

A3 Hindhead

Public Inquiry

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East Hampshire Cyclists' Forum

(also representing CTC Hampshire Cycling)

Proof of Evidence on Issues Affecting Cyclists

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. First I would like to make it clear that the East Hampshire Cyclists' Forum and CTC Hampshire Cycling strongly support the proposed construction of a tunnel for the A3 trunk road under Hindhead Common and the closure of the existing A3 across Hindhead Common to motor vehicles. This will open up Hindhead for cyclists and users of other non-motorised forms of transport, who for years have felt unable to travel freely through the area because of the severance caused by the A3 trunk road.
- 1.1.2. Our objections relate to details of the scheme rather than the overall proposal. The sections on which we would like to see changes to the Published Scheme include the route for cyclists across Hindhead Common; issues concerning the provision of a cyclepath from Liphook to Hindhead, including an underpass in the vicinity of Bramshott Common; and details relating to crossings already included in the Scheme.
- 1.1.3. As has been identified with regard to motor traffic, the A3 represents a vital corridor for cycle trips along the Portsmouth – Guildford – London route. In 2000 the Highways Agency produced a report entitled '*A3 Cycle Facilities Strategy Report*' which recommended a long-term strategy of improvements to cycle and pedestrian facilities along the A3 corridor. Progress has been made in provision for cyclists along a number of sections and a route now exists from Petersfield to Liphook, with further proposals under discussion for a link from Horndean to Petersfield. The Hindhead project represents a unique opportunity to make a further connection from Liphook through Hindhead to Thursley.

- 1.1.4. Examples of journeys which might easily be undertaken by bicycle along the section of the A3 affected by the present scheme include: Liphook to Hindhead (3.5 miles); Liphook to Milford (9.5 miles); Grayshott to Milford (6 miles); and Grayshott to Thursley (3.5 miles). The presence of a safe and attractive route for cyclists across Hindhead Common would also enable residents of villages to the north of the Common to cycle to the many schools, restaurants and shops in and around Hindhead and Grayshott.
- 1.1.5. During 2001-02 W.S. Atkins, acting on behalf of the Highways Agency, undertook a study of the needs of pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists in the area covered by the scheme. We were pleased to be able to contribute to this study in some detail. This resulted in a report, '*A3 Hindhead: Report on Pedestrian, Equestrian and Cyclist Facilities*', published in February 2002. *A copy of this report is included in the deposit documents for this Inquiry (D196).*
- 1.1.6. More recently, however, the needs of cyclists have been included solely under the topic of Recreation, with little recognition of the needs of utility cyclists, who wish to travel from A to B along the A3 corridor and who will not be able to use the Tunnel for this purpose.
- 1.1.7. This view of cycling as solely a recreational pastime has led to a very incomplete view of cyclists and their needs. *Para. 4.5.5 of the Proof of Evidence on Recreation reads as follows: 'There are three distinct types of cyclist with different recreational requirements: mountain bikers, who often bring their bikes by car from distant locations, do not require firm surfaced routes and enjoy completing circuits on tracks and lanes; family or leisure cyclists who do not require especially fast routes but do need a firm surface and seek the attractions of the countryside; and racing cyclists,*

who also sometimes commute to work, requiring a smooth paved surfaced with a moderate gradient and minimum obstacles en route. This latter group would like to use the Existing A3 through the Punch Bowl as a dedicated cycle route.'

1.1.8. On the basis of the above description I apparently do not exist as a cyclist and neither do most of the other people representing cyclists at this Inquiry. There is no mention of the person who uses their bike on a regular basis as transport for local or even longer distance journeys. The reasons for these journeys are as many and varied as the reasons for car journeys – perhaps to the shops, visiting friends, to work, to a conference or Public Inquiry, to connect with other forms of transport, to the pub or restaurant or as part of a touring holiday.

1.1.9. The Highways Agency's narrow definition of cyclists might at first seem harmless but in fact it does real damage to the case we are seeking to make regarding the proposed route across Hindhead Common. The implication is that the only people who are concerned about having a direct route with minimum gradients are the rather eccentric sounding *'racing cyclists who also sometimes commute to work'*. A group described in such terms is unlikely to carry much weight at a Public Inquiry, especially if the implication is that all other cyclists are happy to share a narrower and steeper route with pedestrians and horse riders. In fact, apart from off road cyclists, I know of no group who would prefer a narrow and hilly option and the gradients on BOAT 500 are especially likely to act as a disincentive to the group described as *'family or leisure cyclists'*, who are easily discouraged by steep hills.

1.1.10. It should also be noted that, whereas specifically recreational groups such as walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers, are mostly interested in crossing the A3 trunk road

in order to enjoy the open countryside away from the road, road cyclists, like car drivers, are chiefly interested in travelling along the line of the road in order to get somewhere.

1.1.11. Our objections and proposals with regard to various sections of the Published Scheme are set out below:

2. PROPOSAL FOR RETENTION OF REDUCED WIDTH OLD A3 FOR CYCLISTS

2.1.1. We support *Objectors' Proposal No. 11* for retention of a reduced width Existing A3 for cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders, carriage drivers and disabled people and oppose the plan, proposed in the Published Scheme, to close this route to all users and completely remove or cover up the road surface (*Side Roads No. 3 Order 200; Environmental Statement May 2004, paragraphs 3.3.82 & 3.3.83; Highways Agency Overview Proof of Evidence, para. F.1.29*).

2.1.2. We feel that the alternative route along BOAT 500, as put forward in the Published Scheme, where it is referred to as a '*recreation route*', would be greatly inferior to use of the Existing A3 and would lead to unnecessary conflicts between the various user groups, all of whom would be funnelled along the same narrow path.

2.1.3. This view as regards the most suitable route for cyclists through Hindhead has been consistently expressed to the Highways Agency and the National Trust by our representatives at a variety of meetings over the past four years.

- 2.1.4. We have always understood that when a road is being removed or rerouted the Highway Authority has a duty to provide a suitable replacement for all road users, including cyclists. Once the Tunnel is built, the route across Hindhead Common will be the only option available for cyclists along the A3 corridor and it is therefore essential that the Highways Agency should take as much care over their provision for cyclists as they do for motor vehicles.
- 2.1.5. We propose that retaining a reduced width Old A3 across Hindhead Common as a cyclepath suitable for all types of cycles would not have a negative impact on the achievement of the stated objectives of the Scheme and would, in fact, have a beneficial impact on some outcomes.

