Brendan Whelan
Adur Representative: Inland Waterways Association Kent & East Sussex Branch
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[redacted]

Mr James Appleton
Adur & Worthing Councils
Worthing Town Hall
Chapel Road
Worthing
BN11 1HA

9th April 2021

Dear James,

Restricted Byway 3157
Objection by the Inland Waterways Association to the proposed diversion order

Thank you for your letter of 11th March 2021.

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is a registered charity with over 13,000 individual members nationwide and with a large corporate membership comprising most inland waterway societies and trusts. IWA was founded in 1946 to advocate the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the inland waterways. IWA's Kent & East Sussex Branch has 463 members. I have been a member of the Association since 1974 and represented the organisation on River Adur Matters since 1999.

The Inland Waterways Association objects to the Public Path Diversion Order relating to Restricted Byway 3157 and has concerns about 3158.

The current status at Stowes Gap is detailed on Adur District Council's website (as on 7 April 2021) *"Stowes Gap Hard: access to the hard is a public right of way for trolley wheeled access only across from the entrance way on Brighton Road".*

As you are fully aware, over the past 50 years, Public Hards and Slipways, in Shoreham, have been systematically blocked or rendered useless. This makes it even more important to retain access for future river users at these two locations.

Firstly, considering the "Details of Development" in Part 1 of the Schedule you provided. I note that after seven years, the full planning permission for Tarmount Hard (Byway 3158) is still not in place and that the byway is not open to the public. Supposedly, this came under "public realm improvements". I suggest that this lack of access to the River Adur at that point should be included in any enquiry.

Considering Byway 3157, Stowes Gap. It must be remembered that access to the River Adur is an historic right and that this must continue for future generations. Short term expediency, for the benefit of any party, is not appropriate. Too little information was provided about the proposed change order and it is not possible to understand how the tortuous and restricted route for the byway relates to any current or planned structures on the site. Restricting part of the access to just 1m is clearly unacceptable. Partly because of the pandemic, it has proved impossible to gather the relevant information.

When the Public Hard / Slipway at Ropetackle was approved, the WSCC Rights of Way Officer insisted that the precise area covered by the ancient plans should be kept in place and the size maintained. It is appropriate that a similar approach be adopted for the plans at Stowes Gap. This would involve providing access that is similar both in area and location to the current arrangement. In the case of Tarmount Hard, the Rights of Way Officer and others insisted that a wide straight width should be in place partly to maintain an open view between the road and the river. These set precedents that the plans covering Stowes Gap must meet.

The signage at the current entrance to Stowes Gap indicate that it is both a Public Highway and a Public Hard. Looking at old maps, the current straightforward access goes back for many generations and should therefore be retained as the present convenient location and safe for all the parties involved. Surely, the Right of Way could be changed to this practical location as is would also save the effort in re-routing the byway to the Hard?

In summary, the access to and within Stowes Gap should match what is currently available and should be designed for the future not give short term benefits to a single body. On a personal note, I am concerned that the numerous public bodies don't show any signs of working together to agree a sensible plan. This gives both technical problems and increases the cost to the public purse.

As ever, we in the Inland Waterways Association, will be happy to enter into discussions to try to find a solution that provides appropriate access for future users of Stowes Gap. Similarly, the closure of Tarmount Hard must be ended after seven years of unnecessary delays.

Please will you immediately acknowledge receipt of this Objection.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Whelan MSc, CEng
Adur Representative, IWA Kent & East Sussex Branch