

PRESS STATEMENT
by
THE STONEHENGE ALLIANCE [1]

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International scandal looms over Stonehenge

The Stonehenge Alliance is shocked by Highways England's continuing plans for major and irreversible harm to the UNESCO Stonehenge World Heritage Site. Formal consultation on its A303 scheme proposals starts on 8 February [2].

The scheme would involve extensive road cuttings gouged through the chalk to accommodate new dual carriageways of motorway standard. The twin portals of a c.3km road tunnel would also be located within the designated archaeological landscape. To the east, a flyover would descend beside the renowned Mesolithic site of Blick Mead. To the west, a major underpass and interchange would be constructed close to possibly the most important group of upstanding prehistoric burial monuments in the country.

However well-designed, the devastating impact of this road engineering would destroy archaeology and deeply scar this iconic landscape and its setting for ever.

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee has condemned a short A303 tunnel, and advised the UK Government to examine options that would not damage the World Heritage Site [3]. That advice has been ignored and loss of World Heritage status for the Stonehenge landscape may result, along with undoubted international disgrace.

Kate Fielden, Vice Chairman of Rescue, says:

“Our Government proposes to spend £1.6bn trashing one World Heritage Site while planning to spend about double that sum restoring another. Stonehenge and the Houses of Parliament should *both* receive best treatment.”

Siôn Elis Williams, Friends of the Earth's Regional Campaign for South West England, says:

“After receiving a red rating by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority [4], it would be the height of irresponsibility to give this project a green light in the Stonehenge World Heritage Site of all places. Instead of building another road that increases traffic [5], money for the road scheme could be invested in a region that is crying out for significant investment in its bus and rail network [6] to increase accessibility, improve air quality and boost sustainable tourism.”

Stonehenge Alliance contd.

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Notes

[1] The Stonehenge 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. <http://stonehengealliance.org.uk/>.

[2] Highways England's consultation on its preferred route through Stonehenge World Heritage Site (8 February–6 April 2018). More information about the scheme can be found here: <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/a303-stonehenge-amesbury-and-berwick-down/>.

[3] UNESCO WH Committee Decision, 6.7.17: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7014>.

[4] Institute for Government, *Whitehall Monitor 2018*
<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/whitehall-monitor-2018/delivering-major-projects>

[5] Campaign to Protect Rural England *The End of the Road? Challenging the road-building consensus*: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4543-the-end-of-the-road-challenging-the-road-building-consensus>.

[6] Peninsula Rail Task Force '*Closing the Gap*' – *The South West Peninsula strategic rail blueprint* <https://peninsularailtaskforce.co.uk/closing-the-gap-the-south-west-peninsula-strategic-rail-blueprint/>.