2.2. Background

- 2.2.1. Following extensive consultation with potential users, including ourselves, the W.S. Atkins 2001 report, '*A3 Hindhead: Report on Pedestrian, Equestrian and Cyclist Facilities*', recommended use of a reduced width A3 carriageway as a route across Hindhead Common for cyclists and other non-motorised users: *'the conversion of the existing A3, between Boundless Lane Junction in the north and the National Trust café in the south, to a private means of access and bridleway... it is proposed that two parallel tracks be provided for these works. On the east side there will be a 2.5m wide soil/sand surface track for equestrians and on the west side a 3.5m wide asphaltic surface track for all other users. The latter would be formed by leaving in place a strip of the existing road pavement, possibly overlain by a suitable new wearing course... Gated access will enable all non-motorised users to use this bridleway.'* A Fibredec top dressing was to be applied to the road surface to ensure that it blended in with the

surrounding landscape and there was to be a verge between the equestrian and shared use tracks. The reduced width would also ensure that the route would not be suitable to be reopened for vehicular access in the future.

2.2.2. The above formed part of the Scheme put forward by the Highways Agency up to and including their public exhibition in July 2003 and was effective at the time the first Appraisal Summary Table (AST) report was published in September 2001.

2.2.3. Members of the Cyclists' Forum and CTC Hampshire Cycling welcomed the proposal, which would have amply met the needs of road cyclists travelling through the area and also provided a wonderful resource for others such as wheelchair users and carriage drivers.

2.2.4. As recently as July 2003, we were assured in writing by a member of the Highways Agency team that *'our current proposal and that to be shown at the forthcoming exhibitions is to use the existing A3 around the Punchbowl as a cycle route. The existing carriageway width will be reduced to about 3 metres and gated so that it can only be used by cyclists and pedestrians.'*

2.2.5. We were, therefore, shocked to learn of the decision last autumn to abandon the use of a reduced width Existing A3 as a cycle route in favour of a much less satisfactory detour following BOAT 500 over Gibbett Hill, adding extra length and a significant extra climb to the journey across the Common and reducing the surfaced track width to 2.0 – 2.5m. This follows a route which will be shared with the majority of pedestrians and horse riders visiting the Common as it leads to the popular viewpoint at Gibbet Hill.

2.2.6. The change to the planned route for cyclists across the Common was made without any consultation with cyclists or any specific study of the impact on cyclists of this change. In fact the only consultees appear to have been English Nature and the National Trust (*Highways Agency Proof of Evidence, para. 4.7.22*), neither of whom has any particular expertise or interest in the needs of utility cyclists.

2.3. Why we support a cycle route along the line of the existing A3 in preference to a route along BOAT 500

Width of Path

2.3.1. We support the Highways Agency's original proposal for a 3.5m shared-use path for cyclists and pedestrians along a reduced width section of the old A3 around the Devil's Punchbowl. This would allow ample space for cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users to pass one another in safety and without conflict.

2.3.2. In contrast, we are advised by the Highways Agency that the proposed cyclepath along BOAT 500 would be only 2m wide in places, with a maximum of 3m in some sections. An email from a member of the Highways Agency team tells us: *'The cycle path will be a minimum width of 2m wide but up to 3m wide where space permits, and it will run alongside and separated from an equestrian path. We accept that a 2m width is not ideal and will endeavour to adopt 3m wherever space permits.'*

2.3.3. Clearly the Proposed Scheme is considerably narrower than the original proposal for a 3.5m path along the line of the existing A3. It also falls short of generally accepted guidelines, which recommend a minimum width of 3m on well-used shared-use paths.

This is especially true along a path such as BOAT 500 which has banks along both sides of the path and where vegetation growth will soon impinge quite significantly on the overall width available.

- 2.3.4. A recent Department for Transport draft document '*Adjacent and Shared Use Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists*' recommends a minimum width for shared-use facilities of 3m with an absolute minimum of 2m. However, the document indicates that these widths should apply to the '*effective width*' of the path rather than the actual width. This means providing extra width to allow for vertical features such as banks or vegetation alongside the path. The document also warns that '*practitioners should not regard minimum widths as design targets*' and '*if the recommended widths cannot be realised, the facility may become difficult or impossible for some people to use.*'
- 2.3.5. For a strategic cycle route running through an area popular with walkers and horse riders, anything less than 3m would be inadequate. This is especially true in the case of Hindhead Common where visitor numbers of all types, cyclists, walkers and horse riders, are likely to increase significantly once the trunk road is removed.
- 2.3.6. Sustrans' recently published '*Route User Monitoring Report*' has identified a 114% increase in cycling on the National Cycle Network since 2000, 25% of which is attributable to an underlying growth in cycling and 89% to the opening of further sections of the Network. They also note a 13% year-on-year growth in cycling on traffic free sections of the Network between 2002-2003. As these figures show, growth is particularly marked when a new route is opened where cycling has not previously been a realistic option, as is the case at Hindhead. Sustrans also note similar increases in pedestrian use of their routes.

- 2.3.7. Despite the likely increase in use of routes across Hindhead Common once motor traffic is removed, we are advised by the Highways Agency that they plan to fit a shared use path for cyclists and pedestrians, with a soft-surfaced path for horses alongside, into BOAT 500, where there is only a total of 5-6m width available. As both types of path require a minimum width of 3m, and need to be separated by a verge, it is obvious that this cannot be achieved satisfactorily within the width available.
- 2.3.8. Restricting provision along BOAT 500 to below recommended minimums would guarantee conflict, especially when it is borne in mind that on some sections the gradients exceed 8%, thus ensuring differences in speed between downhill cyclists travelling at 25-35 mph and walkers at 3mph.
- 2.3.9. In contrast, a cycle path along the Existing A3 would allow plenty of space to provide properly for all users and BOAT 500, already a popular route with walkers and horse riders, could continue in its present condition and would no doubt attract many more visitors once the trunk road is removed from the Common.

Surfacing

- 2.3.10. It is clear that the standard of construction of the proposed route along BOAT 500 will not be comparable with that already in existence on the existing A3. In April 2004 Paul Arnold wrote in response to an enquiry *'I do accept that there would be greater confidence in the durability of a path built with the existing road as a base.'*
- 2.3.11. Those who have experience of riding on cycle paths constructed by the Highways Agency alongside the A3 between Griggs Green and Longmoor and from Ham Barn to

Hawkley Road will already know about riding on poorly constructed surfaces. On both these paths the surface, although appearing smooth to the eye, has a ripple effect when ridden on a bike. This makes for a tiring and jarring experience and is not a recipe for encouraging more people to cycle. A similar surface along BOAT 500 would only serve as a deterrent to all but the most determined from cycling across the Common.

2.3.12. Looking to the future, responsibility for maintenance of the cycle path across Hindhead Common will fall on Surrey County Council and, whereas little would need to be done to maintain a reduced width Existing A3, new surfacing along BOAT 500 would be likely to require regular work to maintain it in a condition suitable for road bikes.

