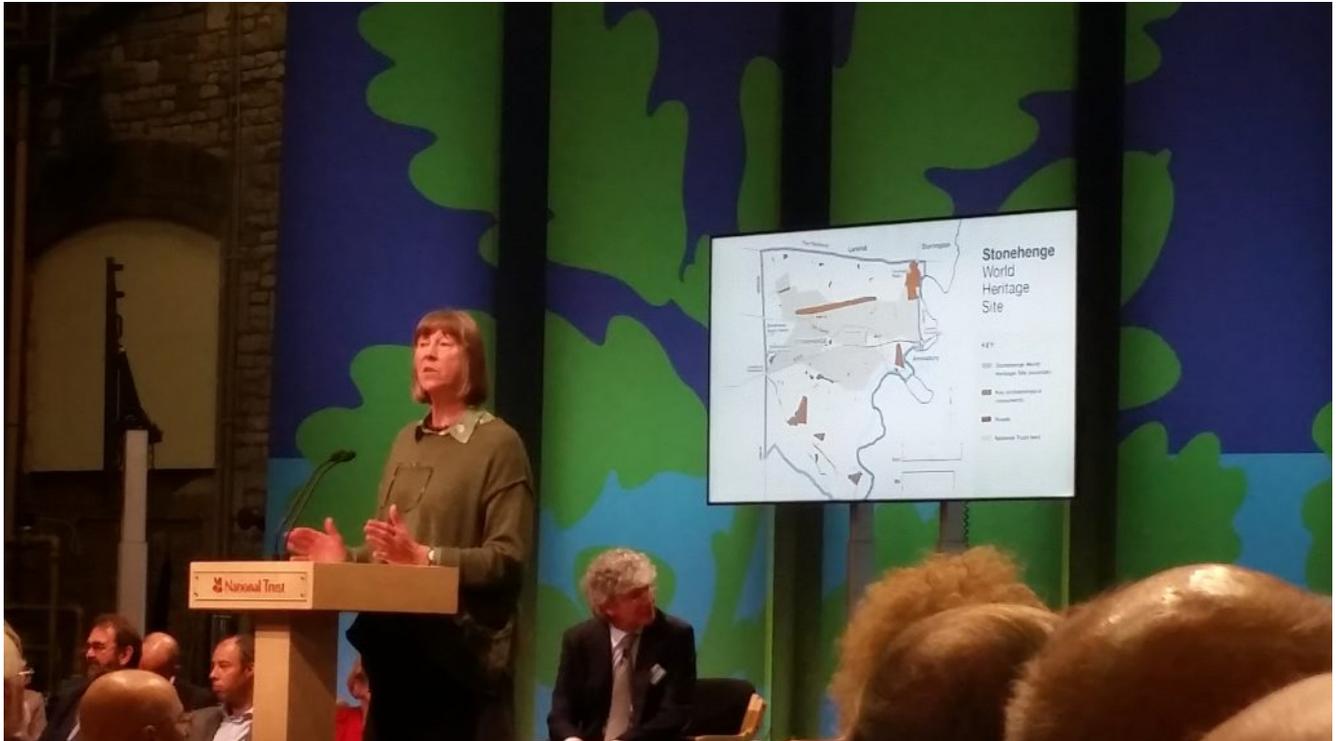


National Trust votes against its founding principles



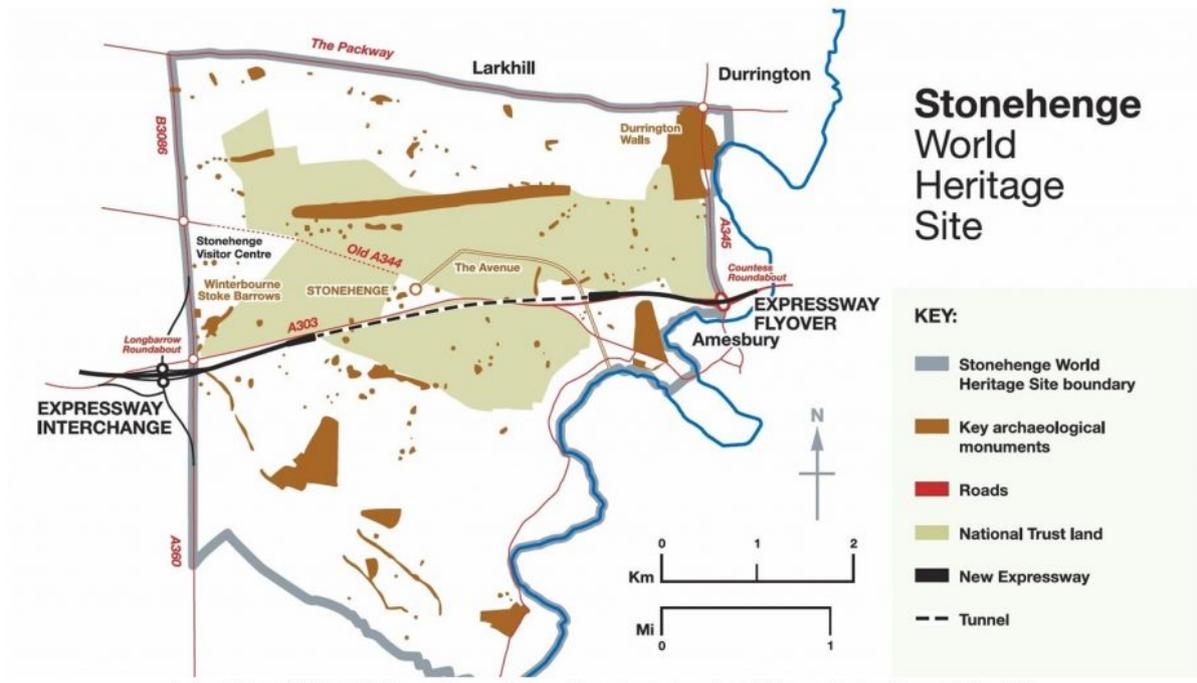
Proposer, Dr Kate Fielden, asks the Trust to stick to its founding principles and think very carefully before lending its name to a road scheme that will irrevocably damage a World Heritage Site.

Last Saturday, the [National Trust AGM debated](#) a motion about the National Trust's involvement in the design and construction of the Stonehenge tunnel and above ground sections of the A303 Expressway.

The members' motion asked the Trustees to reaffirm its founding purposes to protect special places; to respect World Heritage Convention obligations and to acknowledge that any scheme that involves surface engineering across any part of the WHS will damage the WHS, in the Trust's own phrase "For Ever".

Members voted by a fairly narrow margin to maintain the

Trust's support for Highways England's preferred route: a short tunnel past the Stones with about a mile of new dual carriageway through the World Heritage Site.



National Trust AGM 2017: Schematic map of the preferred route, based on Highways England Route Option 1ND
See p.4 of <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/cip/a303-stonehenge/results/sar-volume-5.pdf>

Map showing Government's preferred route for the new A303 Expressway through the World Heritage Site (WHS), including a 2.9km tunnel. Land owned by the National Trust within the WHS is coloured green. Many monuments (shown in brown) are on land south of the A303 managed by farmers and a nature reserve for statutorily protected birds.

While the Trust won the vote, it wasn't by a convincing margin. Over 42% of those who voted (excluding abstentions) wanted the Trust to review its position. If the 11,089 abstentions were included, fewer than 50% were against the Resolution. This must give the Trust pause for thought.

You can view the results of the voting papers submitted by 1.3% of the Trust's five million members that participated

[here](#).

The votes cast against the motion by the Chairman as proxy ensured the motion was lost. Members had not been made aware in the Trust's written response to the motion that UNESCO's World Heritage Committee had urged the Government to look at further options for widening the A303 "with a view to avoiding impacts on the OUV [outstanding universal value] of the property", including a bypass and "longer tunnel options to remove dual carriageway cuttings from the property".

Worryingly, Highways England is ploughing on regardless, ignoring the advice of [UNESCO](#)

