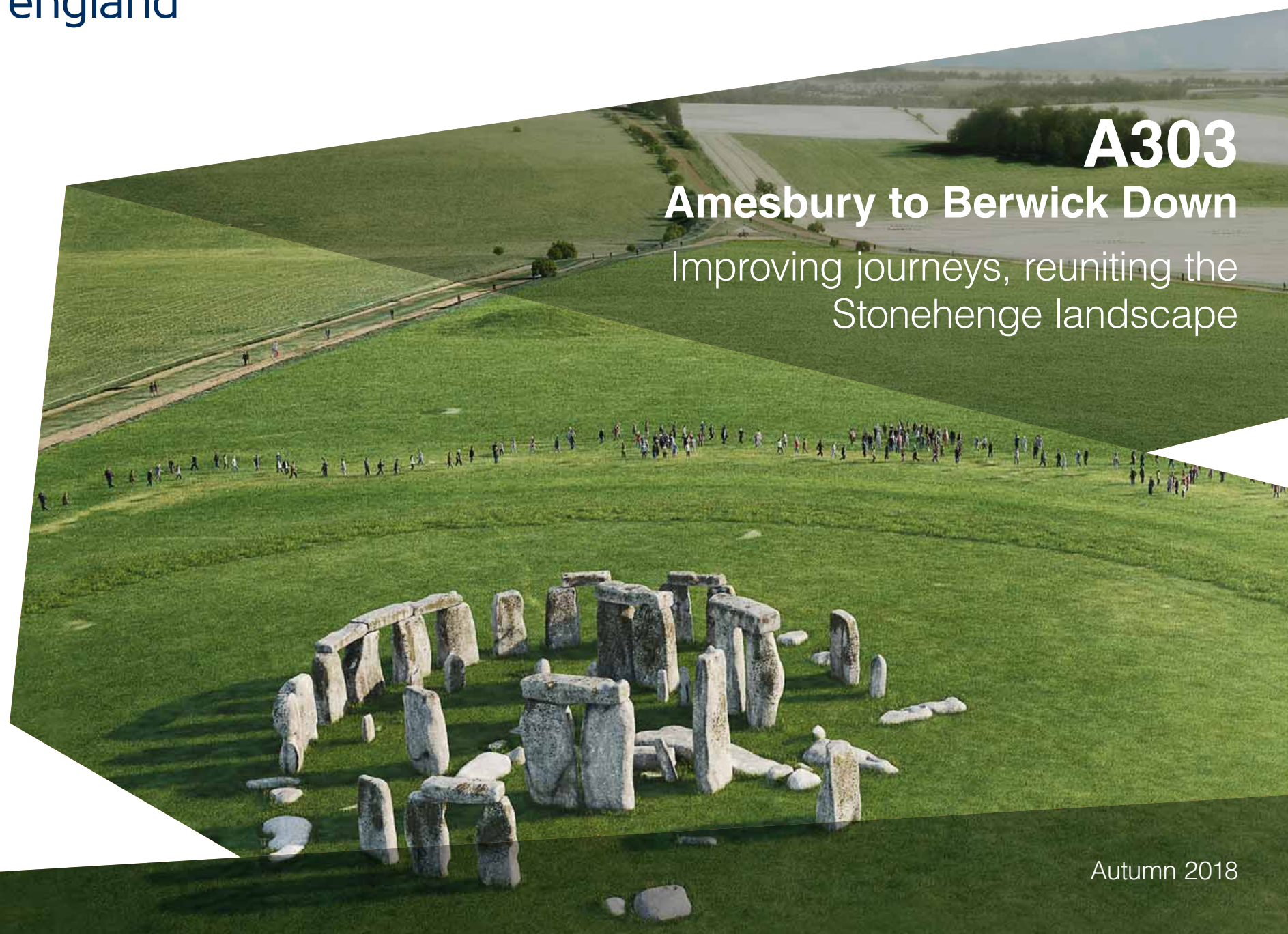


# A303

## Amesbury to Berwick Down

Improving journeys, reuniting the  
Stonehenge landscape



Autumn 2018



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# About this booklet

This booklet explains the scheme we have submitted for development consent and how consultation has helped shape our plans. It sets out the key elements of the scheme, reflecting its development since consultation. The booklet also provides a ready reference to important information for those wanting to engage in the Planning Inspectorate's examination of our proposals.

# 1. Foreword



Thank you for taking an interest in our Development Consent Order (DCO) application for upgrading the A303 past Stonehenge between Amesbury and Berwick Down. Over the past two years, we have carried out three public consultations to help shape the best possible scheme for this iconic, world-renowned landscape.

Highways England is committed to delivering a high quality, high-performing, dual carriageway route along the A303/A358 corridor between the South West and the South East. Removing the traffic bottleneck past Stonehenge will improve connectivity and help open up the South West, unlocking economic and social benefits for the region. This forms part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy for investment in roads across the country.

Our scheme includes a tunnel, around 2 miles (3.3 kilometres) long, to remove A303 traffic from a large part of the Stonehenge landscape. In doing so, the tranquillity and natural setting of the Stones will be restored to benefit visitors' experiences long into the future.

The scheme will also improve the quality of life for local communities by providing a bypass for Winterbourne Stoke and relieving nearby towns and villages of rat running traffic.

“

*This application is the most important step forward over the past 30 years towards improving the A303 at Stonehenge, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve this iconic landmark.*

”

In October 2018, we submitted our DCO application for the scheme to the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspectorate has accepted our application and you are now able to engage in the public examination process. We hope you take this opportunity to find out about the scheme and its positive impacts, and we look forward to continuing to work with you as we upgrade this vital route.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'D. Parody'. The signature is stylized with a large 'D' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Derek Parody**  
Project Director, Highways England

## 2. Increasing connectivity to the South West

As part of the most direct route between the South East and the South West, the A303 at Stonehenge plays a big part in the daily lives of tens of thousands of people. Because traffic flows along the single carriageway section between Amesbury and Berwick Down are twice what it was originally designed for, the route can be a daily struggle for many.

The existing road passes just 165 metres from the Stonehenge monument and cuts the World Heritage Site (WHS) in two. Previous proposals over the past 30 years have not found an acceptable or affordable way to tackle the problem.

However, the Government has committed to upgrading the A303 past Stonehenge as part of its Road Investment Strategy for improving connectivity along the A303/A358 route corridor to the South West, illustrated in the adjacent image.

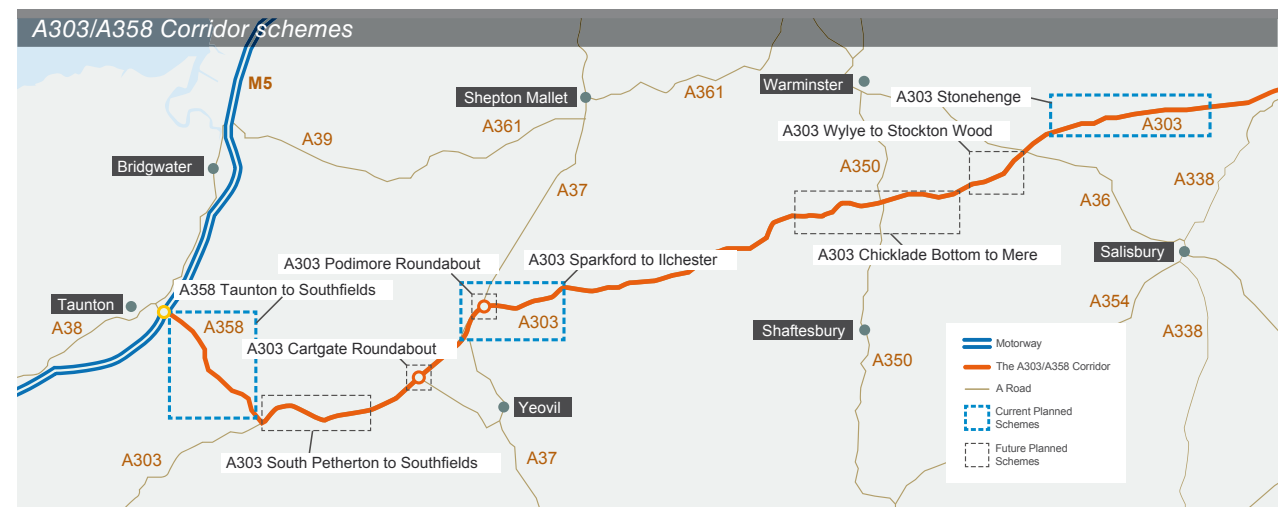
As a result of our detailed work over recent years, we are confident that we have now found the best solution for improving the A303 past Stonehenge.