Gradients

2.3.13. The route of the Existing A3 across Hindhead Common dates from 1829 when the existing turnpike [along BOAT 500] was moved further down the slope. The Highways Authority of the day employed their considerable engineering skills to achieve the easiest possible gradients for carriages using the important London to Portsmouth road. This reduction of the gradients to be negotiated when crossing the Common is a significant factor in our preference of this route for cyclists.

2.3.14. The maximum gradient on the original proposal, using the Existing A3, was 5% and it is recognised that even here, freewheeling cyclists could achieve speeds of 25-35 mph on some sections.

- 2.3.15. The proposed route along BOAT 500, which lacks the careful engineering on the line of the existing A3 and rises ten metres higher, will include gradients of 8% and possibly more, creating a disincentive for those having to cycle up the slope and the likelihood of conflicts with other users for those riding down. Children and novice cyclists would find it particularly difficult to control a bike going downhill on such a slope, especially when encountering groups of pedestrians and unsteady cyclists struggling uphill on the same path.
- 2.3.16. Whilst Paul Arnold, in response to a written enquiry, has argued that *'although undeniably steeper than the A3, the gradient [along BOAT 500] will exceed 5% in only two places, neither of which is more than 100 metres long'*, another member of the Highways Agency team has acknowledged in an email that *'the extra climb is an obvious disadvantage and we accept that it may put off some cyclists from using the route.'*

Conflicts with Other Users

- 2.3.17. The Highways Agency Published Scheme proposes funnelling cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders, horse drawn carriages and disabled people all together along BOAT 500, a plan which seems to guarantee the maximum conflict between the various user groups.
- 2.3.18. In contrast, retention of the existing A3 as a cyclepath would allow visitors to be divided along two separate paths rather than all being crammed into one which is barely 5m wide in places.

- 2.3.19. A survey carried out on behalf of the Highways Agency in 1993 (*London-Portsmouth Trunk Road A3 Hindhead Improvements Environmental Statement Volume 2: Part 12, Recreation*, Highways Agency, 1994) in seven locations across the study area concluded that, of all the sites where interviews took place, Gibbet Hill was the most heavily used, attracting both locals and visitors to the area.
- 2.3.20. It would, therefore, seem to make very good sense to remove road cyclists, who travel at speeds of up to 30 mph from a route which is likely to be used by the majority of visitors to the Common, who set out from car park with pushchairs and wheelchairs as well as dogs, on or off leads, not to mention the many horse riders who use this popular byway. It should also be borne in mind that not all cyclists are on single bikes, some ride trikes or tandems or tow trailers, all of which take up additional space on the road.
- 2.3.21. It should be remembered that horses are often frightened by quiet and relatively fast moving bicycles, however considerate cyclists may be, thus making it desirable to separate these two groups as much as possible throughout the whole route across the Common, not just where gradients are steep, as proposed by the Highways Agency for the BOAT 500 route.
- 2.3.22. A comparison has been made in the *'Proof of Evidence on Recreation'* to the Cuckoo Trail in Sussex, some sections of which are only 2m wide. However, it should be noted that other sections are 3m wide and, running as it does along an old railway track, the path is relatively flat. It should also be borne in mind that only part of this path is open to horse riders, for whom alternative routes are provided. It must also be remembered that the Cuckoo Trail was a new path, rather than a replacement for an existing road,

and an alternative route from Polegate to Heathfield is available along minor roads. For all these reasons, any comparison between conditions on the Cuckoo Trail and Hindhead should be treated with the utmost caution.

2.4. Does a Cyclepath Along the Old A3 Meet the Stated Scheme Objectives?

2.4.1. The stated objectives of the Highways Agency in constructing a Tunnel under Hindhead Common have been set out as summarised below:

- i. resolve the problem of substantial delays on the A3/A287 crossroads
- ii. ensure no significant worsening of AST assessment results compared to that carried out in 2001 (relating to Environment, Safety, Economy, Accessibility and Integration)
- iii. avoid landtake from the Wealden Heaths Phase 2 Special Protection Area

Traffic Congestion and Delays

2.4.2. The Government's *Ten Year Plan*, as quoted in the *Highways Agency Overview Proof of Evidence (para. 5.2.30)*, identifies traffic congestion as the single biggest problem on the roads.

2.4.3. The first objective of the Scheme is to resolve the problem of substantial delays on the A3/A287 crossroads in Hindhead. This will be achieved by the construction of the Tunnel to divert traffic from the Hindhead crossroads. The choice of route for cyclists across Hindhead Common will have no direct effect on the success of the Tunnel in achieving this objective.

2.4.4. However, if the route across the Common is attractive to cyclists this will encourage more people to choose to cycle rather than use a car for local trips. Sustrans' *'Route User Monitoring Report'* states that *'nearly one third of trips on the National Cycle Network replaced a car trip'*. On this basis, encouraging cycle trips across the Common would make a contribution to the reduction in congestion by removing some motor traffic from the A3 altogether.

Environment

2.4.5. The Government's *White Paper, 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' (D1)*, as quoted in the *Highways Agency Overview Proof of Evidence (para. 5.2.10)*, advises that *'For all environmentally sensitive areas or sites there will be a strong presumption against new or expanded transport infrastructure which would significantly affect such sites or important species, habitats or landscapes.'* The Highways Agency document goes on to say (*para. 5.2.11*) that *'on this basis, the key to the assessment of whether this scheme should go ahead will be the degree of its environmental impacts ...'*

2.4.6. Environmental impact is therefore an important issue to bear in mind when choosing a route for cyclists across the Common. It is also one of the factors taken into account in the Appraisal Summary Table (AST) for the Scheme and, as already noted, the Highways Agency are expected to ensure no significant worsening of AST assessment results as a result of the Scheme.

2.4.7. Topics in the Environmental section of the Table include: noise, air quality, greenhouse gases, landscape, townscape, heritage, biodiversity, water, physical fitness and journey ambience.

.In view of the above, it is important to look at the potential impact on all these objectives of retaining part of the old A3 as a cyclepath as compared to that of constructing a new path along BOAT 500.

Noise

2.4.8. The Highways Agency *Overview Proof of Evidence* (para. 8.3.5) states that '*removing all traffic from the Devil's Punchbowl would be of major noise benefit over a large area and enhance the sense of remoteness*'.

2.4.9. As cycling is an almost silent activity, the choice of route for cyclists across Hindhead Common would have no impact on noise levels.

Air Quality, Greenhouse Gases & Water Environment

2.4.10. Likewise, cycling has no effect on air quality, greenhouse gases, or the water environment so these factors will have no relevance in the choice of route for cyclists across Hindhead Common.

