

Responses to Relevent Representations

TR010025

Barry Garwood

RR – 0112

I entirely agree that Blick Mead has complex hydrology and is not fully understood. It is unparalleled in archaeological importance and the wider site probably extends well beyond what is already known. These proposals would indeed be a destruction of the cradle of our civilisation.

RR – 0116

Well said, it is the wider site, not just the Stones that makes it so important. This does indeed look like a revival of the discredited transport policy of the 90s.

RR – 0784

I agree that alternative routes should be considered.

RR – 1032

Your proposal to restore the original route of the Avon is worthy of further consideration.

I agree that the aquifer modelling relies on assumptions based on limited knowledge, rather than just facts. There may indeed be more horizontal flow zones than the one identified between 69 m and 73 m AOD. I completely agree that the representation of the proposed tunnel is rather one - dimensional. I share your concerns that the act of boring a tunnel would lead to additional cracks and fissures that would alter the permeability of the aquifer by creating additional preferential flow pathways. I also struggle to see how the conclusion that all environmental impacts will be negligible is a reasonable one.

RR – 1030 and RR – 1040

I share your concerns that the proposals will render a large area to the west of the proposed western portal archaeologically sterile and that the road would cut through the densest concentration of Neolithic longbarrows known in Britain.

I also share concerns that the eastern part of the scheme poses a real risk to the preservation of organic remains around Blick Mead through changes to groundwater levels. I have further concerns that any groundwater model is only a model that may not full replicate the complex hydrogeology of the area and that the archaeology here is too important to leave to chance.

I agree that archaeological excavation is not the best solution, that todays methods will soon become outdated and that future generations will regret the losses. I note that if the surface of the current A303 were to be taken up and the route returned to a green lane there would relatively little overall loss. These proposals will likely result in the loss of archaeology on an unprecedented scale. I welcome your participation and agree that the proposals should be rejected.

RR – 1060

I share your concerns for Blick Mead springs and was unaware that the water temperature is 11 C.

I support continued access to Byways for all.

RR – 1087

I support your position. I agree the stone circle is but one part of the wider Stonehenge landscape and that this should be considered as a whole. I also agree that tunnelling is expensive and constraints on budgets do not put this landscape in a primary position in the considerations.

Stonehenge is too important to be considered in monetary terms alone. I agree that these proposals fail to consider past lessons such as the positioning of the former visitor centre and that they will come to be seen as a mistake.

RR – 1288

I welcome your participation and support your representation of Pagans and Druids. I agree that any increased light pollution would have a detrimental effect on solstice events. I share your concerns that the proposals put at risk the integrity of the area of burial mounds to the west of the scheme and the archaeology of Blick Mead to the east.

RR – 1400

I support in principle the need for a Winterbourne Stoke bypass. However my concerns for the eastern part of the scheme and its effect on the wider Stonehenge landscape, with loss of important archaeology, leads me to conclude that more consideration should be given to alternatives and that the route of a Winterbourne Stoke bypass should feed into such a route in order to minimise any further loss of this unique landscape.

RR – 1429

I share your concerns that severance of north-south routes in the eastern part of the proposed scheme would add considerable extra distance to users, including cyclists.

RR – 1504

I share your concerns and support your representation. I have asked that the Examination consider what is really meant by the much used expression Outstanding Universal Value, as I consider these proposals will have a negative impact on the WHS and do not increase the outstanding value of this unique landscape. I am also concerned that tunnelling vibrations may destroy archaeology, not only directly but also indirectly through potential changes to hydrogeology, particularly in the vicinity of Blick Mead.

RR – 1536

I share your concerns that the proposals would have a negative impact on Amesbury Abbey and Park, Blick Mead and Vespasians Camp, including their being overlooked by a flyover, as well as added noise and air pollution and the effect on dark skies.

I am especially concerned that changes to the water environment as a result of tunnelling or construction of foundations could lead to serious archaeological losses in and around Blick Mead, including as yet undiscovered material. I am shocked that unauthorised drilling has already caused damage to this sensitive and uniquely important site. I also disagree with the conclusion of the Environmental Statement.

