

THE STONEHENGE ALLIANCE*

PRESS RELEASE

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Celebration or Impending Heritage Disaster?

Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) is under threat of irreparable damage, campaigners of the Stonehenge Alliance warn - even as heritage luminaries gather to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of its designation.

A Wiltshire conference to celebrate 30 years since UNESCO's designation of the WHS will be held on Saturday 19 November.¹ Archaeologists will explain developments in conservation, changes in knowledge through research and archaeology, and the role of the WHS in the evolution of our culture.

But at this very moment of celebration the WHS lies threatened. Abandoning conservation commitments, the Government plans to widen the A303 at Stonehenge, including a short tunnel cutting into the landscape close to the Stones.

Included would be deep tunnel cuttings and portals, new dual carriageway, and grade separated junctions on the WHS boundaries – all to the detriment of Europe's most significant archaeological landscape.

Thirty years ago UNESCO acknowledged the outstanding universal value to mankind of the WHS, and our Government pledged to protect and conserve the archaeological landscapes of Stonehenge and Avebury and transmit them to future generations.²

Stonehenge Alliance spokesperson Kate Fielden commented:

“Those responsible for the WHS agreed to a raft of special planning policies for the management and future wellbeing of this irreplaceable treasure. What has happened to those plans? It seems that the long-term view has been abandoned in favour of political expediency. The very people who should be in the vanguard of defending the WHS are conniving with government to degrade it. ”

Author, historian and broadcaster Tom Holland has lent his support to the Stonehenge Alliance campaign. In an independent video Tom describes the A303 tunnel project as "an act of vandalism that would shame our country and our generation" (link: <https://youtu.be/6u4grV5VIH8>).

¹ Devizes Corn Exchange, Saturday 19 November 2016, from 10a.m.

² World Heritage Convention (1972), Article 4

The Stonehenge Alliance is pressing for a better A303 solution involving no further damage to the WHS and will be handing out leaflets about the scheme at the venue in Devizes on 19 November.

Notes

*The Stonehenge Alliance (www.stonehengealliance.org.uk) is supported by Ancient Sacred Landscape Network (ASLaN); Campaign for Better Transport; Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE); Friends of the Earth (FoE); and RESCUE: The British Archaeological Trust.