Landscape

2.4.11. Reasons given by The Highways Agency (*Summary Proof of Evidence on Landscape and Visual Impact* (paras.5.1.1.i & 6.3.5); *Overview Proof of Evidence* (paras. 8.3.4; 8.1.2.i.&iv); *letter from Paul Arnold, dated 6 April 2004*) in support of their proposal to completely remove the existing A3 and reroute the cyclepath along BOAT 500 are:

- i. to visually and physically reconnect the Punch Bowl with the adjacent heathland landscape of Hindhead Common.
- ii. to enhance the landscape by restoring the contours of the Punch Bowl.
- iii. to restore a sense of remoteness and tranquillity to this very highly valued landscape.
- iv. to enable the National Trust to remove regenerating woodland adjacent to the road corridor restoring sweeping views down from BOAT 500.
- v. to compensate for the impact caused by the Published Scheme on Tyndalls Wood and Boundless Valley.
- vi. to comply with Government policy objectives of ensuring that trunk roads in environmentally sensitive areas do not harm, and if possible enhance, the environment.

2.4.12. In a letter dated 6 April 2004 Paul Arnold wrote that *'Visually a cycle path along the existing A3 would be more prominent than one on BOAT 500. This is because this section of the existing A3 is perched on a ledge and would lie in the centre of open heath and on the edge of the Devil's Punch Bowl whereas BOAT 500 lies partially in a hollow way and is surrounded by woodland. It is true that there are proposals to reduce tree cover near BOAT 500 by the National Trust, but this is unlikely to be total clearance due to landscape considerations.*

2.4.13. We fully support the desire to remove the existing road and reunite the Devil's Punch Bowl with the rest of Hindhead Common and agree that unless all motor traffic is removed from the Common, it cannot be successfully restored and reunited. What we would disagree with is the alleged necessity of also removing cyclists and pedestrians to achieve this restoration.

- 2.4.14. The presence of a cyclepath using part of the existing road surface, with an appropriate top dressing, need not prevent the reuniting of the Common any more than any other path or track through an area of heathland could be considered to cut off one area from another. Cycles are silent and non-polluting and should not be confused or equated with motor vehicles when considering relative effects upon the landscape. Even if the old road were to be completely removed, in the course of time new paths would be bound to appear across the Punch Bowl as walkers develop new routes across the reunited Common.
- 2.4.15. Paul Arnold also wrote that *'landscape restoration of the existing A3 is now being agreed with National Trust and English Nature in order to restore the heads of the valleys and the ancient spurs which characterised the Devil's Punch Bowl. In particular there are cuttings and embankments for the existing road in the area of the YHA access which we wish to restore to the original landform. This would not be possible if the old road alignment were to be kept for cyclists'*.
- 2.4.16. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century Hindhead Common was regarded as a wild and threatening landscape. However, by the end of the nineteenth century it was these very qualities of remoteness which attracted a number of eminent writers and artists to settle in the area. It is worth noting that at the time this group were so attracted to the dramatic scenery the London to Portsmouth road, constructed in 1829, was already well established on its present day course around the Punch Bowl, albeit in a much narrower and less intrusive form than the road we see today.
- 2.4.17. A cycle path using a reduced width section of the existing A3 would probably be narrower than the old nineteenth century coaching road and certainly need be no more

visually intrusive than the old road would have been. In addition, the curvature of the road around the Punch Bowl means that only a short section is visible at any point along its length and the contours of the land make it largely invisible from above or below. It is, therefore, worth considering that, if the landscape with the nineteenth century road was wild and remote enough for the Victorian and Edwardian writers who settled nearby, then the same landscape with a similarly unobtrusive cycle path could be equally attractive today.

2.4.18. We understand that the actual road surface of the A3 around the Punch Bowl cannot be physically removed because removal would cause more risk of pollution from the old-style tar than leaving the road in situ. What is being discussed, therefore, is covering up the road, rather than digging it out. This will no doubt inhibit some of the aspirations to cut away sections around the rim of the Punch Bowl, whilst still allowing some rebuilding of the slope up to Gibbet Hill. The additional width of the existing road, outside the 3.5 metres needed for the cycle path, could of course be covered and restored to heathland as originally planned.

2.4.19. The main incentive for those wishing to remove the cyclepath to BOAT 500 would appear to be their desire to infill the nineteenth century cutting at the northern end of the Punch Bowl. This infilling would effectively block up the existing A3 at this point, thus preventing its use as a cycle path or anything else. In this instance a choice is required between the importance of filling in the cutting and that of providing a good quality route for cyclists across the Common.

2.4.20. We would suggest that the benefit from blocking the old road, which is proposed for reasons of visual impact, would be less than that offered by a good quality cycle path.

The location of the cutting is, in fact, quite difficult to see from other parts of the Common, thus suggesting that the infilling would, to a large extent, be a purely academic exercise. Conversely, allowing cyclists and walkers to continue to travel round the rim of the Punch Bowl would promote sustainable transport and allow visitors the most dramatic views across the Punch Bowl. This should be compared with almost no view from BOAT 500, which is a sunken lane with banks obstructing the view of the Punch Bowl.

2.4.21. It has been argued that the existing A3 lies within the Devil's Punch Bowl SPA/SSSI, whereas BOAT 500 lies along the edge of the designated site. However, the two paths are not far apart and both are near the edge of the Punch Bowl SPA. Once the motor traffic is gone and regenerating trees around BOAT 500 removed, there will be very little difference between the two in landscape terms and, by definition, the gradual reuniting of the two sides of the existing A3 would presumably bring the whole area within the same designation. This would suggest that the cycle path would be passing through a high value site whether it remains along the existing A3 or moves onto BOAT 500.

2.4.22. It should also be noted that construction of a new cycle path along BOAT 500 would inevitably have a detrimental effect on that path, which is at present in an unsurfaced state, apart from a stone base surviving from its days as the Old Portsmouth Road. Besides the new surface which would have to be constructed, the path would also have to be widened if it is to safely accommodate all the user groups the Highways Agency hope to send along it and this could have a detrimental effect on its character as a sunken lane.

- 2.4.23. Despite the insistence by the Highways Agency on the importance of removing the cycle path from the line of the existing A3, it should be noted that the AST from 2001, when the cycle route was expected to follow the line of the old A3, and the revised AST, which includes rerouting the cycle route along BOAT 500, both identify an overall '*slight beneficial*' effect on landscape for the Scheme as a whole.
- 2.4.24. Removal of the A3 trunk road from Hindhead Common has been identified as a significant beneficial outcome from the Scheme, outweighing the adverse impacts of the scheme upon tranquillity within both Tyndall's Wood and Boundless Copse. The Highways Agency *Overview Proof of Evidence* states (*para. 6.2.1.i*) that the Published Scheme will have '*No direct impacts on the Devil's Punch Bowl SSSI/SPA and a beneficial indirect impact by removing the surface route and re-uniting the commons*'.
- 2.4.25. We maintain that the presence of a cycle path across the Common would still allow the re-uniting of the commons and would not in any way detract from the benefits of removing motor traffic.
- 2.4.26. We understand from the Highways Agency that not only do we have to persuade the Inspector of the wisdom of using a reduced width old A3, but also the National Trust, who apparently have the ability to undermine the whole Tunnel project by refusing to release necessary land. The *Overview Proof of Evidence* (*para. 8.2.1*) warns that '*they cannot be forced to sell such land except at the direction of Parliament... This puts the NT in a special position where such land is required since they could refuse to allow their land to be purchased even after an inspector has recommended in favour of a scheme following a public inquiry.*'

2.4.27. We very much hope that our arguments will convince the National Trust of the long term value of allowing the cycle route across Hindhead Common to follow the line of the old A3 rather than BOAT 500. However, even if they are not convinced, we doubt whether they would in fact choose to undermine the whole Scheme over this detail, since that would result in the trunk road remaining across the Common in perpetuity.

