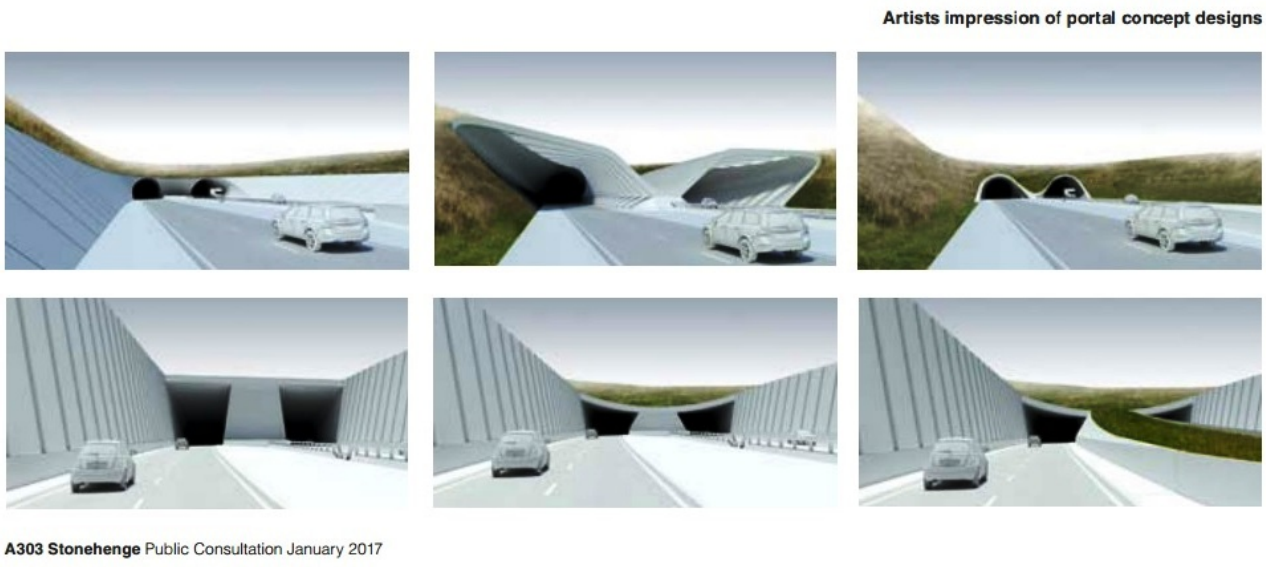
Just 7 weeks to have your say on the short tunnel!



First of three reactions to Highways England proposals for a short tunnel

Reaction #1: Consultation

The A303 plans were published on Highways England's consultation page on 12 January with booklets, helpful fact sheets, impressive videos taking you along the routes, technical documents and some very large file maps. For all that material there is but one option proposed for the World Heritage Site (WHS): the short tunnel of 1.8 miles (2.9km) across the 3.4 mile-wide (5.4km) UNESCO-designated landscape, with a choice of a northern or southern bypass for Winterbourne Stoke village west of the WHS, at a total cost of c.£1.4bn.



Highways England consultation: option for portal concepts within Stonehenge World Heritage Site

Our initial reaction has been widely publicised:

> *The Alliance does not advocate new road building at Stonehenge but accepts the need to improve the tranquillity and appearance of the WHS and its setting. If Government insists on widening the A303 by means of a tunnel across the WHS it must be sufficiently long to avoid any further damage to the WHS and its setting. This scheme that is now being proposed is a major disaster for the WHS.*

We are considering the detail and its implications and will share our thoughts with our followers shortly. Meanwhile, our reaction to the consultation process is set out below.

Consultation shortcomings

- Highways England has been instructed by its client, the UK Government, only to design and develop a short tunnel. A longer, more appropriate tunnel was apparently "unaffordable" and therefore not pursued.
- The consultation on one of this country's most complex road schemes, with major impacts, extends to **5 March 2017**. A seven-week period is not long enough for local

organisations to consult with their members,or for local residents, traders and others to fully understand the scheme's implications.

