

PRESS RELEASE

STONEHENGE ROAD OPTIONS REVIEW

Today's announcement of the five options to be discussed in the review process for the A303 road through the Stonehenge landscape, with details of how that process is to be conducted, falls far short of serious consideration of possible alternative schemes that are appropriate for this iconic World Heritage site.

ICOMOS-UK, the CBA and WANHS strongly support the National Trust's views, as set out in their Press Release today. We are dismayed that the National Trust, as the country's key conservation and environmental organisation, as well as the owner of land that would be affected by most of the proposed options, has not been offered so far any opportunity to shape this review.

Our three organisations welcomed the announcement made by the Roads Minister in July 2005, of a detailed review of possible options for the A303 road at Stonehenge, as a constructive way forward. However, in the event the process so far has been flawed by failure to engage the essential stakeholders or to look at the full range of appropriate alternative options.

ICOMOS-UK, the CBA and the WANHS consider that the review options now being offered amount to a token consultation lacking a long-term vision that respects the international significance of Stonehenge as a World Heritage Site.

We urge the Review Group to consider other preferable options that would better reflect the status and value of the overall Stonehenge landscape.

.....End.....

Background Notes:

ICOMOS-UK:

ICOMOS-UK opposed the road scheme for a short tunnel with four-lane highway at either end, which was the subject of a Public Inquiry from 17th February to 11th May 2004, for the major detrimental impact the cutting would have had on parts of the Stonehenge World Heritage site.

Under the terms of the World Heritage Convention 1972, ICOMOS advises the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on cultural World Heritage sites.

CBA:

The Council for British Archaeology wishes to see a sustainable transport solution for the World Heritage site and opposes the proposed schemes for tunnelling and cutting through the Stonehenge landscape. It wishes to see local road improvements progressed, including the closure of the A344, while alternative, more environmentally acceptable options are investigated fully.

CBA is an educational charity working through the UK to involve people in archaeology and promote appreciation and care of the historic environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

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WANHS:

WANHS objected to the scheme subjected to Public Inquiry in 2004 on the grounds that it involved the construction of 2 km of new dual-carriageway in deep cuttings within the World Heritage Site. WANHS is strongly opposed to such large-scale and intrusive development in the landscape around Stonehenge.

In the 1920s WANHS led the field in the acquisition of land around Stonehenge to secure the preservation of the settings of the stone circle and its surrounding monuments, land now vested in the National Trust. The Society remains involved in the preservation of this landscape, and curates and displays artefacts from the World Heritage Site in its museum in Devizes.

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