### What the scheme will deliver

The scheme will unlock economic growth in the South West by transforming journey reliability, increasing safety and improving connectivity with neighbouring regions, while protecting and enhancing the environment.

To achieve this, we have four objectives for the scheme:

1. **Transport:** To create a high quality reliable route between the South East and the South West that meets the future needs of traffic
2. **Economic growth:** To enable growth in jobs and housing by providing a free-flowing and reliable connection between the South East and the South West
3. **Cultural heritage:** To help conserve and enhance the World Heritage Site and to make it easier to reach and explore
4. **Environment and community:** To improve biodiversity and provide a positive legacy for local communities



## 3. Developing our application

Thank you to everyone who took part in our statutory and supplementary consultations earlier in 2018. Your feedback has helped shape our final application.

This section describes the scheme that has been submitted, its development taking into consideration feedback from the statutory and supplementary consultations, and the resulting benefits.

Information on all the consultations on the scheme and how we have taken on board feedback can be found in the Consultation Report that has been submitted with the DCO application. Section 4 of this booklet has more details of where you can view the Report and other application documents.

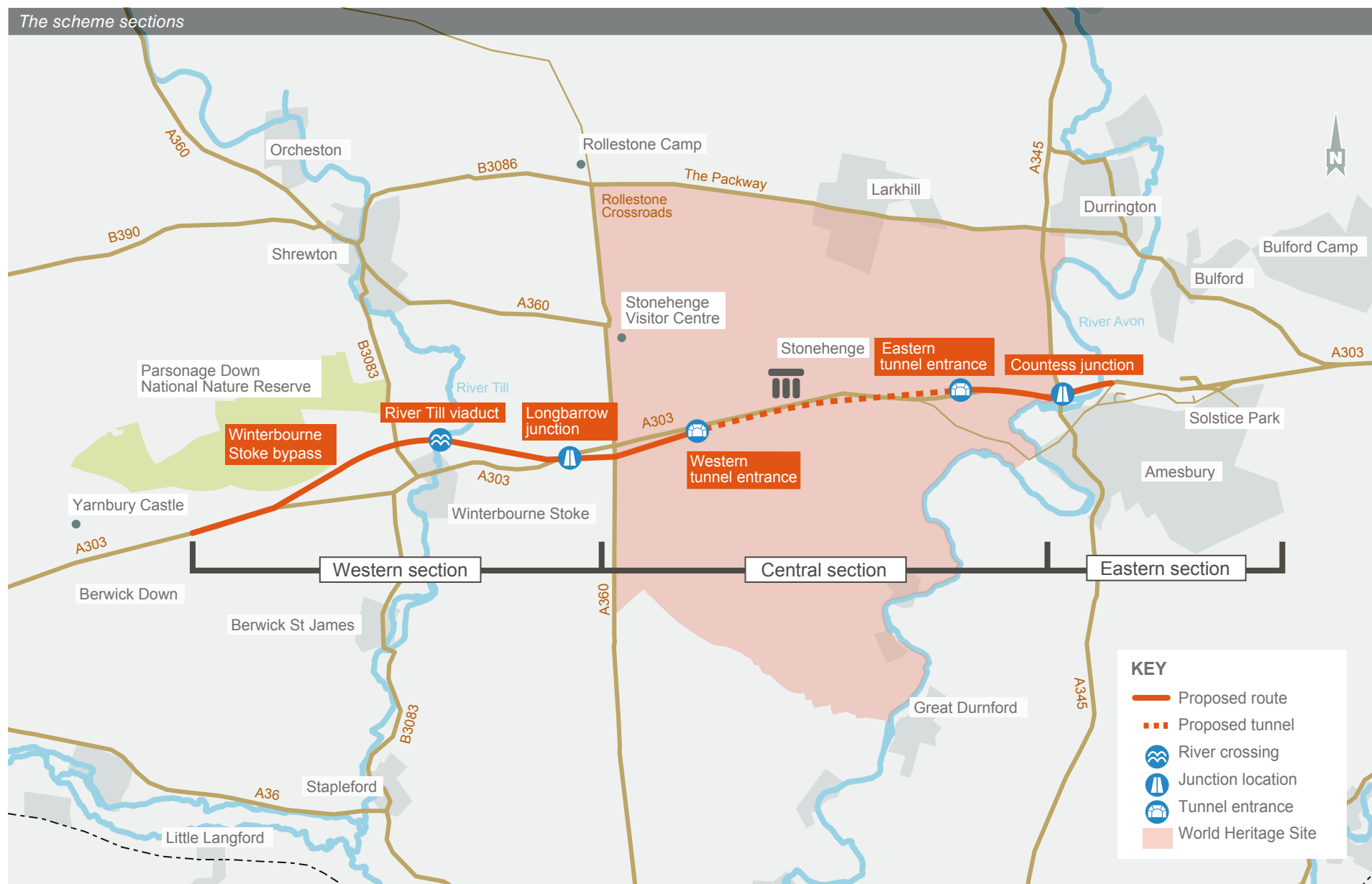
Our DCO application scheme comprises a new dual, two-lane carriageway between Amesbury and Berwick Down with the following key features:

- A bypass to the north of Winterbourne Stoke with a viaduct over the River Till valley
- A new junction at Longbarrow with the A360 to the west of the WHS, with the A303 passing under the junction
- A section through the WHS with a twin-bore tunnel past Stonehenge around 2 miles (3.3 kilometres) in length
- A new junction between the A303 and A345 at the existing Countess Roundabout

To describe the scheme, we have divided it into three sections, as shown in the image opposite.