- Owing to the international significance of the WHS, a myriad of individuals, professional bodies and specialist interest groups and organisations and their members, including those of the National Trust and English Heritage, ought to be fully informed and have their say – both in the UK and abroad. Nevertheless, a final decision will be given in summer 2017.
- The published programme of public involvement does not include stakeholder events outside South Wiltshire other than one in London for members of the Society of Antiquaries.

Location	Date	Time
The Manor Barn High St, Winterbourne Stoke, SP3 4SZ	Saturday 14 January 2017	11am to 5pm
Antrobus House 39 Salisbury Rd, Amesbury, SP4 7HH	Wednesday 18 January 2017	2pm to 8pm
Shrewton Village Hall Recreation Ground, The Hollow, Shrewton, SP3 4JY	Friday 20 January 2017	5pm to 9pm
Avon Valley College Recreation Rd, Durrington, SP4 8HH	Saturday 21 January 2017	11am to 5pm
Larkhill Primary School Wilson Road, Larkhill, SP4 8QB	Tuesday 24 January 2017	5pm to 9pm
The Manor Barn High St, Winterbourne Stoke, SP3 4SZ	Friday 27 January 2017	2pm to 8pm
The Guildhall, Salisbury The Market Place, Salisbury, SP1 1JH	Saturday 28 January 2017	11am to 5pm
Grove Hall The Grove Building, Church Street, Mere, BA12 6DS	Saturday 4 February 2017	11am to 5pm
Society of Antiquaries Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BE	Monday 6 February 2017	2pm to 8pm
Antrobus House 39 Salisbury Rd, Amesbury, SP4 7HH	Wednesday 8 February 2017	2pm to 8pm

- Why not hold exhibitions in Hampshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall? Should not visitors to the UK be consulted? The Stonehenge Alliance has followers from all over the world. Currently, our top 10 non-UK followers who would wish to have a say are from Australia, Canada, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Netherlands, Serbia and Spain. Should there not

be events at our premier tourist site at the Visitor Centre? At Heathrow Airport? St Pancras International? Via tour operators or online events?

So is this single short tunnel option a “done deal” as one of our followers recently posted or a “stitch up” as another blogged?

A common view already expressed, see for instance BBC Points West, is that this scheme is an unjustified extravagance when lack of funding is crippling the NHS. Many others do not want to be deprived of a view as they pass the monument.

The task of participating in consultation about the problems and possible solutions is enormous and we need to make the best of the current opportunity. A good start is that concerned people are writing to UNESCO on our website and continue to sign our petition which currently stands at over 23,500 signatures. Typical comments on the petition site are

> *“This site is of national and global importance. We need to cherish and protect it for future generations.” “Because risking damage to such an important historical site to make car journeys quicker and easier is ridiculous. There are other routes and other ways to travel.” “Stop this madness now!!” “The tunnel would be a travesty; we would in years to come be labelled as the generation who vandalised the country’s heritage. That this work is even being considered is deeply shameful.”*



George McDonic, MBE, BL, DIPLTP, DPA, FFB Outside Department of Culture, Media and Sport following a discussion with officials last June.

Our Chairman, George McDonic, said:

> *"The recent archaeological discoveries around Stonehenge underline the obvious importance of safeguarding the whole of this ancient landscape for future generations. We have been greatly encouraged by worldwide support for our campaign."*

It is vital that as many people as possible participate, attend an event, read through the documents and complete the form before **5 March**. We will continue to inform through future blogs.

What can you do to help?

1. **Please respond to the A303 Stonehenge consultation here** by 5 March 2017. For further information, maps and documentation see Highways England's consultation page here.

2. **If you haven't already done so, please, sign our petition**

and encourage your friends to do the same.

