

Press Statement

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Heritage bodies respond to Highways England's public consultation on the A303 road scheme

Historic England, the National Trust and English Heritage welcome the work done by Highways England on the design of the proposed A303 road at Stonehenge.

The options put forward today by Highways England go a long way towards protecting and enhancing the World Heritage Site (WHS), according to the three agencies responsible for its care and protection.

However they voiced concerns about a proposal to link two byways, introducing a new route for vehicles close to Stonehenge after the tunnel is built.

In a joint statement the partners said:

"We welcome the improvements made to the scheme and, with further work, believe it has the potential to protect and enhance the World Heritage Site if the design includes a 3.2km (2 mile) tunnel incorporating a 200m grass-covered canopy at the western end, steep sided cuttings and a sensitively-located green bridge to hide the traffic and the road to the west. This will reunite a landscape that has been severed by the A303 for generations.

"It is essential that the final design is right in all these areas to protect the unique landscape of the World Heritage Site. We particularly want the proposed green bridge near the current Longbarrow Roundabout to be wide enough to form an effective physical and visual link between important monuments in the landscape.

"However, we are very concerned about the detrimental impact of traffic on the byways on the World Heritage Site and believe this will be made worse by the proposal to link existing byways after the surface A303 is removed.

"The World Heritage Site is internationally-important, not just for Stonehenge itself but for the unique and rich concentrations of burial mounds and monuments in the landscape. This is a once-in-a generation opportunity to reunite this ancient landscape, giving people the opportunity to tread pathways used by our ancestors who built the monuments, to visit and appreciate the monuments and see and hear wildlife without the intrusion of the traffic and noise from the road.

“We will closely examine the details published today and will submit our full and detailed responses to the consultation in due course. We will continue to engage with international heritage advisors and others to help to ensure Highways England fully assesses the heritage impact and comes up with the right solution for the World Heritage Site.”

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For further press information and images please contact:

**Allan King, National Trust South West Press Office on 07771 837988 or
Debbie Hickman, Historic England Press Office on 020 7973 3855 or
Jessica Trethowan, English Heritage Press Office on 07880 052025**