

Stonehenge road scheme will damage World Heritage Site

Twenty-two experts on Stonehenge are united in their objection to the Stonehenge road tunnel proposed by Highways England. This group of senior archaeologists, among them 13 professors, have carried out internationally important research within the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS).

The group welcomes schemes to improve the setting of Stonehenge and its associated monuments, but objects strongly to the plan to bury the A303 trunk road at Stonehenge in a short tunnel (of just 2.9km). The engineering works at the entrances to the tunnel would lead to the destruction of important archaeological remains, and would damage the integrity of the WHS. The principal objections are that:

- The creation of new sections of dual carriageway and slip roads at each end of the tunnel, within the boundary of the WHS, would set a dangerous precedent by allowing large-scale destructive development within a WHS, threatening its status and integrity.
- The construction of the portal at the west end of the proposed tunnel, and new sections of road in its vicinity, would damage an area with an unusual and nationally important concentration of long barrows (Stone Age burial monuments). The proposed new road would cut across the site of a settlement from the time of Stonehenge's construction, perhaps where the builders of its Bronze-Age phase once lived.
- At the tunnel's eastern end, construction of its portal may affect groundwater conditions which could harm nationally important Mesolithic remains at the site of Blick Mead.

The iconic status of Stonehenge and the international importance of archaeological remains within the surrounding landscape demand the highest standards in heritage protection. It is not good enough to destroy one part of the UK's most well-known World Heritage Site in a misguided attempt to upgrade another part of it. We believe that this short-tunnel scheme for the A303 at Stonehenge would place the UK government in breach of its obligations under the 1972 World Heritage Convention, failing in its duty to protect our cultural heritage for future generations.

Prof Mike Parker Pearson FBA FSA FSA(Scot) MCIfA PhD University College
London

Dr Umberto Albarella PhD University of Sheffield

Dr Mike Allen FSA PhD Allen Environmental Associates

Dr Barry Bishop PhD University of Buckingham

Prof Nick Branch FSA PhD University of Reading

Dr Christopher Chippindale FSA MCifA PhD University of Cambridge

Prof Oliver Craig MSc PhD University of York

Dr David Field FSA PhD Formerly English Heritage

Prof Charles French MCifA PhD University of Cambridge

Prof Vince Gaffney FSA PhD University of Bradford

Paul Garwood MSc University of Birmingham

Prof David Jacques FSA MPhil University of Buckingham

Dr Nicholas James PhD University of Cambridge

Prof Joshua Pollard FSA PhD University of Southampton

Prof Colin Richards PhD University of the Highlands & Islands

Dr David Robinson PhD University of Central Lancashire

Prof Peter Rowley-Conwy FSA FSA(Scot) RSNA PhD University of Durham

Prof Clive Ruggles FSA DPhil University of Leicester

Dr Colin Shell PhD University of Cambridge

Prof Julian Thomas MA PhD FSA University of Manchester

Prof Christopher Tilley PhD University College London

Prof Kate Welham MSc PhD University of Bournemouth