Townscape

2.4.28. As regards townscape, the Highways Agency *Overview Proof of Evidence* (para. 6.3.31) indicates that *'the removal of through traffic and congestion between the Hindhead crossroads and the National Trust Café as a result of the Published Scheme would enable a better sense of place and townscape quality to be restored to the centre of Hindhead'*. The *Summary Proof of Evidence on Community Effects*, likewise, states (para. 3.2.2) that *'the Published Scheme would bring about substantial relief to existing community severance in Hindhead east of the crossroads'*.

2.4.29. These results of closure of the old A3 to motor traffic will be much appreciated by cyclists and will be unaffected by the choice of cycle route across Hindhead Common

Cultural Heritage

2.4.30. Generally the choice of route for cyclists would have little effect on cultural heritage sites. However, it should be noted that BOAT 500 follows the original route across the Common, also known as the Old Portsmouth Road, which still retains much of the original road fabric. If a new cyclepath were constructed along this route the original surfacing would inevitably be lost.

Biodiversity

- 2.4.31. As regards biodiversity, the Highways Agency *Overview Proof of Evidence* states (*para. 6.3.38*) that the benefits to biodiversity in the region resulting from the removal of the existing A3 through the Punch Bowl would include:
- i. a substantial reduction in noise levels
 - ii. the removal of a source of pollutants (road run-off and vehicle emissions)
 - iii. the removal of a significant barrier to dispersal for some species
 - iv. the removal of a source of mortality
 - v. facilitating the management of the site
 - vi. a net gain of 2 ha. of additional habitat
- 2.4.32. On the minus side, the *Summary of Proof of Evidence on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (para. 4.3.1)* anticipates minor negative impacts on the Wealden Heaths SPA from works during restoration of the existing A3 and disturbance from increased pedestrian and cycle use of BOAT 500.
- 2.4.33. We propose that the presence of a cyclepath along a reduced width old A3 would not detract from any of the nature conservation gains listed above. Sustrans Information Sheet '*Ways for Wildlife*' indicates that '*the National Cycle Network now passes through a wide range of different wildlife sites without any apparent problems.*'
- 2.4.34. There would still be a significant gain in habitat through the reclamation of land occupied by the existing A3 over and above the 3.5 metres needed for the cycle path. This would be accompanied by a complete removal of the source of pollutants once the motor traffic is gone, as cycling is a clean, non-polluting mode of transport.

2.4.35. Cycling is almost completely silent so the presence of a cycle path would not detract from the reduction in noise and disturbance achieved through removal of motor traffic. Sustrans Information Sheet *'Ways for Wildlife'* tells us that *'there is increasing evidence that cyclists cause very little disturbance to wildlife. This is because their movements are predictable, in that they tend to stay on metalled paths rather than wandering at will, and they stop infrequently.'*

2.4.36. A study carried out on open grassland on the Dutch island of Terschelling between July and September when relatively high numbers of tourists on bicycles were present, showed that cycling was the least disturbing of the activities taking place in the area.

The following table shows the results of this study:

Source of Disturbance	Curlew	Gull	Oystercatcher	Bar-tailed Godwit
Small aircraft	39	27	18	23
Walking person(s)	31	17	65	32
Agricultural activities	10	7	4	8
Cows	1	1	0	1
Cyclist(s)	0	0	0	1
Natural	11	24	0	16
Unknown reason	8	24	0	16

2.4.37. Sustrans Information Sheet *'Ways for Wildlife'* also quotes from an internal report by the RSPB, which states that *'the swift passage of a cycle through a wood is probably the least disturbing human activity possible.'*

- 2.4.38. It has been found elsewhere that the presence of a cyclepath does not act as a barrier to dispersal of wildlife. Sustrans Information Sheet '*Ways for Wildlife*' tells us that '*unlike roads, sensitively planned cycle paths provide safe habitats where wildlife can thrive and safe corridors for species which need to move from one habitat to another*'. Therefore, the presence of a cycle path along the edge of the Punch Bowl would not detract from the benefits for wildlife dispersal resulting from the removal of the road and motor vehicles from the Common.
- 2.4.39. There would, in fact, be far more likelihood of wildlife disturbance associated with the construction of a new path along BOAT 500 than in the partial covering up of the existing road surface along the A3.

Physical Fitness

- 2.4.40. Under the topic of Physical Fitness, the *Overview Proof of Evidence (para. 6.5.56)* includes the comment that '*recreational access is currently severed across Hindhead Common as a result of the existing A3. Crossing the A3 is dangerous and difficult and the recreational experience is degraded by noise and air pollution*' and (*para. 8.3.8*) '*removal of all vehicular traffic would provide a safe, noise free environment for maximum enjoyment of the area by recreational users*'.
- 2.4.41. The presence of a cyclepath along the line of the Existing A3 would not in any way detract from the reunifying of Hindhead Common and the Devil's Punch Bowl for recreational purposes. In fact it would be advantageous for recreational users who would have more choice in the type of route across the Common, according to their

particular needs. This would inevitably encourage more people to choose to cycle through the area.

- 2.4.42. The National Trust identifies, among other objectives in its *'Post-Tunnel Access Strategy'* the aim to *'secure enhanced access by people of all abilities to Hindhead Commons on foot, cycle and horseback'*. We are also told that *'the National Trust welcomes cyclists and encourages cycling both as an activity and as a means of transport.'*
- 2.4.43. In the light of these positive remarks, it is surprising then to find the National Trust suggesting in the same document that cyclists travelling along the route from Guildford to Petersfield should use local roads through Godalming, Milford and Haslemere to avoid crossing Hindhead Common at all. The route they suggest, besides using narrow, busy A and B roads with no provision for cyclists, would in fact, because of its undulating nature, involve more climbs than crossing Hindhead Common.
- 2.4.44. It seems that, in their enthusiasm to pursue the extravagant idea of relandscaping the Punch Bowl, the Highways Agency and the National Trust have treated cycling and its contribution to the environmental objective of encouraging physical fitness as being of only marginal importance and in many ways an inconvenience.

