



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Stonehenge, Avebury  
and Associated sites  
inscribed on the World  
Heritage List in 1986

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## **AVEBURY WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Date:** Wednesday 21 November 2012 at 10.00 a.m.  
**Venue:** Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall, Marlborough

### **Present:**

Christopher Young (Chair) – English Heritage  
Amanda Chadburn – English Heritage (ACh)  
Sarah Simmonds – World Heritage Site Officer  
Gill Swanton – North Farm, West Overton  
Colin Shell – AAHRG  
Andrew Williamson – Avebury Parish Council  
Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger – County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council  
Henry Oliver – Director, North Wessex Downs AONB  
Bill Buxton – Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council  
Cllr Jemima Milton – Wiltshire Council  
Michael Northmore-Ball – Fyfield & West Overton Parish Council  
Beth Thomas – Stonehenge WHS Officer  
Ariane Crampton - Wiltshire Council (ACr)  
Kate Fielden – Avebury Society  
Cllr Stuart Wheeler – Wiltshire Council  
David Vaughan – English Heritage  
Jan Tomlin – National Trust  
Nick Snashall – National Trust  
Gerry Hamersley – Natural England (on behalf of Stephanie Payne)  
Emma Glover (minutes) - Wiltshire Council

### **1. Introduction & Apologies**

Apologies were received from Andrew Vines, Robin Butler, Stephanie Payne, David Andrew and Mike Wilmott.

Michael Northmore-Ball was welcomed as the new representative for Fyfield & West Overton Parish Council; a vote of thanks and appreciation was proposed for Sue Rogers for her work on the Steering Committee and support of the World Heritage Site.

This is Amanda Chadburn's last attendance at the Avebury WHS Steering Committee meeting; appreciation and thanks were given to Amanda for her invaluable hard work for the World Heritage Site over the years. ACh is taking up the role of Senior National Rural & Environmental Adviser

**ACTION: Chair to send a letter to SR to thank her for her hard work and support of the WHS**

### **2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes were agreed unchanged. No matters arising for addition to the agenda.

Action 9 Mark Stansby from the Traffic and Network Management Group in the Traffic Management Team is responsible for brown tourism signs

### **3. International Update: World Heritage Committee 2012 St. Petersburg and UNESCO Periodic Reporting**

#### **3.1 World Heritage Committee**

CY reported on the meeting. There are now 962 World Heritage properties; 26 sites (five natural, 20 cultural and one mixed) were added to the list which now has 745 cultural, 188 natural and 29 mixed properties in all.

There were no UK nominations this year. For the UK the main item of interest were the State of Conservation Reports. The reopening of mines and the Hayle Harbour development in the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site and developments around Liverpool WHS, Tower of London and Westminster were all considered. Liverpool is the first UK site to be put on the danger list due to the proposed development of tall buildings by Peel Holdings

The Operational Guidelines were revised and copies have been circulated to all UK Coordinators. No major changes have been made but there is more on Impact Assessments for developments affecting WHS.

#### **3.2 UNESCO Periodic Reporting 2012 -13**

Periodic Reporting is now being done on UK sites and across Europe and North America to assess how well the sites are being looked after and what threats exist to each.

Questionnaires are completed for each site to create comparable data globally. This process takes place every 6 years.

SS and BT are to begin completing the Periodic Report questionnaire which will cover both Stonehenge and Avebury. They will bring it to their respective Steering Committee meetings for discussion before submission. The deadline for submission is the end of July 2013.

GS enquired about the implications for the WHS of David Cameron trying to prevent Judicial Reviews happening within WHSs. CY confirmed that Planning Circular 07/09 is still a full circular in use until we are told otherwise.

HO asked if English Heritage had any intelligence on the Growth and Infrastructure Bill and how it might impact on the WHS. Changes are being made to it which could allow unrestricted infrastructure development particularly in relation to broadband. The changes are currently out for consultation, HO encouraged all to respond to the consultation.

**ACTION:** HO to copy Committee members into his consultation response and circulate details of the consultation.

### **4. Governance Review**

Christopher Young led a discussion based on the five questions on the agenda. Stonehenge discussed these questions at their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November where there was general consensus that the proposals were sound in principle but that they needed further discussion to explore detailed arrangements. There were written notes in advance of the meeting from Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society who were in general agreement with the main principles of the Review.

#### **4.1 Summary of discussion resulting from each of the following questions:**

**a) Do you agree that there should be an Executive Board? Do you have any comments or suggestions on its makeup, role or relationship to the other groups?**

CS expressed concern that an Executive Board would change the role of the steering committee. It may encourage less commitment from members as they would be less directly involved in decisions related to the WHS.

CS also concerned that the size of the Board may be too small, bringing a potential power struggle between stakeholders with a commercial interest. He believes that Natural England should be present on the Board. GA stated that it isn't necessary or viable for Natural England with its current limited resources to attend the committee and the Board. Policies, guidance and committee representation is in place to enable their role to be carried out effectively without their presence on the Board.

KF stated that the ideas and thoughts of the Avebury Society have been passed to SS and BT for inclusion in ant future discussion. The Society does not support the formation of an Executive Board. Stonehenge and Avebury are too different and there is likely to be a bias towards Stonehenge. If it is to go ahead we need to consider very carefully the form composition and role of the Executive Board to ensure pitfalls are avoided.