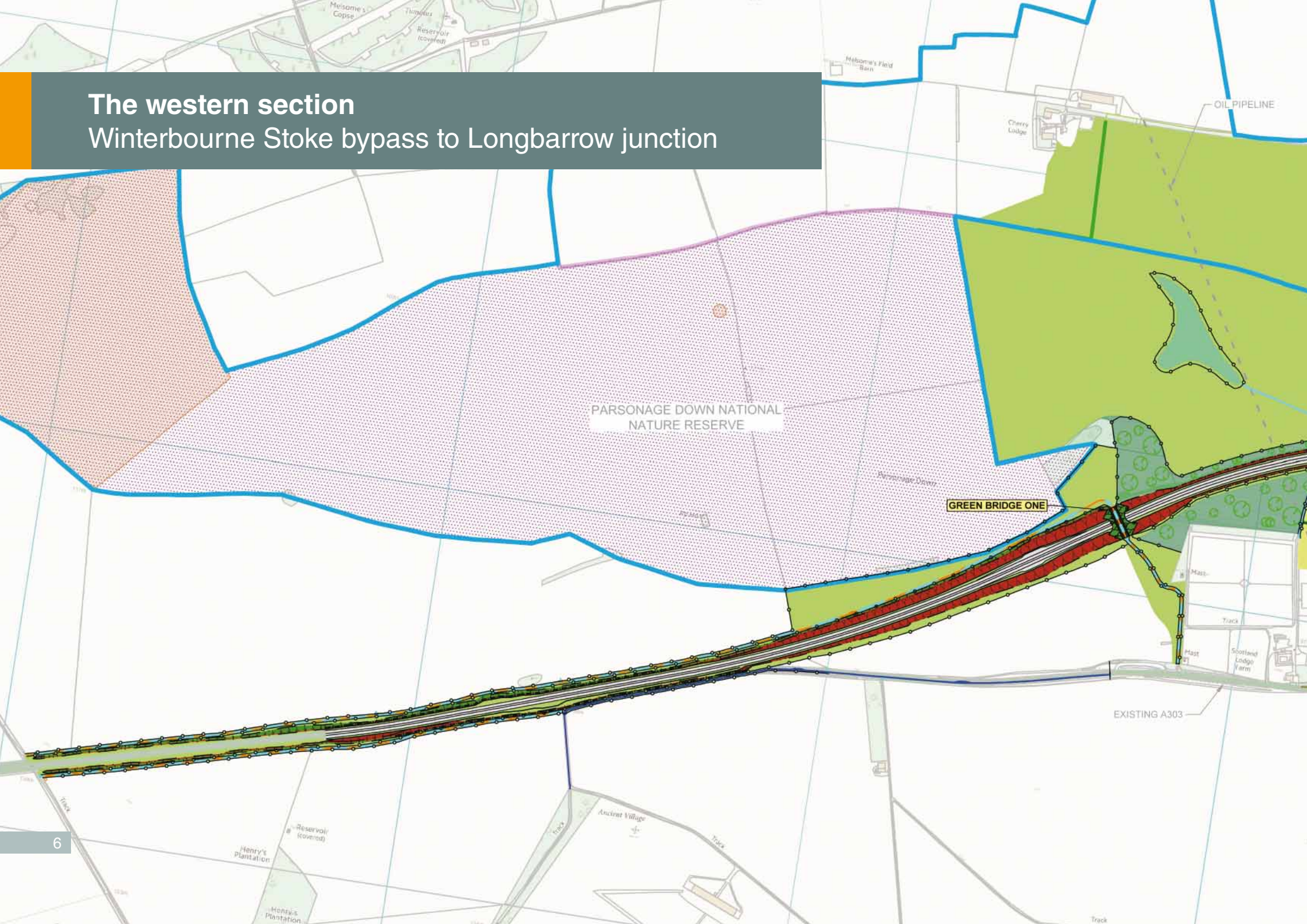
- Western section – Winterbourne Stoke bypass to Longbarrow junction
- Central section – within the World Heritage Site
- Eastern section – Countess junction to just beyond the Solstice Park junction

Over the next pages, as well as describing the scheme and its benefits, we summarise how it has developed since consultation, taking into consideration the feedback we have received.

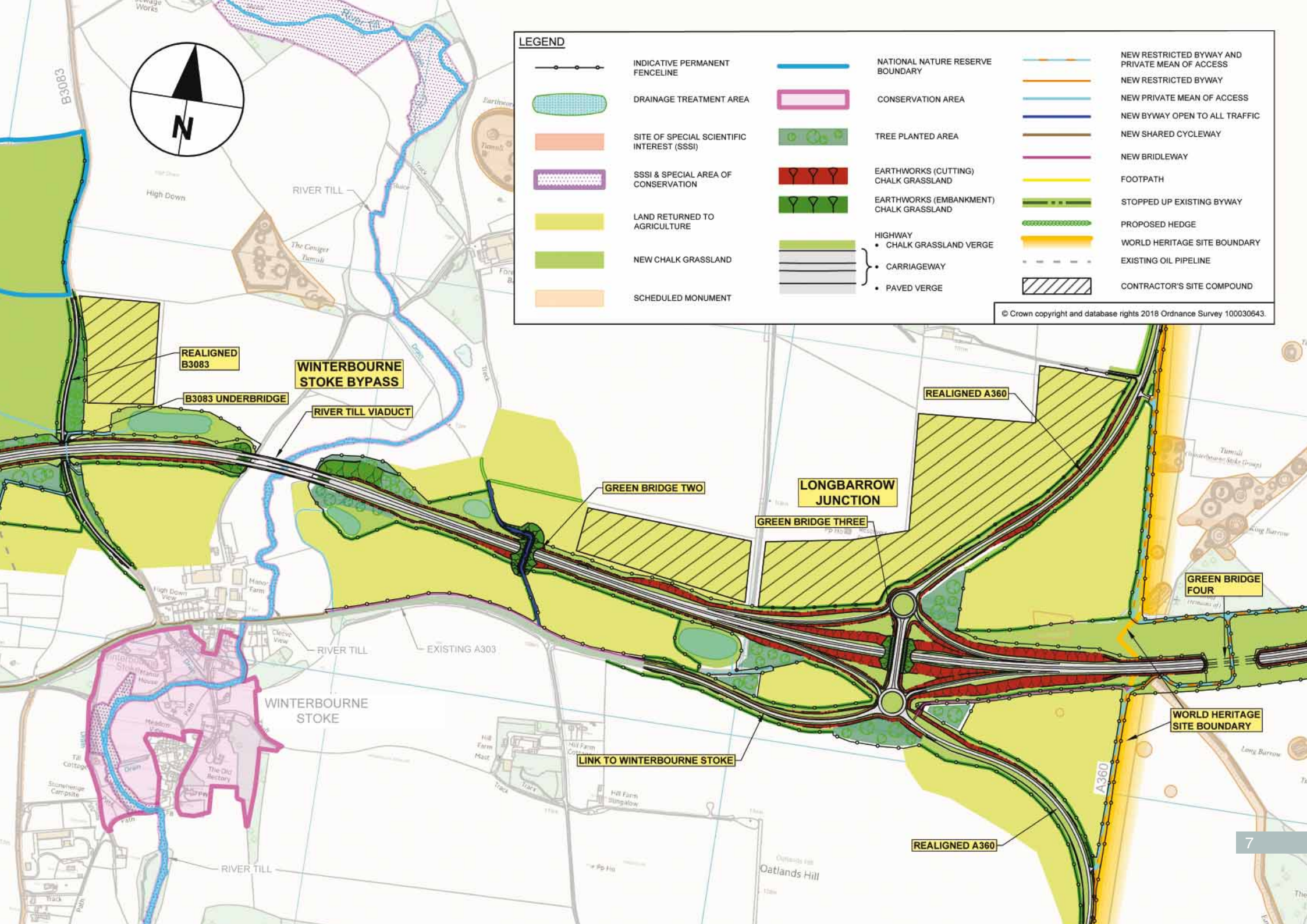




## The western section Winterbourne Stoke bypass to Longbarrow junction









## Western section

The new dual carriageway road will leave the existing A303 around 800 metres east of Yarnbury Castle on Berwick Down to pass to the north of Winterbourne Stoke.

Initially the road will run in a cutting just to the south of Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve. At the south-eastern end of the Reserve a green bridge (no.1) will be constructed.

Leaving Parsonage Down, the road will emerge from a cutting to run on an embankment towards the B3083, before crossing the Till Valley on a multi-span viaduct approximately 200 metres long, as shown in the image below.

The two carriageways of the new road will be carried on separate bridge decks along the viaduct, with a gap between them to avoid the River Till and valley floor under the viaduct being cast in shadow.

From the Till, the road will continue via a series of embankments and cuttings towards a new junction with the A360, with a second green bridge (no. 2) provided east of Winterbourne Stoke.

A new junction with the A360 will be built approximately 600 metres west of the existing Longbarrow roundabout. The junction will comprise slip road connections into two roundabouts linked by a further green bridge (no.3) over the new A303.







*Example of a green bridge*



*Western approach to Longbarrow junction*

## Developments since consultation

**River Till Viaduct** – During consultation we asked people to share their views on the type of parapet the viaduct should have. One option was to have a normal ‘open’ parapet which would make the viaduct itself less visually intrusive but vehicles would be more visible; the other option was to attach a screen to the parapet, which would reduce the visual impact of traffic on views from Winterbourne Stoke.