> ***KINDLY NOTE:*** *Since setting up the petition, we have learned more about the recently discovered Mesolithic site at Blick Mead. This has led us to consider that if Government insists on a tunnel under the WHS, it must be long enough to avoid the WHS and its setting altogether. This would be in line with planning policy and World Heritage Convention safeguards. We cannot change the wording but our intention to avoid further damage is clearly stated in the petition.*

3. **Please write to UNESCO** and, if possible, to the **National Trust** as well, expressing your concerns. Editing your responses in your own words will be more effective.

Follow our campaign on Facebook, Twitter and our blog.

Reaction #2: A303 tunnel impacts on archaeology and ecology

Reaction #3: Transport and planning

WRITE TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

Some unanswered questions about Stonehenge and the A303



Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

Baroness Moulsecoomb asked three written Parliamentary questions about the Stonehenge tunnel plan and safeguarding World Heritage Sites in October 2016. The answers given on behalf of the Departments for Transport (DfT) and Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) appeared not to address the questions directly.

The questions and answers follow with Stonehenge Alliance (SA) comments in italics beneath:

Q **HL2027** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether Highways England plan to investigate using (1) a tunnel which avoids visual and physical damage to the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site and its setting, and (2) traffic management measures to discourage travel at peak times, for the A303 at Stonehenge.

A Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon for the DfT answered on 14 October:

Highways England are considering a number of options for improving the section of the A303 close to Stonehenge, which include a variety of tunnel options. The results will be

available for consideration at a public consultation to be held in 2017. However, they do not have any plans for the historic site at Avebury, as the A4361 is the responsibility of Wiltshire Council.

Highways England are committed to encourage the public to plan their journeys in advance and to consider using England's motorways and major trunk roads of[f] peak hours.

SA *In answering for the Government, Lord Ahmad omitted to say whether Highways England is investigating an A303 tunnel that would avoid the World Heritage Site (WHS) at Stonehenge; nor did he refer to traffic management measures for the A303 at Stonehenge.*

Q **HL2028** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking towards adopting the recommendation of the Joint World Heritage/ICOMOS Advisory Committee on Stonehenge that the asset life design of the A303 widening scheme should "incorporate asset resilience and future proofing in design".

A Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon again replied for the DfT on 14 October:

The Government has proactively sought the views of the Joint World Heritage/the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Advisory Committee and welcomes its recommendations.

Highways England are supported by Historic England to consider the asset resilience and future proofing for their proposals for this section of the A303. This will be presented at a public consultation on proposed route options in 2017.

SA *It is difficult to see how the expertise of Historic England is relevant here, except insofar as any road improvement ought to be governed by the paramount considerations of the WHS and its protection. It seems that we shall have to wait to see what is being undertaken in order to*

incorporate asset resilience and future proofing in road widening design.

Q **HL2029** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to enact primary legislation ensuring that UK World Heritage Sites receive statutory protection from inappropriate planning consents.

A Lord Ashton of Hyde answered for the DCMS on 11 October 2016:

Where appropriate UK World Heritage sites are afforded statutory protection through designation of specific assets through existing legislation. Other aspects of World Heritage Sites are key material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

SA *The Government didn't answer this question. It is true that a considerable number of our historic and natural assets are protected under UK legislation. These include scheduled monuments, grade I listed buildings and certain designated areas such as Special Areas of Conservation. Such designations do not, however, give statutory protection to extensive WHSs such as Stonehenge and Avebury in their entirety, although legally protected assets such as scheduled monuments may lie within them.*

What seems to have been overlooked here is that WHSs themselves are considered by the Government – along with scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens – to be "designated heritage assets of the highest significance" for which "substantial harm or loss . . . should be wholly exceptional" (National Planning Policy Framework, para. 132).*

Lord Ashton's reply infers that only "aspects" of WHSs are key material considerations in determining planning applications: Government planning policy guidance and the World Heritage

Convention clearly demand a great deal more.

While ambiguities remain over what should be protected, it seems obvious to us that ***statutory protection*** *for UK WHSs would remove much confusion and ensure the proper safeguarding of WHSs in line with World Heritage Convention obligations. Our WHSs, despite being protected under international law, are highly vulnerable to the ambitions of developers. International law, unlike UK legislation, may be disregarded in the UK.*

Must the car dominate Stonehenge 30 years on?



