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# Cropcircle Access Pass Scheme

developed to compensate the farming community and to control access if permission to their fields is granted.

A Summary

# What preceded it? A brief history



## Wiltshire & Crop circles

Wiltshire is world's epicentre of the crop circle phenomenon. Worldwide there is a great interest in crop circles, from various perspectives. Large numbers of national and overseas visitors are attracted to the county every summer.

Meanwhile there is a growing conflict arising between the main parties involved in the crop circle phenomenon (farmers, tourists, researchers, tour and conference organizers).

Angry farmers started to cut out formations, visitors are upset and disappointed, research can't be continued. Allowing the situation to drift out of control is in the interest of no-one, and could affect the county's tourism, income and reputation.

## Farmers & Crop circles & Visitors

Crop circles are unwanted by farmers, as are visitors who disrupt their privacy, cause annoyance (blocking roads, leaving litter) and extra damage by trampling the crops.

Each summer a chaotic situation is happening in the fields as there are no official rules and regulations to handle the situation. Ways to compensate farmers for their losses are failing (donation boxes are stolen). Over the years a "cropcircle-industry" has been developed without involving the farming community and respecting their wishes.



Farmer's annoyance originates in the seemingly unstoppable work of well-known hoaxers/claimants, their supporters and PR machine. This group damage crops for their own ends and without consideration for farmers. The police and in particular the Rural Crime team is over allocated and understaffed to offer sufficient help and support.

Visitors from abroad are mostly unaware of this situation and the negative impact they are causing. They do not know where they can go, if access to a crop formation is permitted or that there is a code of conduct they can follow. They often experience angry farmers and conflicts in the field.

# How the Access Pass Scheme came into place

During the 2012 season it became clear there would be a real likelihood that farmers would cut out all formations and there would be nothing to visit and to research in the future years.



Derek Viner and Monique Klinkenbergh consulted Mrs Claire Perry - Member of Parliament for Devizes Constituency - in August 2012 to draw attention to the conflict and to ask for help and leadership in this matter. At her instigation, Derek Viner, David Dawson (Director Wiltshire Museum in Devizes) and David Andrews (CEO VisitWiltshire) met in September 2012. At this meeting it was agreed that the community would benefit from improved relationships between visitors and farmers. It was decided to set up a process of consultation with interested parties to see if a better way could be developed. Subsequently, four meetings (between March and June) were held with local authorities, farmers, NFU representatives, the Rural Crime Team, crop circle researchers, tour- and conference organizers. The purpose of the meetings were to discuss the potential for a new sustainable approach to crop circles.

The initial meeting with farmers and local authorities in March 2013 suggested the possibility of co-operation and the search for positive initiatives, such as a Crop circle Access Pass Scheme, but this potential was not realized in the subsequent two meetings in April and May, that involved the group of crop circle enthusiasts.

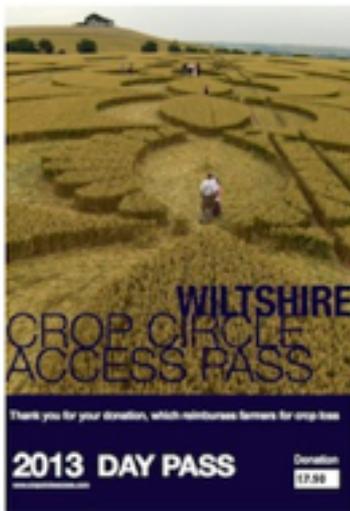
At these two meetings, some farmers felt that crop formations brought positive experiences, but farmers in the Pewsey Vale remained steadfast in their resolve to damage formations by cutting and denying access. The majority of the crop circle group lacked cohesion and the ability to work together towards a joint solution.



Finally, at the meeting in June - one day after the first crop circle appeared - the Access Pass Scheme was implemented and set in motion by Monique Klinkenbergh and Derek Viner.

Due to the short time things had to be put in place, the farmers and the public could not be informed adequately and in time regarding the Access Pass Scheme initiative. At the same time an alternative scheme for donations unfolded. This all resulted in confusion, disharmony and misunderstanding between farmers, visitors and members of the crop circle community.

# Crop Circle Access Pass Scheme 2013



The Crop Circle Access Pass Scheme was set up and promoted through the Cropcircle Information and Co-ordination Centre (CICC), a self funded and non-profit enterprise based at the Woodborough Garden centre near Pewsey.

From mid June 2013 visitors were encouraged (not obliged) to purchase access passes before entering accessible formations.

Access passes were available for day (£7,50) week (£20,00) and season (£40,00) as well as for tours and researchers. In the case where only 1 formation could be visited, the price was reduced to £2,50.

Access Passes were sold at the Centre at Woodborough, the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes and online via the website [www.cropcircleaccess.com](http://www.cropcircleaccess.com) and the free Mobile App 'Crop Circle Access'.

## Crowd Funding Campaign

A crowd-funding campaign - Save the Crop Circles - was set up to encourage interested people from around the world to donate money to be used for reimbursing farmers.

The campaign made a promising start, but slowed down during the season when it became clear that not many farmers were prepared to allow access.



## Wiltshire Farmers Crop Circle Fund

All moneys received from Access Pass Sales, donations and Crowd-funding were exclusively used to compensate farmers for the losses associated with crop formations. The CICC did not receive this money nor made any profit from it. A Wiltshire Farmers Crop Circle Fund was established and all moneys collected have been accounted for in minuted weekly meetings of the administrators of this Fund. After paying farmers the agreed amounts and a donation of £500,00 was made to the RABI, it was decided that the fund will carry forward an amount of nearly £5000,00 into next year. Result of this is to be seen in the financial report.

