

**26 July 05 Salisbury District Council refuse planning permission for new Visitor Centre and Access Scheme – below are comments from English Heritage and National Trust**

**English Heritage**

English Heritage's application for new visitor and access facilities at Stonehenge has been refused planning permission 26 July 2005 by the Planning and Regulatory Panel of Salisbury District Council.

English Heritage is very surprised and disappointed by this decision. Approval was recommended by the planning authority and the scheme was also approved by the Northern Area Committee of Salisbury District Council at its meeting of 19th July 2005.

We believe that the grounds for refusal are ones which can easily be addressed and will be discussing with Salisbury District Council when to re-submit the scheme.

**National Trust**

The National Trust is disappointed by the decision of Salisbury District Council to decline planning permission for English Heritage's plans to remove the existing facilities and car park at Stonehenge and build a new visitor centre at Countess East near Amesbury, together with a land train access system into the Stonehenge Historic Landscape.

However, as Fiona Reynolds, the Director General of the National Trust makes clear, "English Heritage's plans are only one part of the vision to re-unite the Stones with their landscape and improve the experience for visitors. Other plans for visitor access will now clearly need to be worked on, but we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the fundamental solutions to Stonehenge's problems lie with resolving the current stranglehold of the A303 and A344 roads.

"There remains an urgent need for government, through its recently announced review of road scheme options at Stonehenge, to deliver a suitable road scheme that ends the blight of traffic around one of the world's greatest heritage sites. Decisions on this are already long overdue and debates about visitor facilities should not be used as an excuse for further delays on this critical aspect of the Stonehenge vision."