Traffic on the A303 is seasonal and cuts across the Stonehenge World Heritage Site.
Copyright: Stonehenge Alliance

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the designation of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site, now under threat from major A303 Trunk road widening in an attempt to reduce congestion and journey times. Stephen Joseph, Director of Campaign for Better Transport reflects on other 30 year anniversaries with lessons for the A303 by Stonehenge.

Recent weeks have seen a couple of other 30 year anniversaries, that the media have more or less ignored, but which had profound consequences for the way we travel. First, there was 29 October 1986. This was the day the M25 opened in its entirety. The then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher performed the opening – there are pictures of her on an otherwise deserted motorway. It was a practical illustration of the "Great Car Economy" that she praised in later speeches. It had taken over a decade of planning and construction, and the M25's origins went back much further, to post war planning for London and the surrounding South East. Latterly, it was one of three Ringways, orbital motorways around or in London, and the only one that was finished. They were supposed to solve London congestion and respond to rising car ownership and use. The same thinking led on to a 1989 Government road building programme, described by the then Transport Secretary as "the biggest road programme since the Romans".



Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher dances across an empty M25 before its official opening. 29 October 1986. Photo: BT.com

But in fact, the M25 became a by-word for traffic jams. Rather than acting as the “bypass for London”, it generated lots of local traffic, spurred in part by developments around it, like the Lakeside Shopping Centre in Essex. Extra lanes were added in the 1990s, but traffic, and therefore congestion, increased with those extra lanes. It became an illustration of a truth, increasingly accepted during the 1990s and 2000s, that it’s not possible to build your way out of congestion, because road building simply generates traffic.

When the Labour Government came to power in 1997, they scaled back the road programme and commissioned a series of “multi-modal studies”, including one for the M25. The main consultant on that study described widening the M25 as being like “digging a ditch in a bog” and recommended forms of road charging or traffic restraint instead. An earlier road-widening and short tunnel scheme at Stonehenge was thankfully withdrawn in 2007 largely owing to cost.



“Widening the M25 is like digging a ditch in a bog”

All of these lessons appear to have been forgotten. We are back to an era of road building, with a universal belief that it’s possible to meet demand for road use by building and widening roads. The “predict and provide” forecasts and models that justify road building, based on extrapolating past trends, are still in place, despite noises about moving to a range of scenarios instead. There is serious talk of double-decking the M25 to cope with future traffic growth, especially around Heathrow with a third runway. Issues of air quality and climate change are ignored, because of a belief (not founded in any serious research) that all cars by 2040 will be electric, and possibly driverless too.

Meanwhile, on 30 October 1986, bus services outside London were deregulated. This was supposed to reverse previous

declines in bus use – in fact if anything it accelerated it. “Bus wars” broke out on various city streets, as rival companies raced to pick up passengers. Integrated ticketing and low fares policies, like that adopted by South Yorkshire Council, disappeared. Gradually the industry consolidated, and indeed has invested in new buses and on upgrading the offer on key routes. However, the split between “commercial” profitable routes and council-subsidised unprofitable routes and operations at evenings and weekends – effectively a prohibition of cross-subsidy – has, with local council cuts, seen a near-disappearance of socially necessary services in some areas.

So these weeks in 1986 saw two major events that together massively increased people’s dependence on cars as the only way to get around. Buses became less useful and attractive as an alternative to cars for many journeys, and Government investment became focused on roads, especially for local transport outside the big cities. These were combined with a deregulation of the planning system – Nicholas Ridley, the architect of bus deregulation as Transport Secretary, moved on to the Department of the Environment and allowed through on appeal a large number of car-based out of town shopping centres and housing developments. The abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London Council, also in 1986, further weakened attempts to link land use and transport planning.

