

Stonehenge Alliance Press Release

Stonehenge Alliances petitions UNESCO in Paris

Embargoed: Tuesday, 5 September, 2023

Leading members of the Stonehenge Alliance [1] and Save Stonehenge World Heritage Site (SSWHS) [2] are travelling on Eurostar to Paris today to present UNESCO with a copy of a 225,000 signature petition, from 147 countries, [3] calling on the UK Government not to build its damaging road scheme through the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) [4]. This comes ahead of the World Heritage Committee meeting in Riyadh the following week [5].

The Stonehenge Alliance is keen to understand UNESCO's reaction to UK Government's approval of the road scheme, despite UNESCO's calls for a decision to be delayed and the scheme to be amended [6]. It is likely that if the scheme goes ahead unaltered, the WHS could be de-listed.

John Adams, chair of the Stonehenge Alliance and one of the 3 directors of SSWHS, said:

"We want UNESCO to appreciate that its opposition to this highly damaging road scheme through Stonehenge World Heritage Site is strongly supported by hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. We urge it to remain strong in the face of the UK Government's indifference to this iconic British heritage site."

Chris Todd, director of Transport Action Network (TAN), a member of the Stonehenge Alliance and a director of SSSWHS said:

"If this road scheme goes ahead, Stonehenge could lose its World Heritage Site status. This would be an international embarrassment for the UK. Only three World Heritage Sites have ever been delisted since the signing of the World Heritage Convention in 1972 [7]. The most recent was Liverpool in 2021, which also happened under this Government's watch. To lose one WHS is bad enough, but to lose two would signify a failure of leadership and responsibility for both humanity and future generations."

SSWHS continues to fundraise for its legal action and has raised nearly £50,000 but needs to raise a total nearer to £80,000 [8].

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Notes to editors:

[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.

[2] Save Stonehenge World Heritage Site is a limited company set up by three individuals closely associated with the Stonehenge Alliance to specifically challenge the original [Government decision](#) on 12 November 2020 to approve National Highways' damaging scheme. The [judgement](#) on the first judicial review was handed down by Mr Justice Holgate on 30 July 2021.

SSWHS recently applied for a judicial review of the Government's second approval of the scheme on 14 July, 2023.

[3] The Stonehenge Alliance has two petitions, one for residents in the UK ([38 Degrees](#)) and one for people outside the UK ([Change.org](#)). The combined total stands at over 225,000 with signatures from at least 147 countries worldwide.

[4] The Government published its [second decision letter](#) on Friday, 14 July, six days before the Somerset and Frome by-election, again approving the road scheme.

[5] The 45th session of the [World Heritage Committee](#) is meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 10 – 25 September, 2023

[6] UNESCO has long expressed its concern about National Highways' proposals. See annexure G in the [Final Report](#) on the joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS / ICCROM Advisory Mission to Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (April 2022)

[7] The three sites to have been [delisted as World Heritage Sites](#) are:

Germany: Dresden Elbe Valley – delisted 2009

Oman: Arabian Oryx Sanctuary – delisted 2007

UK: Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City – delisted 2021

If Stonehenge WHS was delisted it would make the UK the only country to have had more than one WHS delisted and be responsible for half of the delistings since 1972. Both de-listings would also be the responsibility of various Conservative Governments since 2010.

[8] The [CrowdJustice page](#) was launched on Friday, 28 July, 2023