With more people preferring the benefits of the screening option, the scheme now includes a 1.5 metres high environmental screen on the south side of the viaduct. We have also included additional landscaping between the new road and Parsonage Down and at the River Till Viaduct approaches, to help screen and mitigate its visual impact.

**Longbarrow junction** – Having considered the feedback, the new roundabouts will have signalised entries which will also serve to enable pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to gain safe access to the new public rights of way in the WHS.



*Traffic through Winterbourne Stoke village*



## Benefits of the scheme

**Winterbourne Stoke village** – The relocation of the A303 to the north of Winterbourne Stoke will remove through traffic from the centre of the village. This will significantly reduce noise levels and visual intrusion, and improve air quality in the village, making it a more tranquil and attractive place for residents and visitors. It will make Winterbourne Stoke feel more like the country village it has historically been.

**Enhancing biodiversity in the River Till valley** – On either side of the valley, a number of road drainage infiltration areas will be formed. These will create additional habitats for flora and fauna to enhance the biodiversity of the local area.

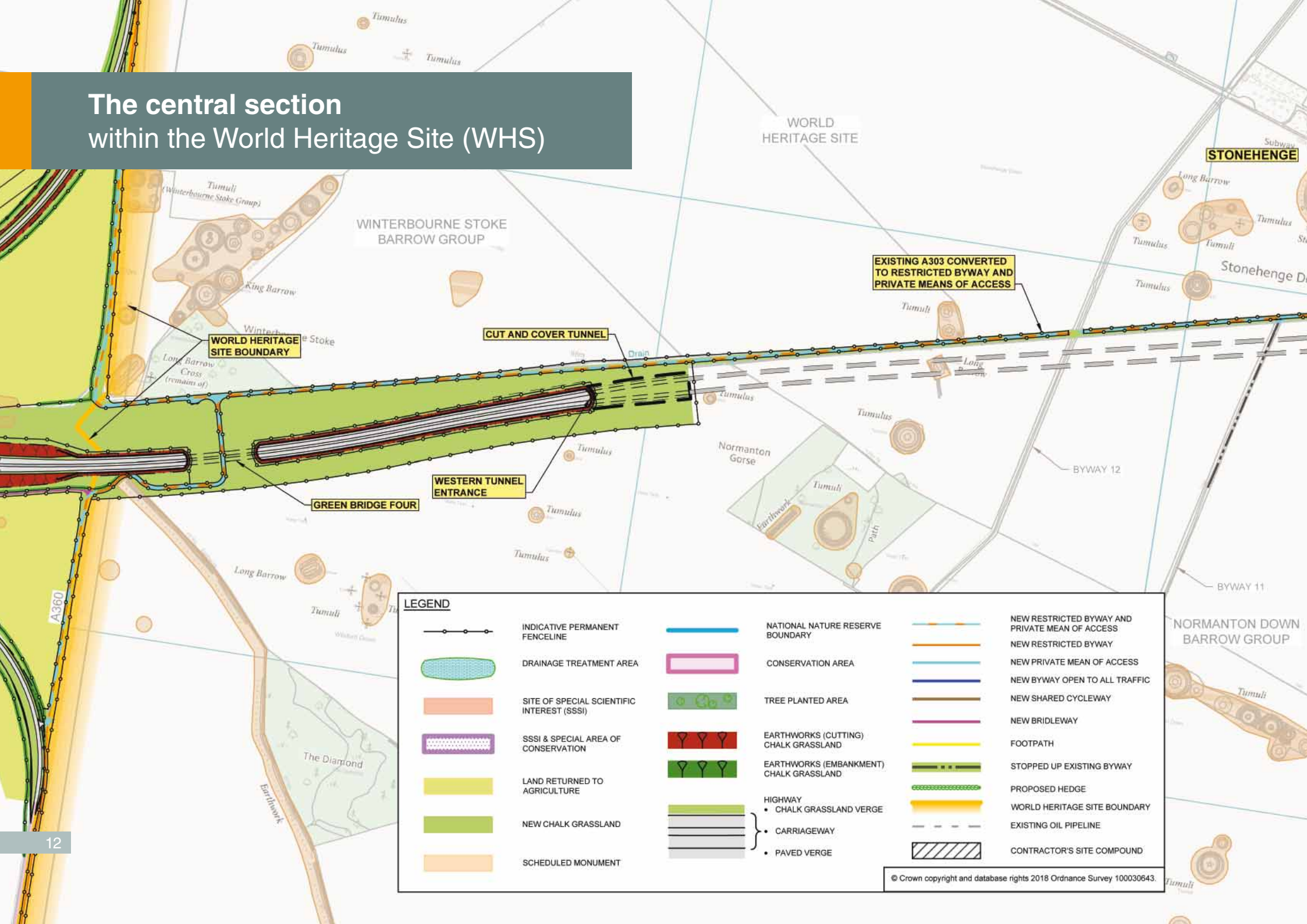
**Creating habitats next to Parsonage Down Nature Reserve** – The road passes just to the south of the Parsonage Down National Nature Reserve. On the north side of the road, and to the east of Parsonage Down, we will create approximately 100 hectares of chalk grassland. This will benefit and extend the existing area of chalkland, improving biodiversity by creating habitats for rare birds and other local fauna.

**Enhancing local connectivity** – The new Longbarrow junction will provide easy access to the new A303 from Winterbourne Stoke, north-south along the A360 between Shrewton and Salisbury, and to the Stonehenge Visitor Centre.



*Chalk grassland*

# The central section within the World Heritage Site (WHS)







## Central section

The new road will enter the WHS in a deep cutting some 100 metres to the south of the existing A303. The alignment has been carefully chosen to avoid direct physical impacts on scheduled monuments and to avoid intruding on views of the setting sun from Stonehenge during the winter solstice.

Once inside the WHS the road will go under a 150 metres wide green bridge (no. 4) which will accommodate a restricted byway connection between the northern and southern halves of the WHS. From the green bridge the new road will continue in cutting to the tunnel's western entrance. This entrance will have a fully grassed-over canopy, as illustrated in the image opposite.

The road through the tunnel will continue to the south of the existing A303, passing approximately 200 metres to the south of the Stones, before rising to emerge from the tunnel to the east of The Avenue, the ancient ceremonial route from the River Avon to the stone circle.

The twin-bore tunnel will be around 2 miles (3.3 kilometres) in length. This is longer than the 1.8 miles (2.9 kilometres) tunnel previously proposed - a result of optimising the locations of the tunnel entrances to protect heritage and best integrate the scheme into the surrounding landscape.

The new road will emerge from the eastern end of the tunnel on the north side of the existing A303, more than 100 metres to the east of The Avenue. From the tunnel, the new road will join the existing A303 where it passes Vespasian's Camp.







*Inside of the tunnel*



*Illustration of a twin bore tunnel*

## Development since consultation

**Green bridge No.4** – Following the statutory consultation, this green bridge has been widened to approximately 150 metres and its location confirmed within the WHS, as one of three changes presented for the supplementary consultation.

The wider green bridge will improve the physical and visual connection between the northern and southern parts of the WHS and the monuments within it. The bridge can be used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders enjoying the new public rights of way being provided in the WHS, and will also provide improved connectivity for wildlife crossing the new road.

**Western cutting** – Having considered the feedback, we have chosen to form the deepest two thirds of the cutting with vertical retaining walls, with the top third formed with rolling grassed slopes. This will minimise the footprint of the road within the WHS, while providing a softer finish to the top of the cutting from viewpoints within the WHS.

**Western canopy** – Following consultation on options for the western tunnel portal, we have chosen to construct a fully grassed-over canopy at the tunnel entrance. This will minimise the visual impact of the approach to the tunnel by achieving better integration with the WHS landscape.