RR – 1610

I share your concerns including concern for loss of disabled access, Byway access and iconic views of Stonehenge. I agree that the proposals pose a wider threat to public enjoyment, solstice gatherings and other events.

I share concerns that advice from the likes of UNESCO and archaeologists is being ignored. I also agree that there has been a lack of transparency in the applicants reasoning for choosing this route over alternatives.

RR – 1621

I share your concern that advice from UNESCO to seek alternatives that would not have an adverse impact on the WHS has been ignored and question the applicants interpretation of Outstanding Universal Value in this context.

I also share concerns that information on hydrogeology is almost non-existent, that the scheme does not represent good value for money and arguments about economic benefits are not convincing.

I agree that there is a lack of consideration for routes outside the WHS and that information that would inform such consideration is lacking. Highways England's views of the scheme's benefits are indeed questionable.

RR – 1626

I question the need for the scheme as presented on economic grounds alone. Traffic levels expand to fill the road capacity available. Consideration should also be given to the impact on climate change of ever more road building.

I agree that delays on motorways resulting from collisions can be lengthy and that the delays on the A303 are usually shorter and result from congestion. Dualling the A303 will make it more like a motorway and subject to the same kind of lengthy delays.

Traffic slowing down in the vicinity of Stonehenge normally only adds a few minutes at most to journeys and the busiest periods are often weekends when there is more holiday traffic and less business and commercial use of the route.

It would make sense to improve other sections of the A303 and leave the Stonehenge section as it is, while a long term solution that does not negatively impact the WHS and key archaeology is sought.

Such a solution could be an alternative route around the WHS, improvements to public transport options, or a combination of the two.

RR – 1661

I share your concern that advice from UNESCO's World Heritage Committee is being disregarded and that the British Government could be in breach of international duty to protect Stonehenge WHS.

I share concerns for damage to the WHS, its landscape and archaeology, the loss of views, the quality of the applicants information, consultation processes and consideration of responses.

I agree that the case for the scheme is not compelling and that congestion is not that bad, especially outside holiday season.

RR – 1681

I share your concerns for damage to archaeology, Blick Mead and the wider landscape that would result from the positioning of tunnel portals.

RR – 1682

I share your concerns.

RR – 1683

I share your concerns and agree that the proposals will lead to increased traffic and have a negative impact on the WHS and its archaeology. The economic case is not convincing. Alternatives should be sought, including public transport improvements.

RR – 1711

This is a very good representation. I agree that there has not been an open public debate, alternatives are not being adequately considered and the scheme is at odds with the notion of a sustainable future.

RR – 1725

I disagree that proposal could improve the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS as I consider the setting of Stonehenge within the wider landscape is what makes it special. The positioning of tunnel portals and approach roads within the WHS and close to important monuments and features including Blick Mead and numerous barrows will have a hugely detrimental effect and may lead to changes in the water environment that will lead to the destruction of archaeology that pre-dates Stonehenge itself by thousands of years.

In comparison the strip of tarmac that comprises the A303 has relatively little impact on Stonehenge, it is the volume of traffic using it that causes a disturbance. I also disagree with the removal of access rights to the Byways.

Having rebuilt Stonehenge from the pile of stones that was gifted freely to the nation, the heritage industry would now seek to exclude public access to those who do not wish to pay, unless they are prepared to walk miles across Salisbury Plain, from wherever they are still able to park.

RR – 1897

I do not consider that Stonehenge should be considered in isolation when considering the value of the WHS and its so called Outstanding Universal Value. The negative impact on archaeology and the wider landscape of the proposed tunnel would outweigh any benefits of removing traffic from A303 at Stonehenge.

I can't help thinking that there are some who are conflating Outstanding Universal Value with the outstanding financial value to the heritage industry of closing the roads and Byways that currently afford free views to all.

I note your call for a person with expertise in archaeology to be included on the Examination Panel with interest and support. I also note that there appears to be very little support for the scheme in the representation of archaeologists unconnected with the heritage industry. I feel an alternative route outside the WHS should be given more consideration.

