

Mid-Sussex District Council  
Oaklands, Oaklands Road  
Haywards Heath  
West Sussex  
RH16 1SS

7th May 2025

Dear Mid Sussex District Council,

**Re: Scientology's application for a PSPO on Saint Hill Road, 15th July 2024**

In his letter, Mr. Hodkin notes Saint Hill "also has many non-Scientologist visitors", which complements our position that our protests were not discriminatory in nature as we do not target or single out people based on their religious beliefs. Both Scientologists and non-Scientologists attend events at Saint Hill, and our purpose is to raise awareness of the support available to those who have suffered abuse inside Scientology - not to protest their so-called religious beliefs. It is not possible to differentiate between those who consider themselves Scientologists and those who do not, for example by appearance - and our message is aimed at everybody equally, regardless of faith.

Mr Hodkin also notes the calendar of public events at the property "including Easter, Christmas, Bonfire Night, Spring and Summer events" which he claims are "attended by many thousands of general public from the local area." In order for a PSPO to be implemented, there needs to be clear evidence of "persistent, ongoing" disruption to the local community and there is no evidence of protests being held outside the majority of Scientology's events at Saint Hill. In the last six years, there have only been two protests at Saint Hill and they were both in response to the 'International Association of Scientologists' (IAS) anniversary event - which is the largest fundraising event in Scientology's calendar internationally and is not a religious service.

The letter also refers to the size of our protests, stating "a few anti-Scientologists have demonstrated outside of the property." Firstly, I would like to point out that this indicates the Church's position agrees our protests have been small in nature and therefore unlikely to cause disruption to their event or the local community. secondly, I would like to clarify that our protests are not anti-Scientology. We have nothing against those who choose to follow L. Ron Hubbard's teachings and are protesting behaviours, not beliefs. Our message has, and always be "the abuse has to stop."

The Church's letter also notes that Saint Hill Castle is a registered place of public worship, and I would like to emphasise that our protests have not been organised to coincide with any so-called religious ceremonies. The IAS event is a fundraising event and is used by Scientology leader David Miscavige to update his followers on the expansion of the Church's real estate empire and where money has been spent on programs like their Narcnon drug rehabilitation centre, which was recently subject to an investigation by the Charity Commission and Care Quality Commission after incidents of abuse and neglect were reported by *The Observer* newspaper. There is no evidence of any protest activity that has been organised to disrupt or coincide with any religious worship ceremonies, weddings, funerals or other such events at Saint Hill and we do not target people visiting Saint Hill for this purpose. Our message is broadcast to all in the area - we march through the town centre and the demonstration culminates with a static picket by the entrance of their property. Our signage includes messages such as "When was the last time you saw your family? They love you and so do we", "It's not out-ethics to put your mental health first. If you need help leaving, call the Aftermath Foundation." and "It's time to end abuse in Scientology."

Mr. Hodkin also states "The manner in which demonstrations have occurred outside of the Church on Saint Hill Road has not respected the rights of others, not avoided hate speech and has threatened public safety" to which I firmly disagree. Firstly, Scientology have engaged in a targeted campaign of harassment against several members of our group including writing to protestors' employers and personal connections in a vicious and distressing smear campaign.

In Scientology policy letters, L. Ron Hubbard wrote "the law can be used very easily to harass, and enough harassment on somebody who is simply on the thin edge anyway, well knowing that he is not authorized, will generally be sufficient to cause his professional decease. If possible, of course, ruin him utterly."

Scientology considers anybody who leaves their group, or speaks out publicly without their approval an enemy, known in their scripture as a "Suppressive Person". Accordingly, Scientology assigns vast resources to shut down any form of protest, censor free speech and infringe on the rights of anybody who does not tow their party line. Under 'Rights of a Suppressive Person or Group', Scientology policy states "a truly Suppressive Person or group has no rights of any kind and actions taken against them are not punishable" through their internal Ethics procedures.

In HCO PL (Policy Letter) 18th October 1967, 'Penalties for Lower Conditions', Hubbard explains those considered enemies "May be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologist. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed'.

These are the precise behaviours we are confronted with as ex-Scientists and members of the public concerned about the welfare of others who wish to leave. It is this precise behaviour that we are standing up against, and continue to lead our activism with kindness and compassion despite Scientology policy requiring Saint Hill to respond with a confrontational, divisive and combative response.

Scientology policy requires its followers to manufacture artificial disputes and complaints in order to suppress free speech by any means necessary, and they are directed by policy to “destroy” anybody who is critical of their organisation. This is why it is even more vital people stand up despite the odds to sound the alarm about some of the extremist, dangerous behaviours prevalent in Scientology and the abuse many (including myself) have suffered while inside. Contrary to Mr Hodkin’s statement, it is Scientology who do not respect the rights of others and the video evidence gathered at last year’s protest demonstrates the kindness and compassion with which we conduct ourselves - such as warning passers by of oncoming traffic, directing them to the entrance and complimenting them on their outfits.