**Removing the previously proposed link between Byways 11 and 12** – At statutory consultation we proposed a new link between Byways 11 and 12 to the south of the A303. Following consideration of consultation responses, we have removed this link from our proposals.





## Benefits of the scheme

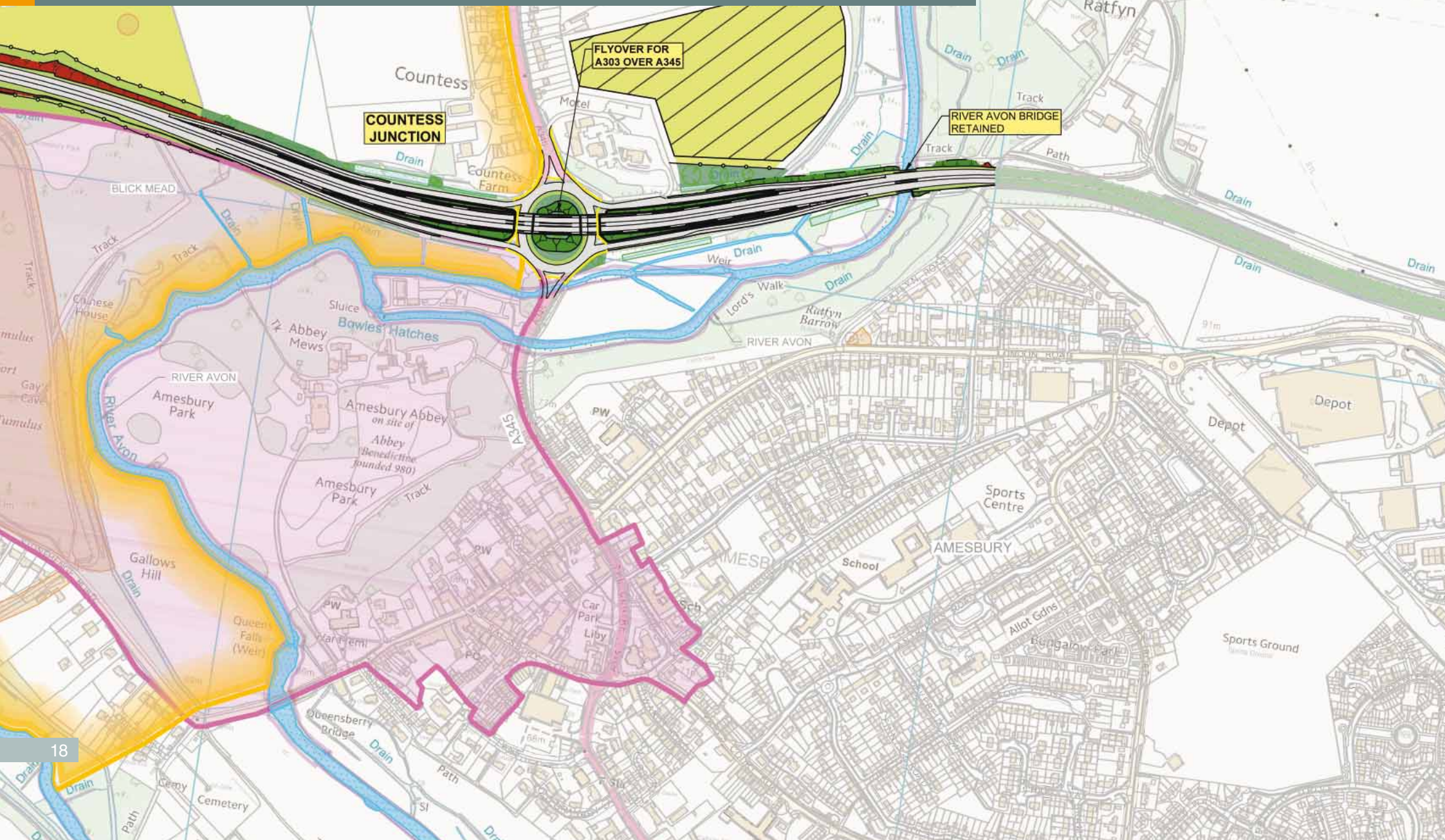
**Restoring tranquillity to the WHS** – Placing the existing surface road in a tunnel will remove the sight and sound of traffic and will restore the tranquil environment and setting of Stonehenge and large parts of the surrounding WHS landscape. This will greatly enhance the visitor experience. The wider green bridge will also improve the setting of the Winterbourne Stoke barrow group. The overall result will be one of considerable benefit for the WHS.

**Reuniting the WHS and reconnecting The Avenue** – The scheme will do much to re-unite the two halves of the site (north and south of the existing A303), including The Avenue where it is currently severed by the existing A303 dual carriageway. Visitors will be able to appreciate more of the historic landscape, including the inter-relationship of monuments and monument groups with the landscape and enjoy the mid-winter sunset solstice alignment between Stonehenge and the Sun Barrow without intrusion.

**Habitat connection and landscape restoration** – The scheme will connect habitats either side of the tunnel and the 150 metres wide green bridge, accommodating the safe movement of wildlife.

The removal of the road over much of the WHS will also remove visual intrusion on the landscape and, through an extended network of byways, will create a larger area for people to explore. Improving the visitor experience in this way will potentially increase the time people spend in the WHS from a couple of hours to see the stone circle and visitor centre, to a day or more as people walk the wider landscape and enjoy other significant features. This presents a major opportunity to increase understanding of, participation in, interpretation and presentation of the wider WHS landscape.

## The eastern section Countess junction to just beyond the Solstice Park junction





# LEGEND



INDICATIVE PERMANENT FENCELINE



DRAINAGE TREATMENT AREA



SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)



SSSI & SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION



LAND RETURNED TO AGRICULTURE



NEW CHALK GRASSLAND



SCHEDULED MONUMENT



NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE BOUNDARY



CONSERVATION AREA



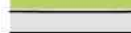
TREE PLANTED AREA



EARTHWORKS (CUTTING) CHALK GRASSLAND



EARTHWORKS (EMBANKMENT) CHALK GRASSLAND



HIGHWAY



CHALK GRASSLAND VERGE

CARRIAGEWAY

PAVED VERGE



NEW RESTRICTED BYWAY AND PRIVATE MEAN OF ACCESS



NEW RESTRICTED BYWAY



NEW PRIVATE MEAN OF ACCESS



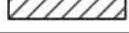
NEW BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC



NEW SHARED CYCLEWAY



NEW BRIDLEWAY



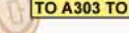
FOOTPATH



STOPPED UP EXISTING BYWAY



PROPOSED HEDGE



WORLD HERITAGE SITE BOUNDARY

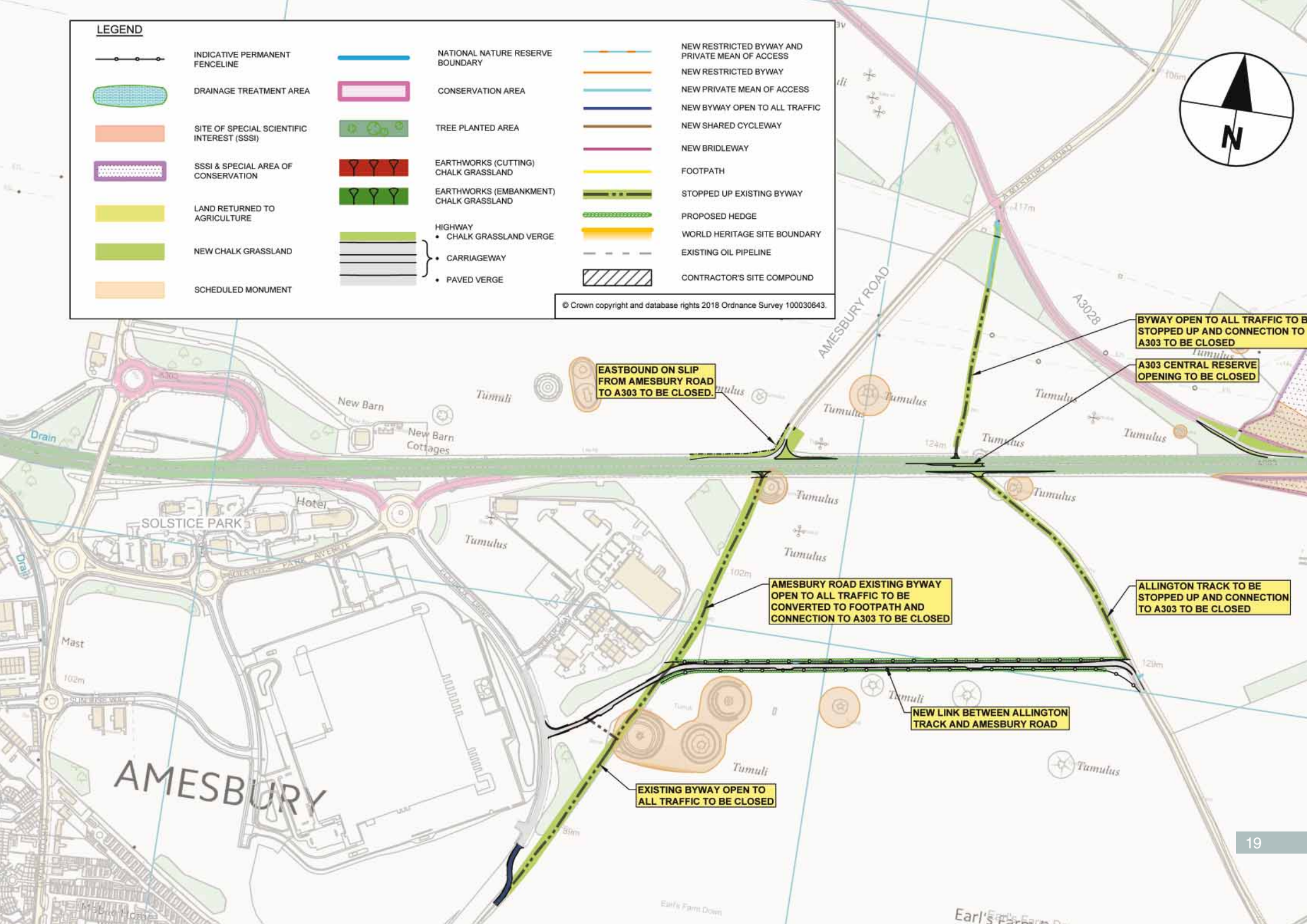


EXISTING OIL PIPELINE



CONTRACTOR'S SITE COMPOUND

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EASTBOUND ON SLIP FROM AMESBURY ROAD TO A303 TO BE CLOSED

BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC TO BE STOPPED UP AND CONNECTION TO A303 TO BE CLOSED

A303 CENTRAL RESERVE OPENING TO BE CLOSED

AMESBURY ROAD EXISTING BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC TO BE CONVERTED TO FOOTPATH AND CONNECTION TO A303 TO BE CLOSED

ALLINGTON TRACK TO BE STOPPED UP AND CONNECTION TO A303 TO BE CLOSED

NEW LINK BETWEEN ALLINGTON TRACK AND AMESBURY ROAD

EXISTING BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC TO BE CLOSED

## Eastern section

Having emerged from the tunnel, the new road will join the existing A303 on its approach to Countess roundabout. A flyover will carry the A303 above the roundabout junction with the A345.

To the east of the Solstice Park junction, a number of existing accesses on the A303 will be closed to remove dangerous conflicts between slow and fast-moving traffic.

## Developments since consultation

**Countess roundabout** – Following consultation, we have decided to carry the flyover over the roundabout on retained embankments with landscaped slopes. Local respondents preferred the visual appearance of this option rather than having the flyover carried on an open viaduct over the roundabout.

In addition, to mitigate traffic noise, the design of the flyover has been developed to include a noise barrier 1.8 metres high on both sides of the road.

**A3028 access to the A303** – Taking into consideration concerns raised, the visibility sightline will be improved for traffic joining the A303 eastbound from the A3028 on-slip, at the top of Solstice Hill.

## Benefits of the scheme

**Improving local connectivity** – By removing east-west through traffic from the roundabout and including signalised crossing facilities for non-motorised users, the improvements at Countess will make it easier for local residents and other users of the A345 to move between the northern and southern parts of Amesbury and to access the A303.

**Improving safety** – The changes to existing connections onto the A303 east of the existing Solstice Park junction will improve safety for all users.



*Visualisation of Countess roundabout junction with embankment with landscaped slopes*







## Improving journeys for everyone

### Reducing congestion on the A303

By providing a high standard dual carriageway with free-flowing junctions, the scheme will solve the longstanding traffic problems of congestion and delay on the existing A303 past Stonehenge.

Travel times will be improved so that during the peak tourist season the journey between Amesbury and Berwick Down, which can currently take 60 minutes or longer, will take only 7 or 8 minutes. Safety will be enhanced by making the A303 a free-flowing road, free of conflicting turning movements, reducing driver stress and avoiding the temptation for drivers to divert onto unsuitable local roads.



*Congestion on the A303*



## Creating public rights of way

The scheme will improve connectivity and accessibility for walkers, cyclists and horse riders through the creation of new rights of way, between Yarnbury Castle and Winterbourne Stoke in the west, and then all the way through to Amesbury in the east.

Once the tunnel and new A303 opens, the existing A303 through the WHS between Longbarrow and Stonehenge Road, Amesbury will be turned into a restricted byway for non-motorised use, save for occasional agricultural and utility vehicles.

The creation of these new public rights of way will provide access for residents in Amesbury and Winterbourne Stoke into the heart of the WHS, and enable all visitors to enjoy an enhanced tranquil experience.

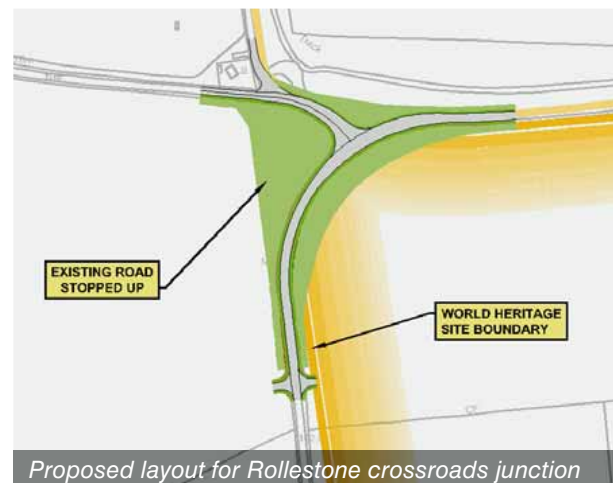


*Exploring the World Heritage Site*

## Reducing rat running

A free-flowing, congestion-free A303 will remove the reasons for traffic to rat run through local villages such as Larkhill and Shrewton, making it safer and easier for people to reach local facilities such as schools and shops.

Once the scheme has been granted consent we will modify Rollestone Crossroads west of Larkhill to alter traffic flow priorities, adopting the modified layout that was presented for supplementary consultation. This change will further discourage rat running through Shrewton.



