

Wansford Parish Council

Deadline 9 Submission

Comments on Historic England's Responses to the ExA's Additional Questions (ExQ3)

A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling

In the view of Wansford Parish Council, Historic England's response completely fails to answer the Examining Authority's clearly worded question.

Historic England is well aware that there is a possible route for the upgraded A47 through the southern part of the Scheduled Monument that does not impinge on any of the recognised features on which the scheduling is based. Using this alignment actually leaves a greater clearance to the main features of the Monument than the scheme proposed by National Highways. Clearly this alignment does not do substantial harm to the Monument. It does not "result in the total loss of a number of key burial features that make up the late Neolithic and early bronze age burial cemetery" as claimed by Historic England.

At a meeting between the Parish Councils and Historic England (Highways England were invited to attend but declined) held in Cambridge on the 23rd January 2020, Historic England stated that they had not carried out a spatial analysis of the features of the Scheduled Monument and instead had relied on the work done by Wansford Parish Council. That work resulted in the Alternative Visions document, as already seen by the Examining Authority, which was displayed by Historic England at the meeting.

Having the Alternative Visions document in their possession, and having accepted its contents sufficiently to rely on it, it is very difficult to see how Historic England can make the statements that are in their response. Either they have not researched the matter properly or they are deliberately trying to avoid giving a detailed response.

Throughout the development of the A47 dualling scheme, Historic England have shown a curious lack of interest in the contents of the Scheduled Monument. As an example, when they reviewed the boundaries, following a request from Highways England, they actually excluded an area from the east side of the monument which both the aerial photographs and the geophysical survey show to contain a number of interesting features.