

From: [Janet Laveau](#)
To: [Benjamin Whiffin](#)
Cc: [Adam Denby](#); [Gemma Wallis](#); [Peter Hodkin](#)
Subject: Re[4]: FW: Meeting to discuss Church of Scientology/Highway boundary
Date: 23 October 2024 00:09:00
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

****EXTERNAL****

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email. I suggest that it would be helpful if [REDACTED] would review their notes of our discussion on Tuesday last, which we have an accurate record of and is the basis of how we are proceeding.

I fully appreciate that West Sussex Highway authority is coming under a lot of pressure from people who wish only to discriminate and incite hatred against our religion. However, the Highway Authority needs to be very careful about attempts to be drawn into doing the same. This would not only be improper, but also illegal under our laws which protect against discrimination and mandate equal and proportionate treatment.

As your colleagues know, and I had hoped would have communicated to you, what we have done in this area, and as we discussed, and will do, was specifically done on the advice and recommendation of the police. They advised this as they observed people standing across from our entrance poking their heads out from the trees with cars passing by at 60 mph. It has been entirely concerned with improving safety while also containing unlawful public disorder from occurring on and next to this small area of highway.

The facts have been distorted by these few people and the highways authority should not allow itself to be used by people who wish only to discriminate and incite hatred based on religion, but should instead act in the proportionate and sensible way it has acted thus far.

Permitting people to stand on the Church's own property to shout at, intimidate and harass our members who are coming to their Church - is not right – no matter how someone might want to twist things.

To reiterate, the hedge opposite the Church entrance was planted more than a decade ago on the advice of Police Inspector Scott, because safety in that area of the highway was a serious risk because people were placing themselves in between the trees and would step onto the carriageway or poke their heads out that could easily have been hit by cars flying past. That was the frightening reality and it has obviously been seen by your authority many times in the intervening years without any issues being raised. As your colleagues know, it was specifically inspected by the Highway Authority on 29 April 2013, when your inspector told us the hedge was fine so long as we keep it trimmed. It was also inspected by you on 22nd November 2023, when the same advice was given. Removing the hedge reverts back to that dangerous setup and I really don't think that is in anyone's best interest or what is wanted by anyone.

As we have said we are happy to continue to work with you to keep this area as safe as possible.

In relation to the other side, we are aware of the position regarding highways and ownership.

However, the evidence points to the area we laid paving slabs at the Church entrance, not being part of the Highway. As your colleagues are aware, and have no doubt now investigated for themselves, that entrance was constructed on the Church's land back in

1990, in accordance with a planning permission given by Mid Sussex District Council. The County Engineer was fully consulted, and at no time was it asserted that the area was part of the Highway, or that the permission of the Highways Authority was required for this work.

At that same time, we set back the wall that goes down towards the south gate, to improve sight lines.

What we do at our entrance, and what occurs from time to time down the side of the highway here, are all part of the normal life of our local community. There is nothing extraordinary about them, and they generally improve safety.

The Highway Authority needs to come and talk to us to resolve our very real concerns, and we will work together to address them, not write to us precipitously and without proper regard for the actual facts and history. They should not allow themselves to be used as part of a campaign by people who wish to destroy religion.

Can I therefore suggest that after we get through with this busy week, we get together again and reach agreement on matters? This was essentially what we agreed with your colleagues last Tuesday.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject RE: Re[2]: FW: Meeting to discuss Church of Scientology/Highway boundary

Good morning, [REDACTED],

[REDACTED] has been keeping me updated with regards ongoing discussions on this matter. I thought it would be worth just reiterating the County Council's position relating to a number of points discussed previously, as there would appear to still be some confusion:

- The highway boundary is shown in pink on the attached 1:1250 scale plans (north and south lodge). This land is not owned by the County Council, but the existence of highway rights over it means that it is under the control of this council as Highway Authority (HA) for West Sussex. Private ownership rights are irrelevant in these cases, as the highway rights always take precedence, and hence the Church is not permitted to interfere with the land without the consent of this council.
- As I understand it, we have not been presented with any evidence to the contrary, and therefore it would be an offence to position anything within the land shaded pink on the attached plans. Furthermore, if an incident/accident were to occur as a result of

any illegally positioned obstruction, it is likely that any Public Liability Insurance in place would be invalid, and that liability would sit directly with the Church. I would strongly advise you to seek independent legal advice before positioning items on the public highway unlawfully.

- We would be happy to discuss the tree issue further, subject to receiving any paperwork or correspondence relating to any consent the Church believes was in place at the time. As far as I am aware, this has not been forthcoming.

I look forward to receiving information pertaining to the tree agreement, and please let me know if you have any further questions.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Highway Operations Manager – Eastern

Place Services

Highways, Planning and Transport

West Sussex County Council

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2024 4:18 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re[2]: FW: Meeting to discuss Church of Scientology/Highway boundary