

**Tuesday, 12 September 2017**

## **LOCAL COMMUNITIES SHOULD GIVE GREEN LIGHT TO STONEHENGE ROAD SCHEME**

The Government has at last announced its preferred route for the long awaited A303 road scheme around Stonehenge. Our *Campaign for the Preservation of the Southern Till Valley (CPSTV)* is relieved that a decision has finally been made. We believe that what is now on the table represents the most logical option. It will address the most serious concerns raised by those living and working in the surrounding area, whilst ensuring that visitors will continue to enjoy Stonehenge.

The A303 desperately needs massive improvement – not just to relieve appalling traffic congestion that currently blights the area but also to open up a long-term road solution that will serve the needs of the South West economy. It was, and remains, a demanding and complicated task to deliver a road scheme that would take into account so many diverse views as well as the huge number of variables and obstacles in an area of great historic value and outstanding natural beauty. A tunnel represents the only viable solution, which addresses most of the different and various concerns held by landowners, residents, businesses, archaeologists and naturalists, if Wiltshire is to avoid the environmental travesty of Twyford Down and learn the lessons from Hindhead.

It is so often forgotten that the route of the A303 has been in existence for many centuries. The realignment of the tunnel, now running much closer to that historic highway, represents the path not of 'NO' damage but of 'LEAST' damage. The western portal will link more efficiently into the A360 junction and should result in better local access and less likelihood of rat running. Its realignment also answers concerns regarding the line of the Winter Solstice sunset, and avoids Normanton and Lake barrow groups as well as the RSPB reserve.

Over the last six months, *CPSTV* has taken soundings from local communities and other concerned groups. We have tried to play a constructive role to secure the best road solution, supported by specialist technical research and face-to-face meetings with landowners, archaeologists and local residents. We argued that the views of local communities should be pivotal if a sensible outcome was to be achieved. Although we are relieved that the chosen western bypass will run north of Winterbourne Stoke, that positioning forms part of a much more complex picture.

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Numerous details must still be addressed and finalised. We hope that local communities will continue to play a lead role to mitigate the impact of the new route for the benefit of the countryside and local villages for the foreseeable future.

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For further information contact

**Carolyn MacDougall**  
**01722 792761**