## Keeping people moving during construction

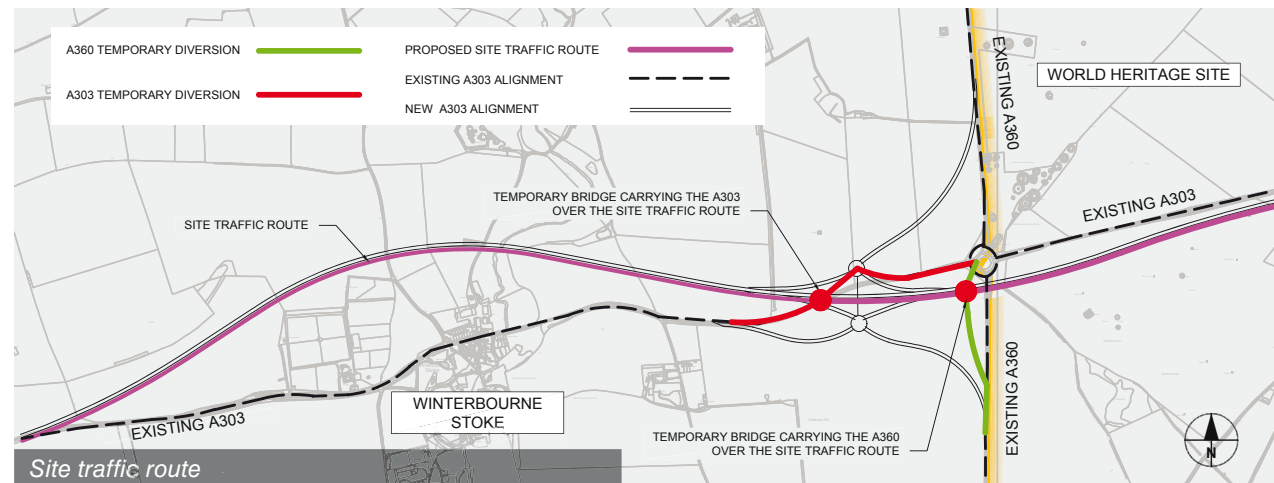
We expect the main construction works to start in 2021 and continue for approximately five years until 2026. We will work closely with Wiltshire Council as the local highway authority to agree traffic management plans that limit congestion on the local roads network and on the A303 during this period. This includes building a haul road within the works site boundaries to keep construction traffic separate from public roads as much as possible.

Traffic flows on the A303 will be maintained throughout the duration of the works, except for very occasional overnight closures to facilitate tie-ins between the new and existing road. There may also be closures for

safety reasons during certain construction operations, such as off-loading large items of plant and equipment.

For materials brought to site, delivery times will avoid peak periods and access routes will be confined to main roads. Our plans will keep traffic on the A303 moving during construction.

Even though construction of the tunnel may take up to 5 years, we will aim to complete and open the Winterbourne Stoke bypass and Countess flyover as soon as efficiently possible, to bring benefits to local communities at the earliest opportunity.





## 4. Next steps for our application

Following the Planning Inspectorate's acceptance of our DCO application for examination, the next steps are set out in the diagram below. You will be able to register with the Planning Inspectorate as an interested party and, in doing so, will be able to share your views on the scheme with them. The Inspectorate will make arrangements to start the public examination of the scheme proposals, probably in the early part of 2019.

The Secretary of State's decision will then follow 12 months later, in the first part of 2020.

For more information on the planning process, please see <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

### How to find out more

To find out more about our application you can visit the Planning Inspectorate's website (at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-west/a303-stonehenge/>) where you can view our full application and track how it is progressing, including when examination is due to start. You can also register to be an Interested Party through the website.

### The next steps of the application process

#### Pre-examination

During this step, you can register as an interested party; you will be kept informed of progress and opportunities to express your views on the scheme.

Inspectors will hold a Preliminary Meeting and set the timetable for examination.

#### Examination

The Inspectorate has **6 months** to carry out the examination.

You can send in your comments in writing. You can request to speak at a public hearing.

#### Decision

A recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport will be issued by the Inspectorate within **3 months**.

The Secretary of State then has a further **3 months** to issue a decision on the proposal.

## 5. Working with you

We have established a Local Community Forum with an Independent Chair. The Forum will hold regular meetings for sharing information between Highways England and people in the vicinity of the scheme.

Our scheme website will be kept updated with information about news and forthcoming events: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a303-stonehenge-amesbury-and-berwick-down/>



The Independent Chair of the Local Community Forum is Jim Claydon. Jim is a town planner with extensive experience in nationally significant infrastructure projects. Acting as an Examining Inspector on three offshore wind farms and chair of the community forum at Hinkley Point C nuclear power station, Jim has earned his

reputation for handling high profile projects successfully.

Jim has lived and worked in the South West for over 40 years. He is a Past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute and former Head of the School of Planning and Architecture at the University of the West of England.

As Independent Chair, Jim will ensure that the Forum works closely with other groups and organisations, including Highways England, to identify and deliver wider legacy benefits of the A303 scheme.







# Contact us



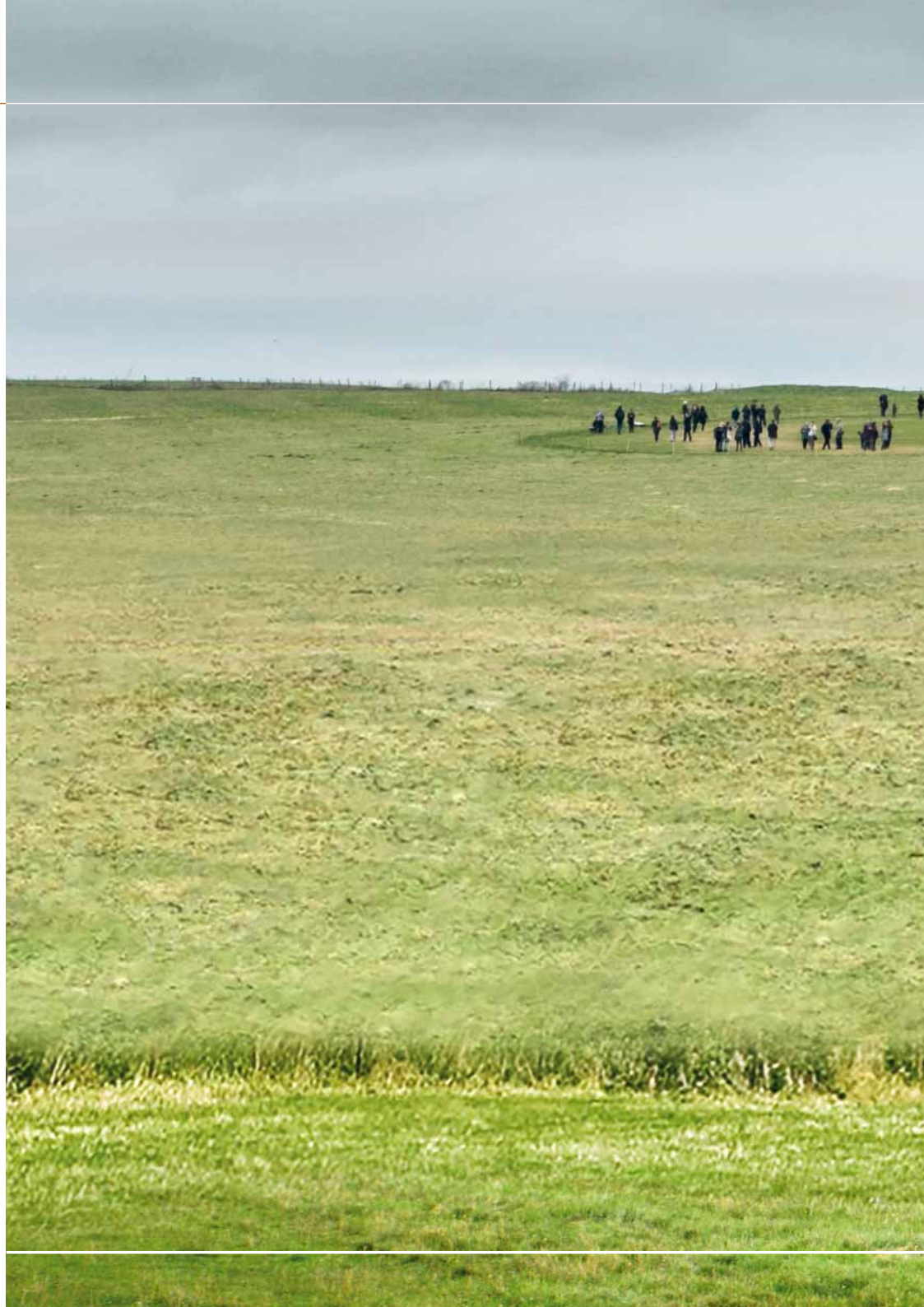
[A303Stonehenge@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A303Stonehenge@highwaysengland.co.uk)