There is also no evidence of any hate speech or threats to public safety. Sussex Police were present at both the 2023 and 2024 protests for the entirety of the weekend and no arrests, warnings or cautions were made despite having perfectly sufficient powers to do so should there have been any hate speech, discrimination, harassment or public safety concerns.

Mr Hodkin’s letter suggests the demonstrations “have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality”, however I would argue that it is Scientology’s event that has a larger negative impact on the community. Thousands of cars traveling from across Europe and attempting to access the property at the same time via one entrance (despite multiple being available) and poor traffic management on Scientology’s part has led to miles-long tailbacks on Saint Hill Road and Turners Hill Road every year they have held their IAS event. Similarly in the last two years they have placed large speakers on the perimeter of their property, pointed at the protestors and the road, which have played repetitive, distorted bagpipe music at a dangerously loud and anti-social level. This noise caused distress to the several members of the public who spoke with us as they walked past over the weekend, and is a brazen attempt to drown out our chants such as “the abuse has to stop.”

Similarly, Scientology have installed concealed fencing and planted a hedgerow on public land opposite the entrance, blocking the public right of way along the eastern verge of Saint Hill Road. In their correspondence with West Sussex Highways, the Church have admitted to doing this in order to obstruct protestors, but this also has the knock-on effect of minimising the space available to dog walkers and passers by to walk along the road safely. On the Western side of Saint Hill Road,

Scientology have installed temporary planters and metal barriers to block the footpath during the weekend of their IAS event, forcing their own event attendees to walk in the road. During our protests, we ensure ample space is given for passers by to use the limited verge space available. We also provide portable lighting to illuminate the roadside and wear hi-vis jackets as safety is our primary concern. Scientology's actions and lack of regard for the safety of those using Saint Hill Road are what have caused a detrimental effect on the quality of life for those in the local area and the impact of our protest in this regard is minimal.

Due to Scientology's well documented history of bully tactics and harassment policies many victims of abuse find themselves too afraid to seek help from organisations such as The Aftermath Foundation and fear reprisals for speaking out publicly. Mr Hodkin makes it clear the Church's goal is to restrict the rights of protestors, writing "the effect of the PSPO proposed is to prohibit the demonstrators from conducting their activities on the public highway immediately outside of the Church."

Implementing a PSPO would set a dangerous precedent for other churches and religious organisations to restrict the rights to free assembly near their premises, and would ratify Scientology's goal to censor free speech and muzzle anybody critical of their harmful practices. Due to the tight control the Church has over the lives of its members, for example by restricting access to the internet and limiting their contact with the outside world, it presents a unique challenge to ensure those attending Saint Hill are aware of the support and assistance that is available to them should they need it. Scientologists are forbidden from contacting law enforcement and will be punished for doing so and their connection to the internet is heavily censored. As such, the ability to reach people at Saint Hill in the form of peaceful assembly is paramount to ensuring they are aware of the loving and supportive community that is ready and waiting to welcome them with open arms should they wish to leave.

I would urge the Council to carefully consider the wider implications of implementing a PSPO: not just the burden on limited resource and public finances, but the mandate it would give to Scientology to seek further restrictions on free speech and rights to assembly elsewhere.

Mr. Hodkin suggests in his letter "the demonstrators refused to use the designated area," which I would like to clarify is not the case. We worked closely with Sussex Police prior to the protest in both 2023 and 2024 and it was agreed the area to the south of the entrance, on the west side of Saint Hill Road, was safest for us to gather and was likely to cause the least disruption to the local community. The designated area Scientology had suggested is situated right outside Rockwood Park, a residential area - and was likely to cause greater disturbance to local residents as well as providing a smaller space for our group to gather. We have complied with all police requests during both of our protests, and encourage

everybody attending the protest to follow instructions and engage in their activities in a peaceful and non-disruptive manner.

I propose not to respond to Mr. Hodkin's personal attacks and allegations against me as an individual, however I do feel it is important to note that The Rockwood Park Residents Association consists of senior Scientologists who are intrinsically linked to the Church's upper management and both the Rugby and Sports Clubs received donations of £50,000 from Scientology at the 2024 IAS event.

We remain committed to exercising our human rights of free speech and assembly, and I cannot stress enough that our goal is not to harass, intimidate or disturb Scientology's event - which is held several hundred feet behind the Castle, nowhere near the location of our protest. We are simply calling for an end to the abuse and bullying behaviours that are prevalent throughout the Church - and we hope to raise awareness of the support and community available to those who need it.

We are, and always will be, open to dialogue with the Church of Scientology and have made numerous attempts to do so prior to arranging both protests.

There have been two protests in the last six years, and I fail to see how this would justify the requirement for activity to be "persistent and ongoing" in order for a PSPO to be implemented.

Please don't hesitate to reach out should you require any further information, clarifications or evidence ahead of the Council's report to elected members on this matter.

Many thanks and kind regards

Alexander Barnes-Ross  
*Ex-Scientologist, protest organiser*