

THE STONEHENGE ALLIANCE [1]

A303 Stonehenge Tunnel petition closes in on 150,000 signatures

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, 11 November, 2020

In advance of a decision on the Stonehenge tunnel scheme, expected on Friday 13 November, Ministers have been informed that the number of signatures to the Alliance's petition is close to 150,000 [2]. The petition, addressed to the Secretaries of State for Transport and Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, asks for no further damage to be done to the surroundings of the famous Stones.

Some 50,000 petition signatures were presented to Ministers last February. The huge increase since then follows an important new find of massive pits around Durrington Walls.[3] It also represents many thousands wanting to safeguard our heritage for future generations. They urge the UK Government not to vandalise the Stonehenge landscape with dual carriageway cuttings, tunnel portals and highway interchanges – all part of the A303 Stonehenge road widening scheme.

Signatories come from 147 countries, including the UK, underlining the international concern expressed by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee which opposes the road in its current form.[4]

Expert evidence on behalf of the Alliance presented to the formal Examination of the road scheme in 2019 reveals, in addition to its adverse impacts on the heritage, the scheme's poor value for money and disregard for climate change.[5]

Tom Holland, Alliance President, says:

"Even at the best of times, blowing £2 billion on a white elephant of a tunnel that will desecrate a World Heritage Site while doing very little to speed up traffic along the A303 might have seemed sub-optimal. Now, in the context of all the eye-watering sums that the Government has been spending this year, it would be insanity. I pray, for the sake of the public purse as well as for Britain's most precious prehistoric landscape, that they see sense."

Michael Wood, historian, broadcaster and writer, says:

"This is Britain's greatest historical landscape. The whole point should be to preserve and enhance our understanding and enjoyment of this wonderful place. That goal cannot be driven by arguments over traffic flow. Especially now. Think again!"

Kate Freeman, for Friends of the Earth South West says:

"The impact on the iconic Stonehenge landscape – and on climate – of building this road would be disastrous. Future generations would be appalled at the way we had squandered their heritage and environment. At a time of climate crisis, expressways like this are not something ministers should be considering."

Contacts

Tom Holland, Stonehenge Alliance President.

Michael Wood.

Kate Freeman, Friends of the Earth South West.

Kate Fielden, Stonehenge Alliance Hon. Sec.; Vice-chairman, Rescue.

Notes

1. The Stonehenge Alliance supporter-organisations are: Ancient Sacred Landscape Network; Campaign to Protect Rural England; Friends of the Earth; Rescue, the British Archaeological Trust; and Transport Action Network. <https://stonehengealliance.org.uk/>
2. For petition, which is steadily increasing, please see <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-stonehenge-world-heritage-site> (38 Degrees – UK only) and <https://www.change.org/p/save-stonehenge-world-heritage-site-to-the-secretary-of-state-for-transport-secretary-of-state-for-culture-media-sport-uk-government-save-stonehenge-world-heritage-site> (Change.Org. – UK and abroad). See also: <https://stonehengealliance.org.uk/our-campaign/petition/>.
3. See V. Gaffney et al., <https://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue55/4/full-text.html>.
4. UNESCO World Heritage Committee Decision 2019: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7543/>
5. The Stonehenge Alliance's Summary of Case at the 2019 Examination into the road Scheme can be accessed via the National Infrastructure Planning A303 Stonehenge website at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010025/TR010025-001707-Stonehenge%20Alliance%20-%20Summary%20of%20Case.pdf>.

For image of three generations at Stonehenge ready to send boxes of petition signatures, please see: <https://stonehengealliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/X1FA8761-scaled.jpg>