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PRESS RELEASE

Saving our motoring heritage.

Over three separate periods in the summer of 2011, LARA sent representatives to the public inquiry into the proposal to impose a prohibition of driving order (TRO) on the byways open to all traffic (BOAT) that pass through the Stonehenge World Heritage Site. This is an area much larger than you might think, and the order would have closed 7km of byways that have been used and enjoyed by drivers and motorcyclists for over 100 years.

LARA argued that it would be unsafe to divert small trail bikes on to the A303 and the A360, and that this had not been considered by Wiltshire Council, the order-making authority. We also argued, amongst many other points, that for as long as the A303 bisects the World Heritage Site, the amount of motor traffic using the byways was insignificant in its impact.

In his recommendations published on the 16th November the Inspector (Mr. Alan Boyland BEng(Hons) DipTP CEng MICE MCIHT MRTPI) recognises that "...The BOATs that are the subject of the proposed TRO are key links in the network.... It seems to be undisputed that the only alternative routes would largely be on roads more dangerous for motorcyclists, particularly those riding the relatively low powered and slower bikes habitually used by trail riders. Several objectors have also pointed to the lack of a risk assessment regarding the use of the alternative routes by trail bikes. it seems to me that diverting trail riders from BOATs onto roads would be likely to increase the level of risk to their safety, even if the particular roads involved are not in themselves significantly more dangerous than other similar ones." Mr Boyland added "I accept that Wiltshire has a considerably greater length of BOATs than any other County. This is not however, in itself, a reason for allowing a further loss for recreational motor vehicle users."

LARA is particularly pleased with this result because we opposing Wiltshire Council (represented by counsel) and English Heritage (represented by leading planning QC John Hobson) with their teams of experts and a 'money no object' approach to the issue. We now hope that Wiltshire Council will discuss the situation with us to find a workable and amicable outcome.

For more information please contact admin@laragb.org or visit our web site www.laragb.org