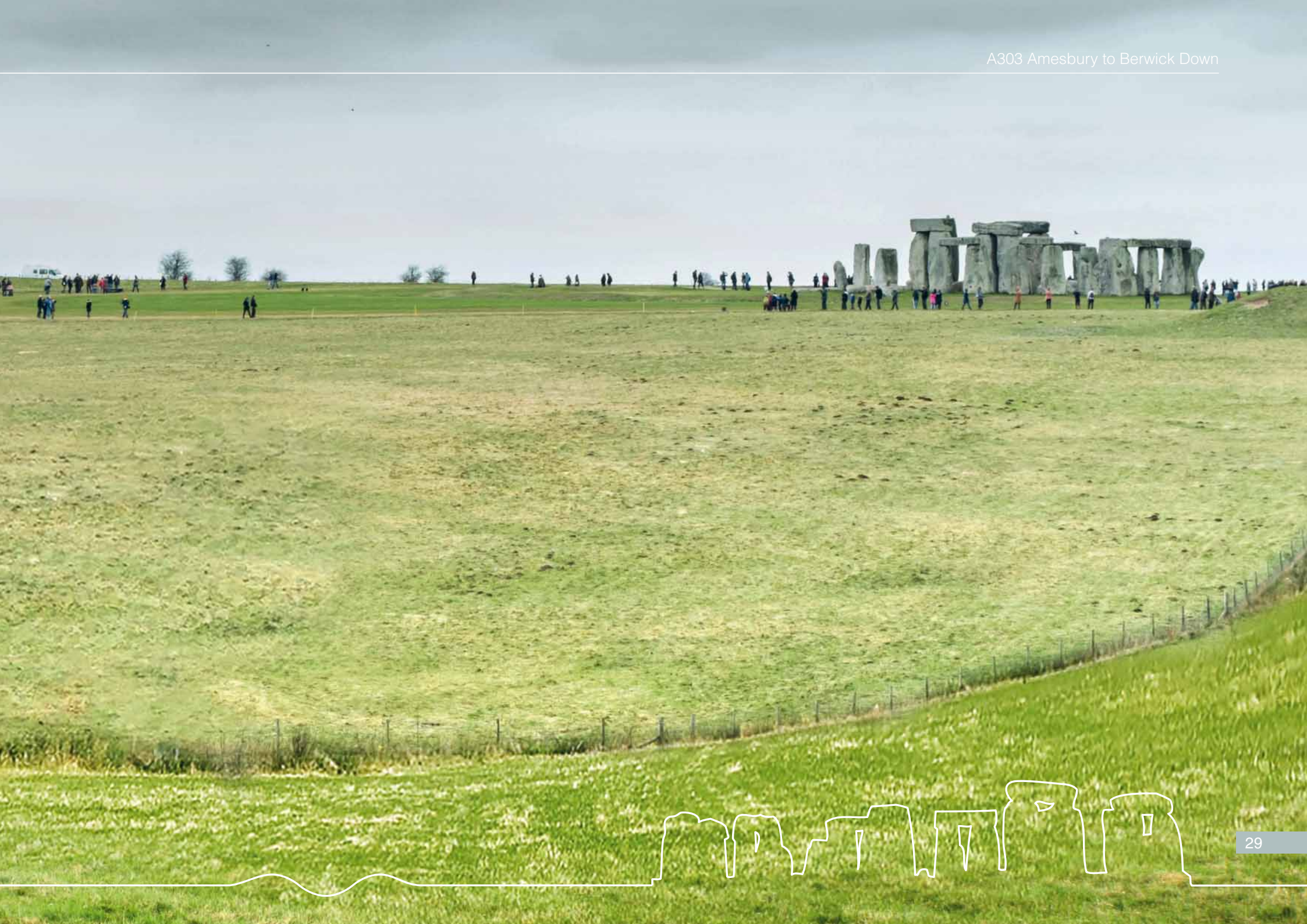
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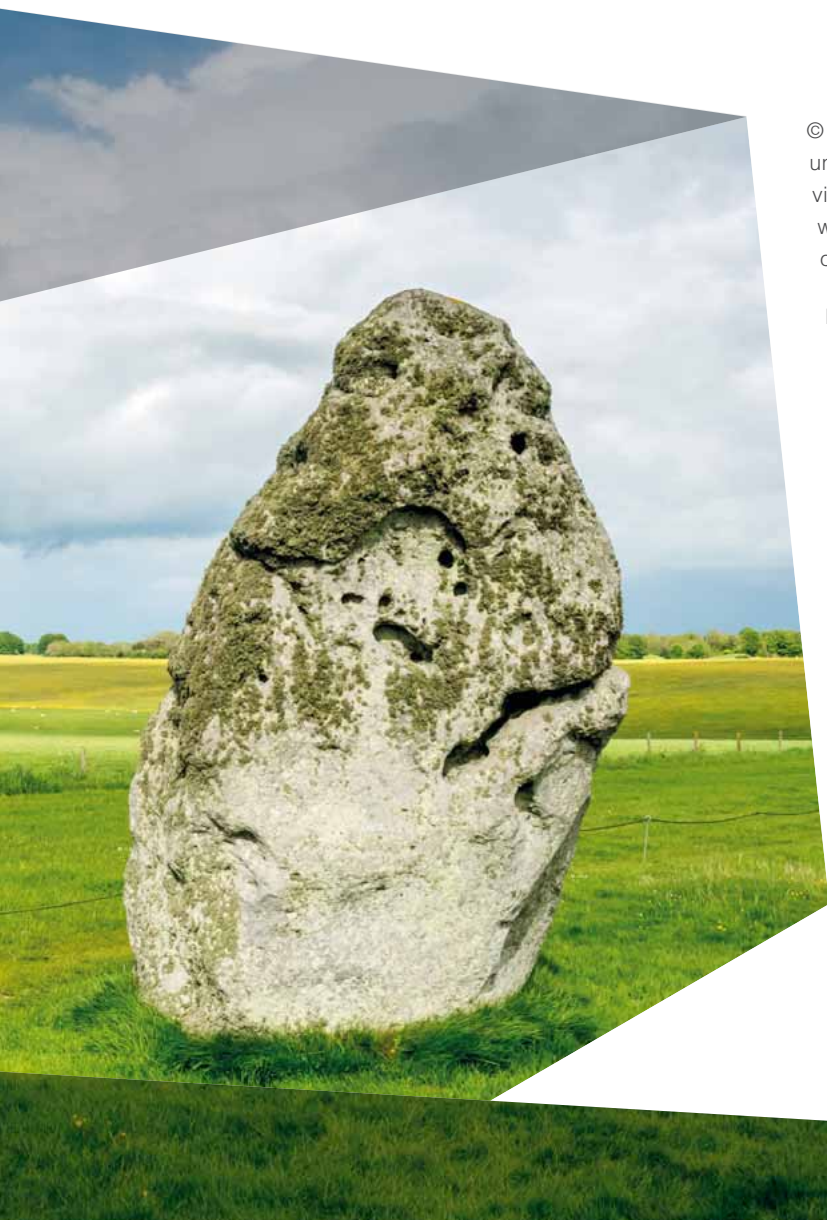








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