

**From:** Rollo Maughfling

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**To:** Richard Price <RICHARD.PRICE@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Summary of evidence given at oral hearing of 22/5/19 public enquiry into A303 Stonehenge.

My name is Rollo Maughfling, and I am Archdruid of Stonehenge and Britain, and have been so for over thirty years. I am also Stonehenge Officer to the Council of British Druid Orders. I was instrumental, with my colleague Arthur Pendragon, in liaising with Wiltshire Constabulary, Wiltshire Council, the National Trust and English Heritage, in inaugurating trouble free ceremonies and seasonal celebrations at Stonehenge for druids and other members of the public who wished to attend, at both summer and winter solstices and both spring and autumn equinoxes. These negotiations culminated in the foundation of what is known as the Round Table in 1995, and led to free and open managed access at Stonehenge for these religious and spiritual occasions, from the year 2000.

It seems to me that the whole question of the A303 Stonehenge tunnel and road improvements, is one of balance. We cannot improve the natural and man made features of the World Heritage site at the expense of the motorist, and the present hell of A303 congestion at Stonehenge, which I myself have experienced, as do local people, on a daily basis. At the same time, we cannot ease the pressure on the motorist to the extent of ripping up the landscape of this vastly important ancient Neolithic site, in a manner which will do irreparable damage and earn us the scorn of future generations.

I would like for a moment, to ask everyone to take part in a little exercise of the imagination, which may help put this tricky matter into slightly better context.

Imagine that you are Highways England, and you have just received a commission, to let us say, put a tunnel under the Houses of Parliament. This would provisionally start at Millbank to the South, and finish up somewhere on the Victoria Embankment to the North.

It would be utterly unthinkable for such a tunnel project, given the high cost of real estate in the vicinity, to suddenly find itself foreshortened, and instead of coming up on the Embankment, find itself scheduled to come up in the middle of the Palace of Westminster, but a stone's throw from the Speaker's Chair. It would be unheard of, and utterly ridiculous.

And yet when we come to the countryside, the tendency is to think that because it's all open fields, perhaps it doesn't matter.

But that is precisely what is happening in respect of the proposed short tunnel at Stonehenge. Whereas the long tunnel was originally scheduled to run from the vicinity of Vespasian's camp in the East to Long Barrow crossroads in the West, passing completely beneath the Stonehenge bowl from one side to the other of the World Heritage site, now, the shortened version of the scheme, actually comes up in the middle of the Stonehenge arena, but a stone's throw from Stonehenge itself.

What, in the name of conservation, is this?

Apart from the dramatic 21st century impact on the archaeology to the West of the site, of a 2 or 3 lane modern highway, the most immediate impact on Stonehenge itself, would be the

fact that instead of lessening the visual and auditory impact of the modern world on the peace and tranquillity of the 5000 year old landscape of outstanding universal value, we will have intensified it.

The western portal to the tunnel and the blaze of light emanating from it at night and on a winter's evening, would, at Stonehenge, be unconscionable. More so, the huge amplification of sound arising from the close proximity of 2 or 3 lane highways travelling at speed in both directions, would have the effect of ruining the experience at Stonehenge for both pilgrim and tourist alike, and ruining the peace of Stonehenge, forever.

If we are already committed to a tunnel, then let's not put ourselves in the position where future generations ask "but for a couple of hundred yards, why didn't the tunnel builders of the 21st century go all the way?" Better no tunnel than one that makes matters worse than they are already. But best of all would be the long tunnel, which has no visual or auditory impact on the environment, and will instead be a credit to our nation, both at home and abroad. And, most importantly of all, will preserve the grandeur and majesty of Stonehenge and its landscape, in perpetuity.

Rollo Maughfling.