Some of this is now being reversed. The creation of an elected Mayor for London, with Transport for London as a co-ordinating and planning authority, is seen generally as a success, and next year there will be elections for mayors for some other city regions, like Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Merseyside. A new Bus Services Bill will give these mayors powers to franchise bus services in their area, reversing bus deregulation, and these powers may be available to others, alongside new and stronger partnerships between councils and

bus operators. New sub-national transport bodies like Transport for the North are being created too.

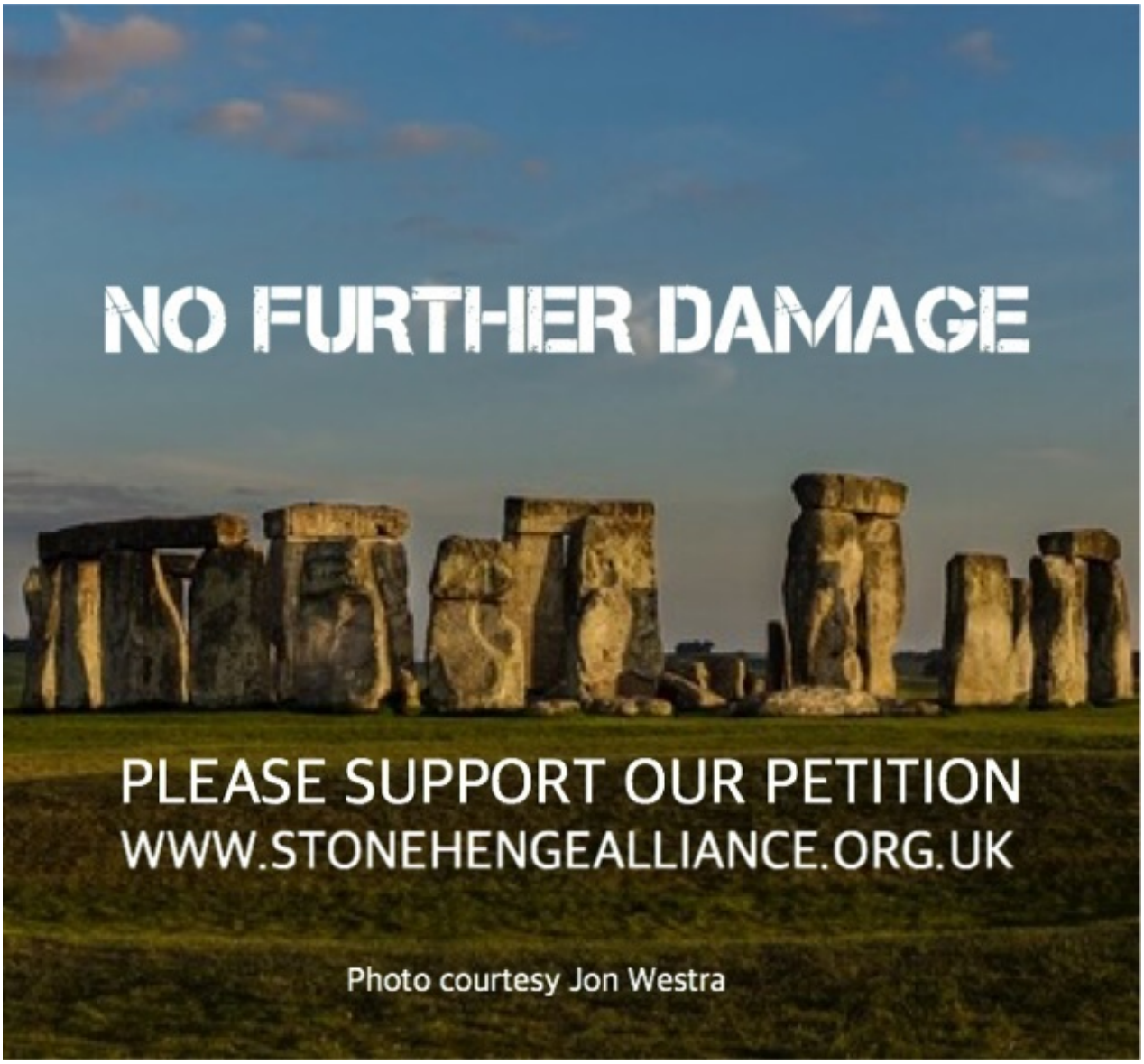
[Blogs by Campaign for Better Transport]