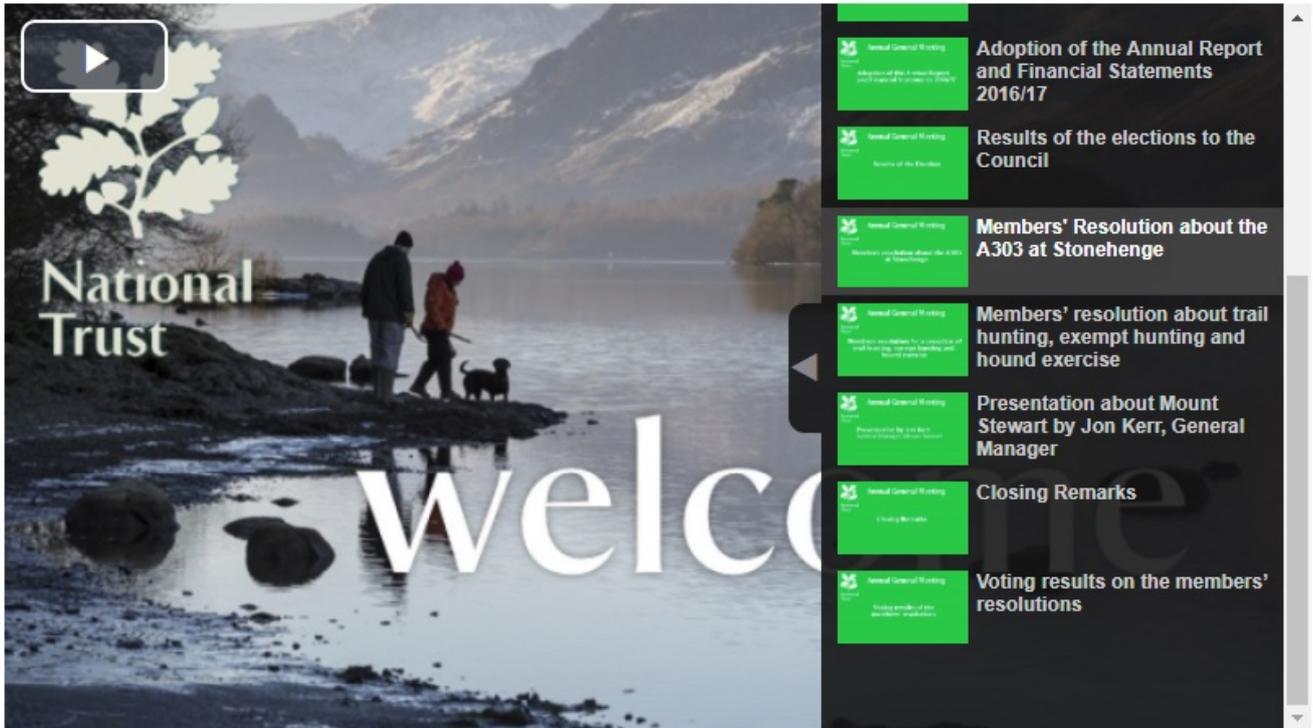
Watch this space!

WATCH THE DEBATE

Click on image to view the 46 minute debate. 11 clips and highlights posted below.



National
Trust



AGM 2017

Kate Fielden proposes the motion

Tom Holland seconds the motion

Carys Swanwick opposes the motion

Tom Oliver quotes from the National Trust's own guidance

A young resident speaks up for the next generation

Kate Freeman asks whether independent advice about the longevity of the scheme had been sought

Ian Wilson, Assistant Director responsible for the A303 Stonehenge scheme, replies on behalf of the National Trust

David Wilson suggests strengthening the National Trust's negotiating hand

Cate LeGrice Mack points out strategic shortcomings

Professor Carys Swanwick concludes the case against on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Kate Fielden makes final comments and appeals to members to vote for the motion

Follow Save Stonehenge campaign and sign up to our blogs in the right hand column.

Dear Candidate, I have 3 questions for you...

An A level history student from near Stonehenge who has [signed our petition](#) was filmed this week asking all UK candidates to protect the Stonehenge World Heritage Site from further damage, rightly pointing out that

"This is my heritage! What message will you send to future generations?"

The three questions asked, that you might like to pose as well, are:

“If elected will you

- 1. Strongly oppose any further damage to the Stonehenge WHS, especially from road building?*
- 2. Seek to strengthen protection for our WHSs through legislation?*
- 3. Argue for less damaging alternatives to road building*

The General Election is your opportunity to quiz candidates and influence the decision not to turn the A303 through Stonehenge World Heritage Site into a 4-lane ‘expressway’ within one of the world’s most famous prehistoric landscapes.

The second question highlights the weakness of World Heritage Sites in the UK, which have no legal protection, unlike National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Look out for hustings advertised in local papers and radio stations as well as their Facebook and Twitter feeds. They are not always well advertised so check out [this crowd-sourced list of local hustings](#) and search by constituency name.

