

Stonehenge Alliance Press Release

# Government decision on Stonehenge back in court

**For Immediate Release: Tuesday 21 May, 2024**

Save Stonehenge World Heritage Site (SSWHS) [1] has been given permission to appeal the decision earlier this year by Mr Justice Holgate [2]. He dismissed SSWHS's application for judicial review of the Government's decision to approve a highly damaging, £2.5bn road scheme through Stonehenge World Heritage Site, for a second time [3].

UNESCO [4], five planning inspectors [5] and over 238,000 people [6] are all opposed to National Highways' highly damaging plans. Save Stonehenge WHS's legal action had been the only thing stopping the giant earthmovers from entering this 5,000-year-old landscape.

John Adams, chair of the Stonehenge Alliance [7] and one of the 3 directors of SSWHS, said:

"This is extremely good news. All those who care passionately about our cultural heritage can breathe a sigh of relief. We now have a new opportunity for the Government decision to be thoroughly scrutinised.

"This road scheme would be incredibly damaging to Stonehenge World Heritage Site. Yet, the Government doesn't seem to care and is desperately trying to bulldoze through this decision before it is thrown out of office."

Leigh Day solicitor Rowan Smith said:

"This news is very encouraging for our client. In granting permission to appeal, the Court of Appeal acknowledged the scale of public interest around ensuring that a decision about the future of Stonehenge is lawful.

"The Court said there is a compelling reason for an appeal hearing. Our client is looking forward to presenting arguments about the fairness of the decision-making process relating to the future of Stonehenge as well as compliance with international law protecting the World Heritage Site."

SSWHS now has to raise a further £34,000 for the Appeal Court hearing [8].

- ENDS -

## Notes to editors:

[1] 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.

SSWHS applied for a judicial review of the Government's [second approval of the scheme](#) on 14 July, 2023 (six days before the Somerset and Frome by-election).

[2] Mr Justice Holgate's [judgement](#) dismissed SSWHS's application for judicial review after a three day hearing was held on 12-14 December at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

[3] The first judicial review was held 23-25 June 2021, with the [judgement](#) being handed down by Mr Justice Holgate on 30 July 2021, quashing the Development Consent Order.

[4] See UNESCO [World Heritage Committee decision](#) from its September 2023 committee meeting in Riyadh.

[5] The [Examination Report](#), dated 2 January, 2020 recommended that the application be refused. It was published on 12 November, 2020, when the Secretary of State made his first decision to approve the scheme.

[6] 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 238,000 with signatures from at least 147 countries worldwide.

[7] 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.

[8] The [CrowdJustice page](#) has a new target of £134,000. This is to raise the additional funds needed for the hearing at the Court of Appeal.