

A Guide to Creative Practice in the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site



Illuminated Stonehenge on UNESCO World Heritage Day 2018 by Finnish Light Artist Kari Kola. Kola's "Impact with Light" at Stonehenge was in place overnight and formed part of English Heritage's activities to mark 100 Years since Stonehenge was given to the Nation and a Century of Care and Conservation.

Our Aspiration

The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, World Heritage Site will continue to inspire architects, artists, historians, archaeologists and others across all artistic and creative genres and forms. Artistic and creative engagements will enhance our understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of The World Heritage Site and actively encourage new audiences. All artistic and creative engagements will respect the fragility of the archaeological remains and their settings.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide an Arts Framework that will encourage artists and creative practitioners to produce work that is inspired by and/or amplifies the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value¹ (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS). This will help to develop a wider audience, engage visitors and the local community and increase knowledge and enjoyment of the WHS.

Artists who want to work with any aspect of the World Heritage Site need to understand the complexities of how the site is managed and the sensitivities involved. This guidance is for information and background research. It does not give permission for activity nor have any artistic value judgement.

This document explains more about the nature of World Heritage and specifically the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site. It identifies the partners involved and who might need to be consulted/approached to support community engagement through artistic projects.

What is a World Heritage Site?

World Heritage Sites (WHS) are natural and cultural sites of Outstanding Universal Value to all humanity. They represent the common heritage of humankind. Governments pledge to identify, protect, present and transmit them for this and future generations by signing the UNESCO World Heritage Convention². The prestigious label is given by UNESCO, following nomination by national governments, to sites that meet the strict international criteria. Every year, after rigorous scrutiny of applications, new sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List.³ In 2015 there were 1,031 World Heritage Sites.

Why is Stonehenge and Avebury a World Heritage Site?

The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites became a cultural World Heritage Site in 1986. One of the first seven WHS to be created in the UK. The two parts of the WHS are located some 40km apart in Wiltshire. The two landscapes that make up the WHS are focused on the great stone circles at Stonehenge and Avebury.

In addition to the great stone circles there are also hundred of associated sites, including burial mounds and earthen structures such as Silbury Hill to the west of Avebury and the Cursus north of Stonehenge. The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan provides further information on the monuments within the WHS and provides references for further reading.

The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS is internationally important for its complexes of outstanding prehistoric monuments. Stonehenge is the most architecturally sophisticated

¹ Outstanding Universal Value is the central idea of the World Heritage Convention. "Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of humanity." (Operational Guidelines para 49)

² UNESCO World Heritage Convention <http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>

³ The World Heritage List is a searchable resource identifying all the World Heritage Sites <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

prehistoric stone circle in the world, while Avebury is the largest. Together, with interrelated monuments, and their associated landscapes,⁴ they demonstrate Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial and mortuary practices resulting from around 2,000 years of continuous use and monument building between c3700 and 1600 BC. As such they represent a unique embodiment of our collective heritage.

Stonehenge and Avebury are both popular tourist destinations with around 1,300,000 visitors a year at Stonehenge and approximately 300,000 at Avebury. The WHS is also a place where people live and work and much of it is farmed. Managing the various activities and interests to protect and enhance the World Heritage Site whilst maintaining its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is a complex and challenging task undertaken by a partnership of private landowners, charities such as English Heritage, the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and local and national government departments. These partners work together to maintain the WHS through the delivery of a shared Management Plan.

The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS Management Plan 2015

What is the WHS Management Plan?

Within the UK, Management Plans provide the overarching strategy for the protection, interpretation and sustainable use of the WHS. They are a material consideration in planning decisions and provide an advisory framework for guiding management initiatives. Management Plans are endorsed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and referred to UNESCO, all landowners and agencies within the WHS are asked to endorse the Management Plan and agree to collaborate on upholding its policies and delivering its actions.

The 2015 Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan provides a framework for all partners and aims to achieve the correct balance between conservation, access, the interests of the local community and the sustainable use of the Site, whether for recreation and tourism, or farming. The overarching aim of the strategy is to protect the Site to maintain its OUV as agreed by UNESCO while providing access and interpretation for visitors and local people, and allowing its continued use for sustainable farming agriculture and tourism.