RR – 1898

I very much welcome the Stonehenge Alliance and largely agree with the views expressed.

RR – 1907

I very much welcome the Trail Riders Fellowship and largely agree with the views expressed. I too am concerned that the proposals include plans to reduce rights on parts of the Highway network.

I wouldn't have any great objection to removal of the hard surface of the A303, provided access rights are maintained along its length. This could link to the road from Amesbury, allowing for the complete removal of the modern dual carriageway at Blick Mead, if an alternative route for the A303 can be found outside the WHS. This would greatly enhance the Outstanding Universal Value while still allowing access for all to Stonehenge.

RR - 1918

I agree with these views, cutting a huge hole in the WHS is hardly preserving it and the cost of doing so is greater than more sensible alternatives. I would also like to see the responses to the earlier consultation and wider consideration of other schemes.

RR – 1947

I agree with the views expressed, particularly noting that the scheme appears to contradict the spirit and stated conditions of the gift of Stonehenge to the nation by the Chubbs in 1918.

RR – 2060

I note with interest your concerns that there is a lack of detailed information in the application regarding groundwater levels and flows, along with other matters that would be required for your approval of the scheme. Likewise details of any constructional dewatering or consumptive abstraction are lacking at the time of your Relevant Representation. I am somewhat assured that you are not inclined to disapply abstraction licensing without a full assessment of requirements and that pending details you cannot comment on whether any licence may be granted.

However late submission of detailed plans disadvantages the potential for close scrutiny, as noted. As such I endorse your assertion that: “the submission of evidence in relation to Groundwater Modelling and Flood Risk Modelling / Assessment must be required prior to the Examination for any Development Consent Order (DCO)”.

I question the accuracy of a model that leads to the assertion that negligible changes to groundwater levels at Blick Mead are predicted, given the extreme importance of this sensitive site.

It is also of concern that much of the tunnelling construction method and identification of risks would be the responsibility of the as yet unknown contractor and not specified within the DCO.

It is also difficult to see how all water quality, groundwater effects and flood risks are found to be non-significant, given the lack of detail at this stage.

RR - 2088

I welcome the representations of the Hosier family as custodians of considerable historic assets within the Stonehenge landscape. I share many of your concerns, including the misinterpretation of Outstanding Universal Value, the lack of surface route options and the lack of meaningful assessment of hydrogeology.

RR - 2209

I welcome the Blick Mead team and very largely agree with the views expressed. I too am concerned that the proposals will have a negative and destructive effect on the WHS that the scheme purports to enhance, including the very special archaeology of Blick Mead and the barrow group close to the proposed western portal.

I also note that monitoring the hydrology of Blick Mead will inform an understanding of typical baseline conditions, but will not cover more extreme conditions such as the increased water levels of 2001 or the drought of 1976. Nor will it prevent any changes to the hydrogeology that may result from the act of tunnelling, or digging of foundations, that could lead to the area drying out with loss of unique archaeology.

RR – 2252

I welcome the NFU to the Examination. I would hope that all users of Byways would have respect for and allow passage of all other users.

RR – 2355

I agree that Blick Mead is a unique archive, shedding light as it does on our history back almost to the end the last ice age.

I too am concerned that hydrogeological changes may lead to the loss of unique archaeology.

Further monitoring study of conditions would help our understanding, but may be of limited use in informing us of the effects of works in the vicinity.

I am sorry to hear that a Highways/Aecom have destroyed part of the site and wonder how they can be trusted.

I too am keen on looking at other routes and have suggested, in my response to the Trail Riders Federation (RR – 1907), that:

I wouldn't have any great objection to removal of the hard surface of the A303, provided access rights are maintained along its length. This could link to the road from Amesbury, allowing for the complete removal of the modern dual carriageway at Blick Mead, if an alternative route for the A303 can be found outside the WHS. This would greatly enhance the Outstanding Universal Value while still allowing access for all to Stonehenge.

RR – 2365