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Dear Ms Walkley

**Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – section 16A
Application for temporary closure of Remenham footpath 4 during the Henley Festival
2015**

The Open Spaces Society objects to the proposed temporary closure of the footpath which we consider to be unnecessary for such a long period. The Festival should be required to demonstrate that it is essential to close the path i.e. that it cannot site its operations elsewhere to avoid the route.

In addition, it is for Wokingham Borough Council to 'satisfy itself that it is not reasonably practicable for the event to be held otherwise than on a road'. In our view, there is nothing about the Festival which requires the use of a road.

The Council also needs to be aware of its statutory duty, under section 130 of the Highways Act 1980, 'to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of the highway ...'. By agreeing to this temporary closure, the Council is failing in its statutory duty.

This is the Thames Path National Trail, a route of international importance, which should not be interfered with merely for a private event.

In addition, the Council needs to 'have regard to the safety and convenience of alternative routes suitable for traffic which will be affected by the order'. The proposed alternative route is not a public highway and therefore does not have the necessary protection. The only available public highways are Remenham footpaths 7 and 8 which are a considerable extra distance, and Remenham Lane which is longer and dangerous. Section 16A (8) therefore cannot be satisfied.

We trust that this year the Council will not automatically agree to the proposals but will challenge the Festival to demonstrate why it cannot operate with the path left in place.

Yours sincerely

Kate Ashbrook
General Secretary