

## STONEHENGE

Trail Riders Fellowship Press Release: December 2011

Fear of legal action from the Trail Riders Fellowship has deterred Wiltshire Council from closing seven Byways Open to All Traffic around Stonehenge.

Wiltshire Council intended to ban motorized users from the routes as part of elaborate plans to construct a commercial Visitors Centre at the World Heritage Site.

The byways, which are used as a convenient viewing point by many visitors to the stones, would have been converted into dedicated trackways for land trains transporting tourists from a massive car park onto the site itself.

After a Public Inquiry headed by the Council's appointed Inspector, Alan Boyland, had found that closing the byways by means of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would result in a substantial loss of amenity for trail riders, and that their use of the byways had little impact on the site, Wiltshire Council backtracked and announced that the routes would remain open for all to use after all.

Significantly, Wiltshire Council was very open about its reasons for the about-turn, saying:

"If the Council decided to make the Order as advertised and not as recommended in the Inspector's report there would be a very high risk of objectors to the TRO seeking to challenge the Council's decision by way of judicial review in the High Court. Should this occur, the Council would incur significant expense in defending those proceedings in the High Court."

A spokesman for the Trail Riders Fellowship said: "The Inspector's support of trail riding and his acknowledgement that it has little or no impact on the wildlife, landscape, archeology or the enjoyment of others of this very significant site is a welcome counter to much of the misleading propaganda that has appeared in the media and we look forward to encountering a similarly enlightened attitude elsewhere in the coming year.

"While trail riders played a significant role in the reversal of Wiltshire Council's plans to commercialise Stonehenge, we were also aided by the mutual support offered by other rights of way groups, and those individuals to whom the Stonehenge site is of particular spiritual or religious significance.

"We are pleased by Wiltshire Council's acknowledgement of the ability and determination of the Trail Riders Fellowship to protect the rights of all to enjoy and celebrate the countryside responsibly, and we hope that this will be recognised by other local authorities throughout England and Wales."

TRF contact: Richard Simpson 07812 402021.

Visit us at [www.trf.org.uk](http://www.trf.org.uk)