# Discovering and communicating formations



## Reconnaissance flights

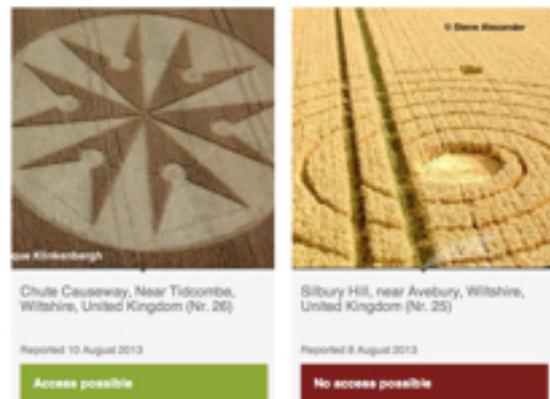
Subject to weather, early morning reconnaissance flights were done by the CICC over the area during June, July and August 2013. The process was to spot and locate new crop formations and to notify the Rural Crime Team and farmers of new crop circles.

Where a new formation was found, farmers were contacted by the Rural Crime Team to ask if public access would be granted. When the farmer was willing to allow access, he was given an immediate payment of £500,00 by the CICC who also placed signs in the field to inform and direct visitors.

The fact that a formation was accessible or not accessible was as quickly as possible publicized on the web site and the smartphone Apps.

## Website and Mobile App

A new website [www.cropcircleaccess.com](http://www.cropcircleaccess.com) (as well as a Facebook page) were created to inform people of the latest crop formations and farmer's wishes regarding access.



A mobile App (for Android, iPhone, iPad) was designed and available free of charge. The App provides users with notification of new formations and information regarding location, accessibility, and parking possibilities. It also contains a link to buy an access pass.



The Android App is available in the Google Play store, the iPhone App in the iTunes store by search term 'Crop Circle Access', or by scanning the barcode on the left side (top left for iPhone and iPad, bottom left for Android).



## Crop circle Information and Co-ordination Centre

The Crop circle Information and Co-ordination Centre at Woodborough (CICC) was combined with the Silent Circle Cafe and Shop of Charles Mallet (previously at Yatesbury). It was open from 15th June till 15th August 2013. At the centre Access Passes could be obtained and crowd funding donations could be made.

The CICC offered a convenient central meeting point and gathering place for crop circle visitors, tourists and researchers and provided up-to-date information about the latest (accessible) crop circles, a cinema corner (including quadcopter videos taken above non accessible formations) a library corner and free use of computers and wifi. Large photo's of significant formations from the past were displayed and lectures and presentation were organized.



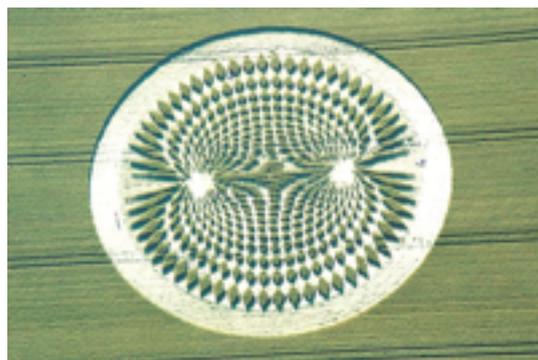
The official opening of the CICC on 28th June 2013 was attended by Ms Claire Perry, MP for Devizes district, Mr James Sheppard (Wiltshire Council and the NFU), Mr David Dawson (Director Wiltshire Museum), Mr David

Andrews (CEO of VisitWiltshire), Rural Crime Team, crop circle enthusiasts, interested farmers, local people and the press.

It is estimated that some 5000 visitors passed through the Centre during the season. The majority of them, particularly those from overseas, have shown by their behaviour, comments and donations that they welcome a clear understanding and are prepared to comply with farmer's wishes.

The CICC closed at the end of the season, but still retains a presence through displays and a computer at the neighbouring Sticks and Stones Cafe at Woodborough Garden Centre, to keep the initiatives under the attention.

The activities and services provided in 2013 cannot be sustained privately by Monique Klinkenbergh. She is actively seeking funding for 2014.





## Some facts and figures

The extreme cold and wet Spring in the UK caused a delay in crops. The first formation of 2013 in Wiltshire (oil seed rape) was reported on 2nd June, while usually crop circles start appearing in April or May.

The 2013 season has seen 33 reported formations in Wiltshire, well down from an average of 50 in previous years in the county.



The 2013 season had only 3 formations reported in the rest of the UK, well down from an average of 80 in previous years.

In 2013 only seven of the 33 formations were accessible for visitors, of which 4 were through the Access Pass Scheme.

In 2013 a total of 14 formations were immediately cut out, some even before a picture could be taken.

## Will the Access Pass Scheme be continued?

I would love to continue, but this would only be realistic and viable if enough farmers would be willing to support and sign up to the Access Pass Scheme. I doubt if this will happen on short notice as farmers simply have had enough after countless years of crop circles.

In October 2013 a meeting took place in Devizes to review the season. An extensive report was presented and discussed. At the meeting it was agreed that farmers/landowners as a whole need to decide and say what it is they want for the future. In case access would be allowed, their permission should be given to one Access Scheme.

We are waiting for the outcome of a NFU meeting regarding their position and decision towards crop circles in 2014. Whatever the outcome will be, I will respect their wishes.

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Photo's by Steve Alexander, Eva-Marie Brekkesto, Nils Kenneth Fordal, Bert Janssen, Frank Laumen, Monique Klinkenbergh, Andreas Muller, Olivier Morel and Janet Ossebaard.