What does the Management Plan say about the Arts and the WHS?

Section 10.7 of the Management Plan discusses using the creative arts sector to help communities engage with the WHS.

“The use of art and the creative sector as a way of engaging communities with their heritage is well established and used by other WHS in the UK such as the Jurassic Coast as a means of reaching those people who might not normally engage with heritage...”

...Wiltshire Council’s Arts Development Team has an excellent network of arts organisations, venues, festivals and practitioners across the county and beyond. This network can be used to

⁴ The associated landscape refers to the setting for each monument and the way that the monuments are placed in the landscape in relation to each other (see Attributes).

deliver partnership events which both inspire and entertain but also engage people with the WHS and its attributes of OUV and allow artists a route to access the WHS as inspiration for their work.

Stonehenge and Avebury have already had an impact on the cultural life through the work of many artists including Turner, Constable and more recently Piper, Nash and Inshaw. The WHS could continue to contribute to the already rich and vibrant cultural life of Wiltshire and several local artists have expressed an interest in being able to use their talents to enrich their work and the lives of others. However, any creative arts programme must give due regard to the attributes of OUV and their protection and would need to consider any impact that traffic and infrastructure required may have on the WHS and the communities within them..."

The Management Plan outlines a policy framework and the 8 underpinning priorities for the WHS. The arts and creative sector are specifically identified within Policy 5 and are relevant to Priorities 4 and 7.

Policy 5d – Artists and the creative sector will offer new and inspiring ways for communities and a wider range of visitors to engage with and learn about the OUV of the WHS and the wide range of artistic responses to it both past and present.

Action

121 Develop an Arts Framework articulating the attributes of OUV of the WHS and the potential for their artistic expression

122 Deliver an artists' symposium exploring the themes related to the attributes of OUV including the shaping of the WHS landscape.

Priority 4 – Improve the interpretation and enhance the visitor experience of the wider landscape

Priority 7 – Encourage local community engagement with the WHS

The priorities of the WHS and its partners

The WHS aims to inspire and engage the widest range of people in understanding and enjoying the OUV. The World Heritage Convention obliges governments to protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations its World Heritage Sites.

The attributes of OUV help to explain what makes up the OUV of the Site.

1. Stonehenge itself as a globally famous and iconic monument
2. The physical remains of the Neolithic and Bronze Age
3. The siting of the Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to the landscape
4. The design of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to the skies and astronomy
5. The siting of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to each other

6. The disposition, physical remains and settings of the key Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary, ceremonial and other monuments and sites of the period, which together form a landscape without parallel

7. The influence of the remains of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial monuments and their landscape settings on architects, artists, historians, archaeologists and others.

The desire to present the values of the WHS also needs to be balanced with the need to protect the Site. Certain activities have the potential to be intrusive and have a negative impact on the Site and its attributes of OUV.

The WHS Coordination Unit and its partners welcome projects that draw their inspiration from the WHS and its landscape without parallel; that help people to understand and explore the attributes of OUV set out above; and to discover the less well known and explored areas of the WHS. The WHS Coordination Unit also welcomes opportunities to engage with the local community to encourage a sense of ownership and pride and to help them gain maximum benefit from the internationally important heritage assets amongst which they live.

Work created within the WHS can be shared with a wider audience at venues outside the immediate WHS boundary. Film-makers, visual artists, writers and musicians can share the values, beauty and inspiration of the WHS through presentations in nearby towns, across the UK and beyond. This ensures that the OUV is presented and transmitted to the widest possible audience and that the Site is also conserved and protected for future generations.

Who manages what and how are decisions made?

The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS is owned and managed by a number of organisations, government bodies, charities and individuals. There are maps in the Management Plan that identify who owns what part of the landscape.

http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/assets/05-BIBLIO_APPENDICES_MAPS_FACTS.pdf

The decision making process will vary depending on the location and nature of the project. See below for a list of the partners involved, critical information and links to find out more.

WHS Management

Both Stonehenge and Avebury have Steering Committees made up of representatives of the WHS partners. These Committees meet two or three times a year. In addition a Stonehenge WHS Advisory Forum meets at least annually and they are a wider group of stakeholders with an interest in Stonehenge.

The Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group (ASAHRG) is a group of professional curators, academics and freelance researchers who meet to encourage, coordinate and disseminate research in the WHS.

Task and Finish groups are set up as required to deliver projects for the Steering Committees as required.

A Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Panel, with an independent chair coordinates the work of the Coordination Unit and both parts of the WHS.

The minutes of the steering committees meetings, ASHRG and the Partnership Panel can be found here <http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/management-of-whs/>

WHS Coordination Unit

The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Coordination Unit coordinates the work of partners to achieve the objectives of the Management Plan. The WHS Coordination Unit is based at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre within the Heritage Service of Wiltshire Council. If you are uncertain of any aspect to do with artistic and creative activity within the WHS please contact the Coordination Unit in the first instance.

Historic England

We are the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. Our duties include offering specialist advice to HM Government on the care of some of the most sensitive heritage assets, including scheduled monuments and highly-graded listed buildings. Unsurprisingly, the two areas of the WHS contain a wealth of archaeological sites that are 'Scheduled' and a fair grouping of historic buildings characteristic of their time of origin and this very special landscape. It is necessary to seek permission from Historic England to carry out works, alterations, installations or activities that may impact on sensitive heritage assets. This can range from installing a temporary tent for an outdoor activity to accessing a site for filming.

Historic England contact details:

Historic England, 29 Queen Square, BRISTOL BS 1 4ND

Phone 0117 9751308

southwest@historicengland.org.uk

English Heritage

English Heritage manages the Stonehenge Monument Field itself, and operates the Stonehenge Visitor Centre which is visited by over 1 million people each year. Stonehenge is open to visitors 363 days per year, with opening times ranging from 09:30 – 17:30 in the winter, and 09:00 – 20:00 at the peak of the summer. Open access to Stonehenge occurs 4 times a year, for Summer Solstice and the other seasonal celebrations.

Any project at the Monument Field, would need to comply with the Stonehenge Regulations (1997) which among other clauses, prohibits the use of amplified music and fire. It is not possible to stand or lean anything on the Stones, cover or paint them in any way. Artists considering working at Stonehenge should also respect that the Stones have a strong spiritual meaning for many people. The Visitor Centre has a temporary exhibition space which offers an opportunity for artists but they should be mindful that this is programmed by the English Heritage interpretation team, often two years in advance.

Approaches to work with English Heritage at Stonehenge should be made to the Stonehenge Director, Kate Davies on kate.davies@english-heritage.org.uk in the first instance. Artists should be aware that approval for their work may need to come from the English Heritage Chief Executive so we recommend giving at least 6 months notice.

The National Trust

National Trust is the largest conservation charity in England with over 5 million members. We own and manage significant areas of land in both halves of the WHS. At Stonehenge we care for over 2,000 acres of land which includes some 350 Scheduled and Unscheduled Monuments. At Avebury we own and manage over 1,500 acres of land and a number of visitor offers including the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury Chapel and Avebury Manor. We welcome approximately 350,000 visitors to each half of the WHS and run events throughout the year. Further details are available on our web-site nationaltrust/Avebury.org.com

Most of our landscape is Scheduled and therefore protected by law from any activity that might be harmful to the WHS, or its OUV. Approaches to work with National Trust should be made in the first place to Avebury@nationaltrust.org.uk or Stonehenge@nationaltrust.org.uk. Artists should be aware that approval for any work may take some time and are therefore advised to allow at least 6 months for such consideration.

Natural England

Natural England manages the National Nature Reserve at Fyfield Down. Any project in this area would need to be discussed and agreed by the Senior Ranger responsible for the Site and the landowner.

Private ownership

A large part of the WHS is in private ownership and the relevant landowners need to give their permission before any project can be agreed which will affect their landholding. Farmers who have taken up a Stewardship Scheme with Natural England/Defra may have restrictions on what they are able to permit on land subject to such schemes. You may also need to apply for permission depending on any heritage or conservation designations affecting the area.