Stuck in traffic on M25 in August 2016 Copyright: Stonehenge Alliance

Until the lessons from the M25 are fully learned, and there is

a framework for providing and investing in alternatives to car travel rather than simply adding lanes to roads and tackling “pinch points” (which usually just moves traffic jams elsewhere), we will continue to be suffering from the 1986 transport and planning deregulation, and the congestion, pollution and car dependence that has brought. A lesson well worth bearing in mind before road widening damages the Stonehenge landscape – and proves to have been unnecessary within another 30 years.



Please take action. Please link here to sign our petition. Thank you.

Short video created for campaign



Link here to view campaign video created by Tom Holland

Our campaign to stop further damage to the landscape of Stonehenge with a short tunnel has been given a fantastic boost by our supporter Tom Holland. He urges viewers to support the Stonehenge Alliance,* saying

> *"Moving the A303 into a tunnel would be a catastrophe. An act of vandalism that would shame our country and our generation."*

The UK Government's road building plans are at a pre-consultation stage but Highways England has written to Stonehenge Alliance saying that their working assumption is to build a 2.9 km (1.8 mile) tunnel. The location of tunnel portals is not yet confirmed but the tunnel would lie within

the World Heritage Site. This is the time to influence Government. Please take action here, now.

* Tom Holland's tweeted video launch.

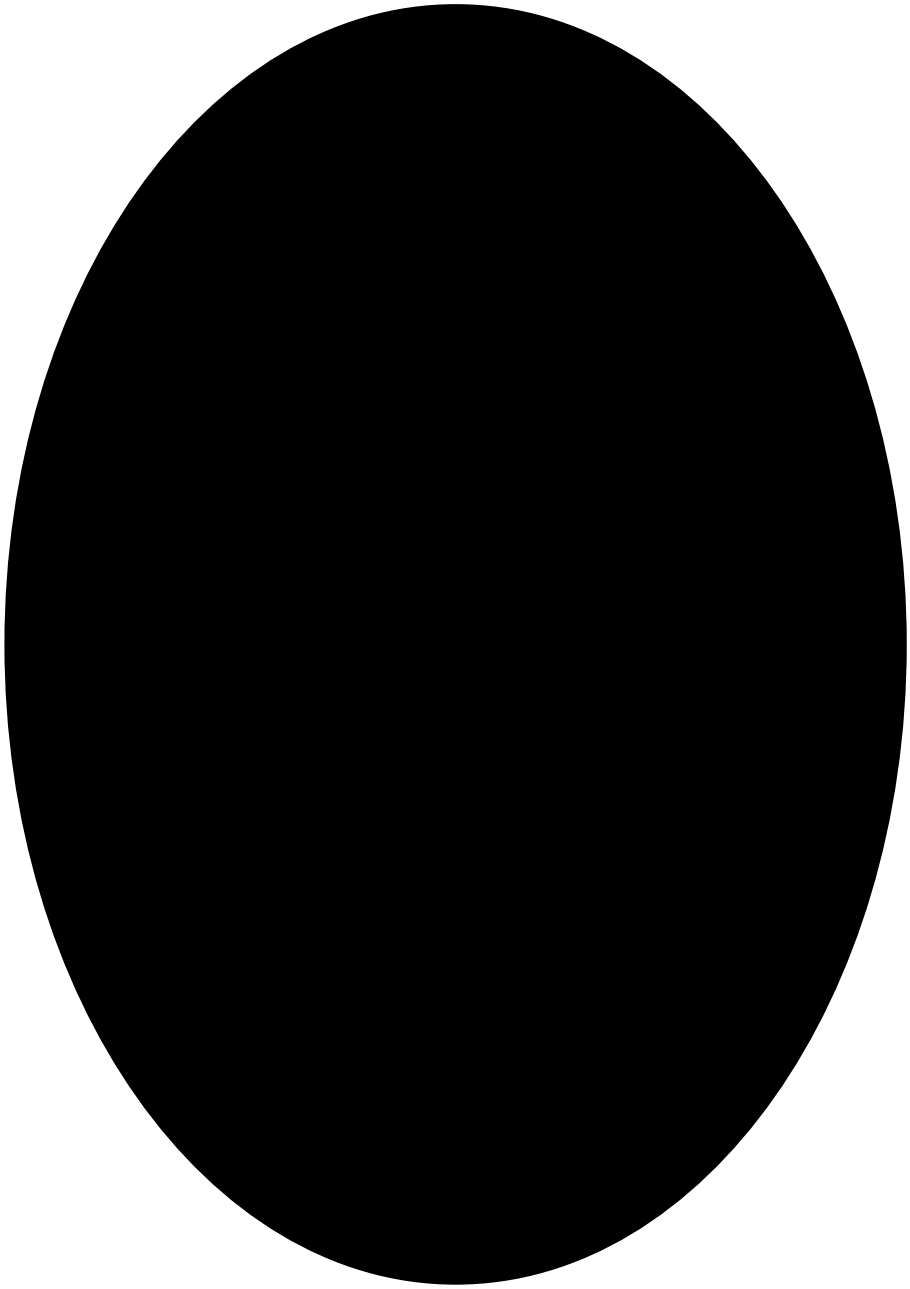
Who is Tom Holland?