Journey Ambience

- 2.4.45. Views would be better for cyclists along the line of the Existing A3, which offers stunning views across the Punch Bowl, as compared to the Highways Agency proposed option using BOAT 500, which is largely in a sunken lane.

2.4.46. There would be more hazards to avoid on BOAT 500 because of the increased likelihood of conflict with other user groups and the increased gradients to climb or descend, depending on direction of travel. This would lead to higher stress levels for those using the path.

Safety

2.4.47. Safety for all travellers has to be taken into account in the AST. This includes reductions in accidents and security.

2.4.48. The Highways Agency *Overview Proof of Evidence (para. 6.2.1.iii)* anticipates a ‘*substantial reduction in accidents*’ as a result of the Published Scheme. For accidents involving motor vehicles, this outcome would be unaffected by the choice of cycle route across Hindhead Common.

2.4.49. However, for the following reasons, a route for cyclists along BOAT 500, as proposed in the Published Scheme, would have a higher risk of accidents involving all types of non-motorised user than the route we propose along the old A3:

- i. The concentration of cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders being channelled along a single path
- ii. The inadequate width of proposals for both the cycle path and equestrian path along BOAT 500
- iii. Increased gradients and consequent speed of downhill cyclists at the northern end of BOAT 500

2.4.50. In contrast, use of the old A3 for cyclists would minimise risk by:

- i. Spreading the various user groups across two paths
- ii. Allowing space for optimum width paths
- iii. Reduced gradients and downhill speeds

2.4.51. In terms of personal security, the route along the existing A3, being more open, would be marginally safer than BOAT 500, most of which is in a sunken lane.

Economy

2.4.52. Under the topic of Economy the AST includes measurement of Central Government costs, benefits to business users, benefits to consumer (private) users, journey reliability and wider economic impacts.

2.4.53. The Highways Agency anticipate a moderate reduction in journey time variability for motor vehicles on the A3 corridor as a result of the Scheme.

2.4.54. The outcome for motor vehicles will be unaffected by the choice of route for cyclists across Hindhead Common. However, for cyclists there would be an increased likelihood of delays on the BOAT 500 route, as put forward by the Highways Agency, in comparison with our proposal of a cycle path along the existing A3.

2.4.55. Delays along BOAT 500 would result from the extra gradients and the probability of close encounters with other users of the route.

2.4.56. The Highways Agency identifies in its *Overview Proof of Evidence (para. 6.3.49)* '*potential for increased tourism to Hindhead Common which could partly mitigate lost pass-by trade and lead to the creation of new jobs in the area.*'

2.4.57. It should be noted that cycle tourism could be a contributor to this increased trade, especially bearing in mind the numbers of cyclists coming into the country via the Portsmouth ferries. This would be especially relevant if a high standard, attractive route is provided across Hindhead Common. However, if the route is narrow and steep and involves conflict with other users it will not be suitable for inclusion in suggested routes for cycle tourists, such as Sustrans' National Cycle Network.

Accessibility

2.4.58. The AST also requires attention to be paid to accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car.

2.4.59. *PPG13: Transport (D139)* includes objectives to promote more sustainable transport choices and accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling.

2.4.60. The Highways Agency *Overview Proof of Evidence* identifies a moderately beneficial outcome from the Published Scheme regarding accessibility as a result of reduction in severance in Hindhead and at the Devil's Punch Bowl.

2.4.61. We would also point out that the presence of a safe and attractive cycle route across Hindhead Common would have a highly beneficial effect on accessibility to everyday facilities for cyclists. Residents of settlements north of Hindhead Common would be able to cycle to the shops and restaurants in Hindhead and Grayshott and longer journeys could be undertaken, linking Liphook, Headley, Grayshott and Hindhead with Milford, Godalming and Guildford. The AST does not appear to have taken this into account.

2.4.62. It should be noted, however, that this accessibility gain would be much more achievable using the old A3 in preference to BOAT 500. This is because the extra gradients, narrow and inferior surfacing, and user conflicts would make BOAT 500 less attractive as a cycle route than a path along the old A3.

Integration

2.4.63. Promotion of integration of all forms of transport is a further requirement of the AST. This includes access to transport interchanges and effects on land-use policy.

2.4.64. Good quality provision for cyclists crossing Hindhead Common would extend the value of the Scheme by providing for cycling in addition to motor transport.

2.4.65. Good quality cycle parking at bus stops and future developments in the availability of buses with space for cycles would greatly enhance the possibilities for combined journeys by bus and bike between local towns. The recent Department for Transport draft document *'Policy, Planning and Design for Walking and Cycling'*, endorses this view: *'improved cycling facilities can significantly increase the catchment of public transport stops, helping to boost patronage on the services.'*

2.5 Cost Comparison Between Cycle Route Along Existing A3 and Route Along BOAT 500

2.5.1. In response to an enquiry to the Highways Agency we have been advised that comparative costs between the two routes are not yet available.

- 2.5.2. However, it is obvious that the cost of building a new cyclepath along BOAT 500, combined with covering up and landscaping the existing A3 around the Punch Bowl, rebuilding the cutting near the Youth Hostel and constructing a completely new path around the rebuilt hillside, will be considerably higher than reducing the width of the existing A3 to form a cycle path.
- 2.5.3. Filling in the cutting on the existing A3 near the Youth Hostel will be a major feat of engineering, with infill material having to be hauled up the steep hillside at the northern end of the route; not an easy manoeuvre, especially as this will have to be accomplished without damaging the existing vegetation.
- 2.5.4. All in all, re-engineering the contours of the Devil's Punch Bowl and filling in the A3 cutting seems a very costly exercise which has no direct bearing on the main purpose of the Scheme, which is to build a Tunnel under Hindhead Common. One must ask whether this is the best use of Transport funding. Use of the existing A3 as a cycle path would, of course, make all this extra effort and expense unnecessary.
- 2.5.5. Subsequent maintenance costs would also be considerably higher for a new path on BOAT 500 as the build quality on such a path would certainly be greatly inferior to the standard of the existing A3.

2.6 Would the Presence of a Cyclepath along the Old A3 Allow the Possibility of Reopening this Route to Motor Vehicles in the Future?

- 2.6.1. We understand that part of the National Trust's anxiety to completely remove the existing A3 carriageway across Hindhead Common stems from a fear that a residual

road surface along this route might be used as an argument to allow access for motor vehicles at some future date.

2.6.2. This view was apparently expressed by National Trust representatives at a meeting of the Highways Agency South-East Road Users Sub-Committee in November 2003.

2.6.3. The reduction in width of the old A3 to a 3.5m shared-use gated path and possibly a 2.5m bridleway, as suggested in the original Highways Agency proposal, would allow the remainder of the A3 carriageway to be covered over and relandscaped, thus ensuring that the route could never be reopened for motor vehicles in the future.

