

Save Stonehenge World Heritage Site [1]

Saturday, 27 February 2021

High Court date for Stonehenge road decision

Save Stonehenge WHS Ltd. (SSWHS) heard this week [2] that a three-day High Court hearing will take place from 23rd to 25th June. SSWHS is challenging Transport Secretary Grant Shapps' decision to go ahead with the highly damaging A303 dual carriageway through the World Heritage Site (WHS).[3] His decision was taken against the advice of a panel of five senior Planning Inspectors (the Examining Authority) who formally examined the scheme in 2019.[4]

The Inspectors considered that the scheme's benefits "*would not outweigh the harm arising from the excavation of a deep, wide cutting and other engineering works, within the WHS and its setting, of a scale and nature not previously experienced historically in this 'landscape without parallel'*". [5] UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, who gave the WHS its international designation in 1986, has also condemned the road scheme.[6]

The complexity of the case has obliged SSWHS to raise its funding target for the legal challenge, including the three-day hearing. [7]

Kate Fielden, Hon Secretary the Stonehenge Alliance and SSWHS, said:

"Having a date for the court hearing gives us something to aim for in preparing for our challenge to Grant Shapps' outrageous decision. We urge our supporters to help us to continue the fight to save our famous World Heritage Site from this appalling scheme. There can be no more iconic symbol of the global heritage of mankind than Stonehenge and we have a duty to safeguard it for future generations."

Notes

1. SSWHS is a company established by individual Stonehenge Alliance supporters to take forward the legal action. The Stonehenge Alliance supporter-organisations are: Ancient Sacred Landscape Network; CPRE; FoE; Rescue, the British Archaeological Trust; and Transport Action Network.
2. The date was confirmed on Wednesday (24th Feb) after a procedural hearing was held to plan for the main hearing on Tuesday (23rd Feb)
3. The [Transport Secretary's decision](#) can be found on the [Planning Inspectorate website](#).
4. The Examining Authority's [Report and recommendations](#) are seen here.
5. For [reasons](#) for the Examining Authority's recommendation to refuse the scheme, and a [timeline of events](#) see the [Stonehenge Alliance website](#).
6. [UNESCO World Heritage Committee Decision 2019](#) .
7. The crowdfunder is on the [CrowdJustice website](#).
8. SSWHS is being represented by Rowan Smith of Leigh Day LLP (solicitors) and David Wolfe Q.C. of Matrix Chambers and Victoria Hutton of 39 Essex Chambers.