New campaign leaflet launched

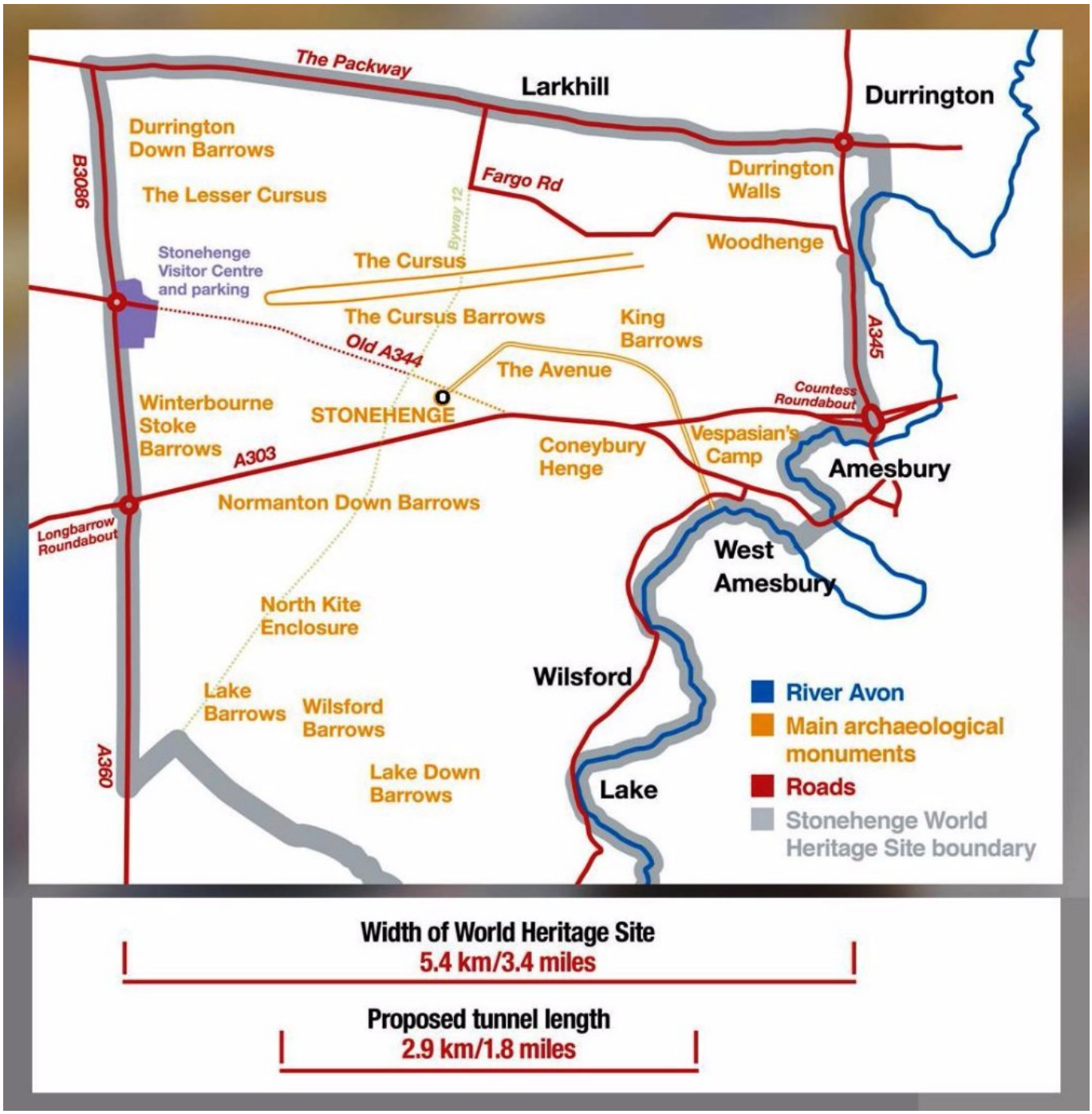


Author, historian and broadcaster Tom Holland launches new campaign leaflet.

Our new campaign leaflet is now in circulation. Designed professionally, it is eye-catching and delivers the clear message that the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) is still under threat from major road building, including construction of a short twin-bored tunnel.



A map of the WHS shows its boundaries, main roads, modern boundary settlements and principal known archaeological monuments.



The scales below the map compare the width of the WHS with the length of a 1.8 mile (2.9km) tunnel, demonstrating that wherever the tunnel might be placed, twin portals would be located well short of the WHS boundary.



An image of tunnel portals at Hindhead provides an example of the visual and physical impacts of such features. At Stonehenge, the deep tunnel cuttings, along with lighting and street furniture, new dual carriageway, and grade separated junctions on the WHS boundaries would be hugely damaging and – in our view – unacceptable in what UNESCO has designated as a "landscape without parallel" for its Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology.

Why our campaign must continue

Despite assertions that the road tunnel announced by the Government in December 2014 will be "at least 1.8 miles (2.9km) long", so far the UK Government has not revised the tunnel length and road dualling for which funding was