2.6.4. We would also endorse the view that BOAT 500 should be downgraded to a bridleway, even if it is decided not to route the cyclepath that way, as its use by motor vehicles once the Tunnel has been built would completely undermine the tranquillity that it is hoped to achieve by removing the motor traffic round the Punch Bowl.

2.7 Conclusion

2.7.1. The Government's White Paper, *'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'* (D1) set out the basic principles of integration between different types of transport; making best use of what exists already; getting good value for money and improving access to everyday facilities for those without a car.

2.7.2. We feel that the Published Scheme's proposal to completely remove the Existing A3 and reroute cyclists along BOAT 500 fails to meet any of the above criteria. It also falls short of guidance contained in *'Cycle Friendly Infrastructure (Institution of Highways*

and Transportation)’, which recommends a minimum width for such a route of 3m and gentle gradients.

2.7.3. The unsatisfactory nature of the proposed route along BOAT 500 is even acknowledged by the Highways Agency. Paul Arnold wrote in April 2004 *‘It is accepted that there would be a greater height for cyclists from the north to climb and greater potential for conflict between users with the Published Scheme’*.

2.7.4. I would, therefore, urge the Inspector to recommend acceptance of *Objectors’ Proposal No. 11* for retention of a reduced width Existing A3 as a cycle route across Hindhead Common, bearing in mind that cyclists will not be able to use the Tunnel and therefore have no choice but to use this path if they need to travel along the A3 corridor.

3. CYCLEPATH FROM HINDHEAD TO LIPHOOK & BRAMSHOTT UNDERPASS

- 3.1.1. We are pleased to support the proposal described in *para. 5.2.26* of the *'Proof of Evidence on Recreation'* for a cycleway along the northbound carriageway verge from the Hindhead crossroads to the point where Bridleway 71 joins the A3.
- 3.1.2. However, to make this provision meaningful, we would strongly recommend its extension slightly further south to allow cyclists to complete a journey to Bramshott and Liphook. One kilometre south of the Bridleway 71/A3 junction there is a small lane, named Rectory Lane, which meets the northbound carriageway of the A3. Rectory Lane itself is very quiet and leads to Bramshott village. Also, from this point there is a tarmac footpath, which could easily be upgraded, running alongside the northbound carriageway of the A3 as far as the A3 Bramshott/Liphook junction.
- 3.1.3. Although this may be felt to be outside the area of the Published Scheme, a short link as far as Rectory Lane would have huge implications for cyclists, making the difference between the provision of a complete route as opposed to the frustration of being nearly there but not quite!
- 3.1.4. In the context of the whole Tunnel Scheme this does not seem too much to ask, especially as the presence of a complete cycle route from Liphook to Hindhead would contribute to the achievement of the stated objectives of the Scheme:
- i. Enabling more people to leave their cars at home and cycle, thus contributing to a reduction in traffic through the area covered by the Scheme.
 - ii. Encouraging more people to cycle, thus promoting physical fitness.
 - iii. Improving safety, by keeping cyclists off the trunk road.

- iv. Helping the local economy by attracting more cycle tourists through the area
- v. Increasing accessibility, by reducing severance between Liphook and Hindhead.
- vi. Contributing to the formation of a longer route from Portsmouth to Guildford, many sections of which are already in place.

3.1.5. If, as currently planned, the path stops adjacent to bridleway 71 there would be no provision for cyclists to continue further south. This would to a large extent undermine its usefulness. Too often cyclists are presented with incomplete routes and then blamed for not using them. This is an opportunity to provide a complete route rather than stopping 1.5 miles short of Liphook. Such a link would be compatible with the Highways Agency policy of providing off-carriageway cycle paths where there is no reasonable alternative route within the trunk road corridor.

3.1.6. It has been suggested that the closure of Sandy Lane to motorised vehicles could provide a link for cyclists to Liphook. However, compared to the route along the A3, this would more than double the distance from the Hammer Lane junction to Liphook and involve a number of additional climbs. It would also be of no help to those wishing to travel through Bramshott.

3.2 Options for Continuation of Cycle Path to Bramshott and Liphook

3.2.1 Four possible options for achieving a link from the end of the proposed cyclepath to Bramshott and Liphook are indicated below, in order of preference:

- i. Continuation for 1 kilometre of the proposed cyclepath alongside the northbound carriageway of the A3 from the junction with Bridleway 71 to

Rectory Lane and upgrading of existing footpath from Rectory Lane to the Bramshott/Liphook junction.

- ii. Improved surfacing of first 500m of Bridleway 71 to facilitate cycle access to the well-surfaced military road which makes up the remainder of the bridleway. This joins Rectory Lane 500m north of the A3 and provides a very good link along a quiet lane to Bramshott, although requiring a detour through the village to reach Liphook.
- iii. If an underpass is to be provided adjacent to Rectory Lane, cyclists could cross the A3 at Hammer Lane and then use the proposed service road to Knockhundred Lane. From Knockhundred Lane there is an existing military track running parallel to the A3 but well separated by a hedge. This track is largely unsurfaced and does not have bridleway status. To be suitable as a cycle route to Liphook it would need bridleway status and construction of a 2-3m wide surfaced cycle track. (We understand that the MoD supports the idea of an underpass at Rectory Lane and has indicated a willingness to upgrade some of their tracks to bridleway status if the underpass is provided.) Cyclists could then cross the A3 through the underpass to reach Rectory Lane.
- iv. An alternative option alongside the southbound carriageway of the A3 is to upgrade an existing 1.5m footpath running alongside the A3 from Knockhundred Lane to a point opposite Rectory Lane. This would need to be widened to provide a minimum of a 2m wide cyclepath with at least 1m of verge between cyclists and the southbound carriageway of the A3. Even with this widening of the footpath it would be unpleasant and potentially dangerous cycling so close to a busy trunk road. Cyclists would then need to cross the A3 through the new underpass to Rectory Lane, as described above.

- 3.2.2. The options described at (i) and (ii) would be preferable for cyclists because they avoid the necessity of crossing the A3 twice, at Hammer Lane and Rectory Lane.
- 3.2.3. Otherwise, option (iii), a cyclepath along the MoD track, would be preferable in terms of safety and ambience to (iv), use of the path alongside the road. However, we recognise that costs might be higher for building a path along the MoD track and that this would also be dependent on changing the status of the track.
- 3.2.4. Whichever route is chosen for a connection to Liphook, we would encourage the Highways Agency to complete the short 500m link along Bridleway 71 from the A3 to the start of the old military road, as this would open up a very pleasant and useful traffic free link to Bramshott, Passfield and beyond.