Archives and Artefacts for the WHS

Wiltshire Museum

The Wiltshire Museum is run by the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and its collections feature many finds and archives relating to both parts of the WHS. All the collections are Designated by Government as being internationally important. The Museum is home to the best Bronze Age collection in Britain, with objects from the burials of the chieftains, leaders and priests who were alive during the 1,500 years when Stonehenge was in active use. Many of these were excavated by William Cunnington, one of the pioneers of archaeology and our archives includes the hand-written notes and watercolour drawings that were edited to create *Ancient Wiltshire*, the first archaeological report, published in 1812.

The Museum features award-winning prehistory galleries and a special exhibition programme in our new Exhibition Galleries. Exhibitions are selected to complement our mission statement –

‘inspiring people to explore the archaeology, history and environment of Wiltshire. We are a member of the Wessex Museums Partnership with Salisbury Museum, the Dorset County Museum and Poole Museums Service. Together we are developing outreach programmes to engage communities across Wiltshire. Contact david.dawson@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk.

The Salisbury Museum

Stonehenge is part of Salisbury Museum’s collecting area. For over 100 years the museum has collected finds and archives from excavations that have taken place both at the monument and in the surrounding landscape. The museum has also collected fine art, ephemera, books and photography relating to the monument – this ranges from a 1828 watercolour by JMW Turner to posters prepared for the Stonehenge Free Festival in the 1980s. Salisbury Museum’s archaeology collections are Designated by the Arts Council due to their international importance.

Salisbury Museum has a permanent gallery dedicated to the archaeology of the region which includes finds from Stonehenge. The museum also organises a changing programme of temporary exhibitions. Sometimes these look at the relationship between art and archaeology, particularly how artists have been inspired by collections and monuments to present their own interpretations of the past. If an artist has a project proposal or wishes to exhibit at the museum please contact the Director Adrian Green (adriangreen@salisburymuseum.org.uk) in the first instance to discuss further.

Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre

Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre is the home of the Heritage and Arts service of Wiltshire Council, in partnership with Swindon Borough Council. It holds over 7 miles of archives including maps, plans and deeds; local studies material such as books, photographs, prints and engravings; and archaeological data and aerial photographs relating to the World Heritage Site. It also is home to [Wiltshire Buildings Record](#) which can help with the history of buildings within the WHS. The History Centre also has a [Heritage Education Service](#) which can help link schools with creative practitioners.

Please see www.wshc.eu for access information and opening times. Please also see our [toolkit](#) for artists which has been drawn up to encourage artists and creative practitioners to work with our collections. We are happy to work with artists in many different ways but please note that exhibitions of original material and the reproduction of items still in copyright may require the owners’ permission so forward planning is essential.

Additional Protections

There are a number of additional protections and requirements that apply in the World Heritage Site that you may need to consider including:

[World Heritage Site](#)

[Scheduled Monument](#)

[Site of Special Scientific Interest](#)

[Listed building](#)

[Conservation Area](#)

[National Nature Reserve](#)

[County Wildlife Site](#)

[Registered Park and Garden](#)

Special Area of Conservation

[Stonehenge Regulations \(1997\)](#)

Further information

Wiltshire Council Arts Service

The arts service aims to help and encourage everybody in the community to have equal access to a range of high quality arts opportunities, either as participants or audiences. It works in partnership with other organisations to make sure the arts opportunities on offer reflect the needs of the local community. The arts service's Arts in Wiltshire blog

<https://theartsinwiltshire.wordpress.com> is a creative space, sharing ideas and opportunities from and with the cultural sector. It encourages connections between artists and communities and aims to inspire creativity. The dedicated Arts & Landscape section highlights the work of artists in our environment. The blog is also a place for those working in arts and culture to keep up to date with jobs, opportunities, funding, resources and training.

The Wiltshire Council's website lists a number of local venues and arts organisations, who may be potential partners and a source of inspiration for creative practitioners: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/arts-galleries-enjoy-experience-arts>

Contact: arts@wiltshire.gov.uk

Other useful websites related to the World Heritage Site and its management.

Wiltshire Council:

www.wiltshirecouncil.gov.uk

Visit Wiltshire:

www.visitwiltshire.co.uk

UNESCO World Heritage Centre:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/>

Historic England:

www.historicengland.org.uk