allocated. It's agent, Highways England, refers to the 1.8 mile tunnel as its "working assumption". This brings seriously into question the options and process for consultation on A303 road widening programmed for early 2017.

Evaluation trenches encounter prehistoric archaeology

Meanwhile, archaeological evaluation trenches have been dug within the WHS, presumably in the hope of finding an optimum route for a tunnel. One such group of trenches was dug on the line of the midwinter solstice from Stonehenge. Evaluation trenches elsewhere have encountered prehistoric archaeology.

Government has an obligation under the World Heritage Convention to protect the WHS but in further damaging the site with such a road scheme it would seriously fail in that duty and run the risk of the site being removed from the World Heritage List.

We are continually learning more about the interconnectedness over time of the landscape and the monuments and sites within it. Geophysical surveys during the last few decades reveal that the WHS is rich in archaeological sites, many of which have not yet been investigated and are prehistoric in origin.

In the words of our supporter, historian and broadcaster Tom Holland,

> *Stonehenge is about so much more than Stonehenge. Please don't let the Government desecrate our most significant prehistoric landscape.*

Please carry on signing and letter writing

We hope that you will sign our petition and tell your friends and colleagues about it.

To order copies of the campaign leaflet please email stand.up.for.stonehenge@gmail.com with your name, address and

post code indicating the quantity you might be able to distribute.