3.3 Bramshott Underpass

- 3.3.1. We support *Objector's Proposal 1A* by Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council for the provision of an underpass, referred to as the '*Canadian Memorial Underpass*', in the vicinity of Rectory Lane, Bramshott, for cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians, linking the two sides of Bramshott Common. This would overcome the severance caused by the existing A3.
- 3.3.2. The inclusion of an underpass would provide a continuous route for cyclists, horseriders and pedestrians from the Bramshott area to the Common on both sides of the A3 and via tracks and bridleways to Knockhundred Lane, Hammer and Haslemere. It would have the additional benefit of providing a corridor for wildlife dispersal.

3.3.3. We understand that the MoD would support the idea of an underpass in the area of Bramshott Common and that, if such an underpass is provided, they would be willing to allow the conversion of footpath 37 and the track parallel to the A3 on the south side to bridleways.

3.3.4. If an underpass is constructed adjacent to Rectory Lane and provision for cyclists travelling to Liphook is to be alongside the southbound carriageway of the A3, as described in *paras. 3.2.1.iii & iv*, there would be a need for a sealed surface cyclepath through the underpass and a suitable link to Rectory Lane.

4. COMMENTS RELATING TO OTHER PARTS OF THE SCHEME

4.1 Knockhundred Lane

4.1.1. We request the provision of a contraflow path to allow cyclists and horse riders to travel in both directions through the proposed one-way section of Knockhundred Lane.

4.2 Hammer Lane Underpass

4.2.1. The *Environmental Statement* text (*para. 3.3.35*) only refers to 'pedestrians and equestrians' using this underpass, whereas *Figure 3.5h* identifies a paved footway/cyclepath. Please amend text to include cyclists and ensure that a suitable path is provided for all types of cycle use.

4.3 High Pitfold Underpass

- 4.3.1. The *Environmental Statement* (para. 3.3.36) contains no reference in text or *Figure 3.5i* to provision for use of this underpass by cyclists or wheelchair users. *Proof of Evidence on Recreation*, para. 5.2.13 refers to ramps suitable for cyclists and wheelchairs but does not indicate the type of surfacing. Please ensure that surfacing is suitable for both these groups.

4.4 Hazel Grove Junction.

- 4.4.1. *The Environmental Statement* (para. 3.3.37) states that a segregated cycleway will be provided on the south side of the bridge across the A3 at this point. However, this is not shown on the accompanying *Figure 3.5j*. Please ensure that a sealed surface cyclepath is provided through this junction.
- 4.4.2. As this is likely to be a busy junction and in view of the close proximity of a number of schools it would be helpful if provision could be made, possibly with toucan crossings, for cyclists crossing the slip roads here.

4.5 Miss James' Walk

- 4.5.1. We would encourage the Highways Agency to provide a path suitable for all types of cycle, in addition to pedestrians and equestrians, along Miss James' Walk and across the proposed Miss James' footbridge. This would provide a useful traffic free route from Hindhead to the south side of Hazel Grove junction, near the Royal School and Amesbury School.

4.6 Hindhead Crossroads

- 4.6.1. We understand there is to be a toucan crossing of the A287 Tilford Road, located 10m or 20m north of the crossroads, however, this is not clearly set out in the *Environmental Statement* or *Proofs of Evidence*. We would like to ensure that this crossing will be provided.
- 4.6.2. We also understand that it is now planned to replace the traffic lights at Hindhead with double mini-roundabouts. It should be borne in mind that many cyclists will be using the road, especially the A287, so their safety should be taken into account in any new design for this crossroads.
- 4.6.3. The '*Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*', Vol. 5, Section 2, Part 4 '*Providing for Cyclists*' advises in the context of roundabouts that even if a separate cycle track is provided along a new trunk road, '*for any other roads intersecting with the trunk road ... consideration will be necessary if cyclists crossing the line of the trunk road cannot be diverted away from the roundabout onto an alternative cycle route.*'
- 4.6.4. The safest type of roundabout for cyclists is the Continental style, which is typified by single lane approach roads and tight geometry on the roundabout. We would, therefore, request that this advice is followed if roundabouts are to be installed at this junction, which will by then be in the centre of a bypassed village, where through traffic should be expected to travel at slow speeds.

4.7 Objector's Proposal 32

- 4.7.1. If our arguments are ignored and cyclists crossing Hindhead Common are diverted along BOAT 500, we oppose the proposal to divert horse riders from the northern end of BOAT 500 to the proposed new section of cyclepath round the infilled headland near the YHA. Combining cyclists and horse riders on the steepest section of the track would be extremely unwise in view of the likelihood of cyclists travelling at high speeds down the hill.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1. In conclusion we would like to repeat that we welcome the plan for a Tunnel under Hindhead Common and the closure of the A3 road round the Devil's Punchbowl. We see this as a wonderful opportunity to restore a sense of community to Hindhead and to provide for greatly enhanced access opportunities for non-motorised forms of transport along the A3 corridor from Liphook to Thursley.
- 5.1.2. We regret having to appear as objectors at this Inquiry but feel it is essential to make the point that a cyclepath across Hindhead Common along BOAT 500 would be greatly inferior to one following the line of the existing A3, as set out in *Objectors' Proposal No. 11*. We hope our arguments and those of the many others who share our point of view will be able to persuade the Inspector of the advantages of choosing the best route for cyclists, especially as this would be of benefit to all visitors to the Punch Bowl and cost considerably less than the proposed alternative along BOAT 500. Why settle for a more expensive and inferior scheme when it would be much easier and cheaper to provide something first class?

- 5.1.3. The W.S. Atkins *'Report on Pedestrian, Equestrian and Cyclist Facilities'* recommended that *'use of cycle audit procedures should ensure that, at each stage of the design process, the needs of Non Motorised Users are fully considered and every effort is made to provide routes which are safe, attractive and direct.'* In the case of Hindhead Common, the best way to follow this advice would be to use a reduced width section of the existing A3 as a cycle path.
- 5.1.4. We would also encourage the Inspector to support our request for a continuous link, suitable for all types of bike, to Bramshott and Liphook. To stop less than a mile short of making this connection would be a tragic lost opportunity. The cost of completing such a link would be minimal in the context of the Scheme as a whole but the benefits to cyclists would be enormous.
- 5.1.5. We support *Objector's Proposal 1A*, referred to as the *'Canadian Memorial Underpass'*, at Bramshott Common, which would greatly contribute to the accessibility of the whole of Bramshott Common.
- 5.1.6. We feel it is vital to ensure, before construction begins, that the crossings mentioned in this document are to be suitable for all types of bike as it will cost no more to include this provision when the Scheme is built but it would be a long and costly process to upgrade these underpasses at a later date.
- 5.1.6. We are greatly encouraged to think that by 2010, as a result of this far reaching Scheme for Hindhead, it may be possible to cycle safely and easily from Petersfield to Thursley and hope that the recommendations contained in this Proof of Evidence will form part of the finished project.

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