

THE STONEHENGE ALLIANCE

From the Chairman, George McDonic, MBE, BL, DIPLTP, FRTPI, DPA, FFB
C/O 1 The Old Smithy, Alton Priors, Marlborough,
Wiltshire SN8 4JX

The Rt. Hon. David Cameron, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

17 March 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

Stonehenge and proposals for the A303

You may recall that I wrote to you on 29 October 2014, expressing concern about the damage that would be caused to the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) by widening the A303, to include a short, 1.8-mile (2.9km) tunnel close to the Stones. Since then the Government has announced its intention to implement such a tunnel, despite having granted our request for costing for a longer tunnel.

We expressed our concerns about a 1.8-mile tunnel to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee Advisory Mission to Stonehenge last October, pointing to the Government's re-stated commitment to Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention, given on 23 September 2015, in response to a Written Question by Baroness Jones. Article 4 of the Convention reads as follows:

“Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State. It will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and co-operation, in particular, financial, artistic, scientific and technical, which it may be able to obtain.” (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>)

This commitment is to protection of the whole WHS property, not just elements of it. Thus there is strong reason to question the advice of Historic England and the National Trust to the Government concerning a 1.8-mile tunnel. The stance of these bodies conflicts not only with World Heritage Convention obligations but also advice given by the International Council on Monuments and Sites in its *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*.

Notwithstanding the Government's Convention obligations, Minister of Transport Andrew Jones said, at a Westminster Hall debate on 1 March 2016, that the Government is “committed to delivering a 1.8-mile tunnel at Stonehenge”. His full statement also appeared to be at odds with

the statutory process for National Infrastructure Planning projects which requires consultation before any decision is made.

I would therefore be grateful if you should, please, let me know:

1. whether the Government has received the report of UNESCO's October 2015 Advisory Mission to Stonehenge and, if so, when it will be available for interested persons such as ourselves to see;
2. what options the Government considered and by what process it weighed them up and made its decision before announcing that it was "committed to a 1.8 mile tunnel";
3. how the Government reconciles implementation of a 1.8-mile tunnel and associated major engineering works well within the WHS with its obligations under Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention; and
4. whether, in view of Andrew Jones' statements on 1 March this year, consultation on options for widening the A303 is intended to be wide, inclusive and open minded.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

George McDonic
Chairman, the Stonehenge Alliance

cc. The Rt. Hon. Patrick McLoughlin, MP, Secretary of State for Transport
The Rt. Hon John Whittingdale, MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb
Lilian Greenwood, MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport
Richard Burden, MP, Shadow Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Maria Eagle, MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
John Glen, MP for Salisbury
Susan Denyer, Secretary, ICOMOS-UK
Petya Totcharova, UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Note. The Stonehenge Alliance, of non-governmental organizations and individuals, maintains a watch over any major development proposals that would impact adversely on the Stonehenge World Heritage Site. The Alliance is supported by: Ancient Sacred Landscape Network; Campaign for Better Transport; Campaign to Protect Rural England; Friends of the Earth; and RESCUE: The British Archaeological Trust.