All your candidates can be found by [post code or constituency on the BBC election site here](#).

Let us know how you get on!

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 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.

Stonehenge and the A303: Westminster speaks

Stonehenge and the A303 have been raised twice in Westminster recently. Of greatest concern was a debate on *Road Routes to the South West* in Westminster Hall on 1st March ([Hansard Col. 261WHff](#)) giving an opportunity for local MPs to promote predictable local interests. MPs demanded reassurance and action on the Government's proposed expressway to the West Country, notwithstanding the intermittent nature of traffic congestion, unequal allocation of funds, ambitions for a second railway to the South West and the likelihood of moving traffic pinch points elsewhere. Upgrading the A303 was largely seen as more important than proper protection of landscape and heritage.

Richard Burden, Labour Shadow Minister for Transport (and Westminster Forum chairman on 11 February, see *below*) proved more pertinent in addressing Roads Minister Andrew Jones:



*Shadow
Minister of
Transport,
Richard
Burden:
concerns for
integrity of
the
archaeological
site*

“The status quo pleases no one and it is necessary that we find a solution to the A303 and to Stonehenge. . . . can the Minister confirm when he expects a costed and timetabled set of options for the road?”

In the meantime, has he asked Highways England to evaluate short-term and medium-term options to improve traffic flow and alleviate congestion?”

Also, can he satisfy concerns that the current front-runner—a 2.9 km tunnel—would protect the integrity of the archaeological site, as required by article 4 of the world heritage convention? And in the event that the Government cannot satisfy the objective of providing a fully costed and timetabled proposal by 2017, what would he do?” (Cols. 272–73WH)

Roads Minister Andrew Jones, in response, said:



*Minister of
Transport,
Andrew Jones:
not renegeing
on commitment
to build a 1.8
mile tunnel*

“It is always appropriate to consider options broadly to ensure that the scheme is absolutely the right one, but there is no doubt whatsoever here; we are committed to delivering a 1.8-mile tunnel at Stonehenge. Our objective is to be able to stand at the stones and not see cars. The tunnel will transform the experience of that important part of our national heritage, and at the same time remove an environmental problem and a traffic problem. We should not, however, confuse the development consent order process requirement to show that different options have been exhausted with renegeing upon our commitment. That commitment is strong, and we are working on it closely with environmental and heritage groups.

We intend to start the process with three major improvements as part of the A303-A30-A358-corridor package of commitments. The £2 billion budget, which is for only those commitments—it is not the overall budget for the south-west—will help to deliver much-needed resilience for the region. Part of that work has to address the iconic and historically important site of Stonehenge. . . . We will build a tunnel at least 1.8 miles in length, to preserve the world heritage site at

Stonehenge. . . .

The scheme has strong support from the National Trust and English Heritage; I have met with them at the stones and discussed the issue with them. On timing, there will be a formal consultation on the scheme early next year. It will go through the development consent order process—part of the planning process—in 2018. We would expect to start works on the scheme in early 2020. We have to get that right, but I hope that that timing provides some comfort.” (Cols. 274–75WH)

The Minister not only failed to confirm that the Government intends to protect the integrity of the World Heritage Site but also indicated its intention to press ahead with a scheme that would only protect the view from Stonehenge and the interests of major local landowners and businesses. This brings seriously into question the credibility and status of the consultation process on options for widening the A303 at Stonehenge.

The subject of the A303 had been raised earlier, on 11 February, at a Westminster Energy, Environment and Transport Forum seminar entitled *Priorities for the road network in England – investment, innovation and regional development*.

The seminar was chaired by Shadow Transport Minister Richard Burden, MP and Baroness Kramer, House of Lords Liberal Democrat Principal Spokesperson on the Treasury and former Transport Minister.

Speakers included representatives of the Department for Transport, Highways England, the RAC, the Local Government Association, the Freight Transport Association, Transport Focus, and engineers Arup. Notable points of interest were areas of innovation and so-called ‘smart transport’, already proving effective in reducing congestion on motorways and air pollution and set to reduce them further in the future.

Integrated transport in Greater Manchester provided an illuminating case study.

It is pleasing to note that Richard Burden in his questions addressed to Andrew Jones on 1 March, above, reflected many of our own concerns expressed by a representative of RESCUE present at the seminar, in a short [article](#) appended to the seminar transcript .