AW thought the purpose of the Board was unclear, and as a result the purpose of the local steering committee was unclear. Avebury community are a major stakeholder in the WHS so should be included in the Board if the steering committees are to be powerless.

ACr stated the position of Wiltshire Council, which considers that one over-arching body is necessary. It also recognises the need for full consultation on decision-making. The Council would like a representative of the standing conference and local community representation on the Board. SW added that it would be a two-way street between the Board and committees. It is essential to have a body which has to make difficult decisions when necessary.

GH interpreted the Egeria report as promoting a very upward facing group reporting up to UNESCO. He also pointed out that the report appears to vest the main executive responsibilities in the independent chair rather than the Board. This will need to be clarified.

HO suggested that the Board will be making the decisions, and only advised by the steering committees. He was concerned that less people will be involved in decisions which would be simply passed down by the Board.

GS said that the Board should be the servant of the steering committees, facilitating delivery.

BB wondered who the Board would report to; CY said that was a detail currently unknown.

MPK believed that it was essential to have steering committee representatives on the Board, and that an Executive Board is essential in a period of limited resources. ACh commented that in times when finances are diminishing we need to be more efficient and manage and report on the WHS as one site. There are lots of issues common to both parts of the site and some specific to each part. Both parts have issues which need to be dealt with at a higher level. She considered that adequate terms of reference for the Board and each local Committee are needed for everyone to achieve a better level of understanding of the issue.

AW conveyed the thoughts of Robin Butler, representing local farmers: he agrees to a Board in principle but there must be representatives of the farmers and Avebury Parish Council on the Board.

CS suggested that the Board may be a mechanism for fundraising. AW thought that funding must be considered despite not being strongly mentioned in the Egeria report.

SS pointed out that the recommendation for an independent Chair, possibly salaried, must also be considered. The Chair is given importance in the report as a figurehead and champion for the WHS with a pivotal role in relation to the Executive Board.

CY summarised the discussion of the proposed Executive Board:

- Stonehenge were keen to maintain their independence from Avebury due to their differences at a local level
- It is suggested that the Board include the three major stakeholders (English Heritage, National Trust and Wiltshire Council), involve the chairs of both steering committees, and a representative of the standing conference. It should also have an odd number of people
- UNESCO puts a strong emphasis on community involvement which has been reflected by discussion at this meeting
- People's concerns centre on the undeveloped terms of reference for the Executive Board and the Steering Committees. Details about the roles and relationship and composition will need to be fleshed out in advance of the next Steering Committee meetings where the more detailed proposals can be considered once again.

***b) Do you agree with the suggested structure of three groups below the Executive Board: a Stonehenge group; an Avebury group; and one standing conference on archaeological and historical research?***

CS stated that AAHRG is in general agreement with this suggestion, but has concerns that the structure may be top heavy. Expert and community input needs to form the basis for informed management decisions. CY added that the steering committees could agree the annual action plans within the framework of the Management Plan to be passed up to the Executive Board.

JM stated that the voices of residents and parish councils need to be heard and supported, in the structure and mechanism decided on. AW thought that the specific purposes of each group needs to be 'fleshed out' to help focus discussions about their structure.

ACh commented that Stonehenge is missing an equivalent archaeological group. Following discussion CY concluded that a standing conference on archaeological and historical research might work. The AAHRG terms of reference should be looked at to form a model for this. There is room to establish time for dedicated focus on the different halves of the WHS as well as the overarching questions.

***c) Do you think that there should be a single Coordination Unit for both Stonehenge & Avebury? Do you have any comments or suggestions on this proposed arrangement?***

HO stated that the current WHS Officers do a great job. It may be useful to have the two posts set up together rather in separate situations. However he expressed concern that a single coordination unit hosted by one body may result in undue single stakeholder influence on the roles which need a level of independence. HO also asked what the intended relationship between the two coordination posts and the WHS would be. Would there still be a coordinator for each half? AW commented on behalf of Robin Butler and the local farmers to say that he's keen that local focus isn't lost in a joint unit.

ACH stated that there shouldn't be any loss in resource as the job couldn't be done properly with any reduction in resource. If more resource was added to the current coordination role it would in turn increase resource income and action. ACh also pointed out that the Egeria report suggested that the two posts are in a separate unit from the WHS hosting organisation.

MPK stated that Wiltshire Council supported the idea of a joint coordination unit; it is a good opportunity to pool expertise and resources and would provide more opportunities to fundraise and avoid duplication.

SS added that if more is invested the more benefits will be achieved. Administrative support is also essential to increase productivity and provide time for identifying additional funding. An example of investment in WHS is provided by Derwent Valley Mills where the Council has extended the team from one coordinator to three coordinators dealing with different areas, a director and administrative support. This is yielding very positive outcomes.

CS said that the personal interaction between the coordinators and the planning department is important to maintain. He also suggested that a more suitable term for the unit would be a 'management unit' as in Bath WHS.

CY concluded that the general consensus appeared to support a joint coordination unit. A great deal of joint work is already done across the whole WHS by the coordinators. He also stressed that the unit is intended to have at least two coordinators and would ideally follow other successful WHS models which have invested in a variety of roles within the unit.

***d) Do you agree that the key partners should take joint responsibility for the funding of the WHS Coordination Unit? Do you have any comments or suggestions on this?***

It was confirmed by both Wiltshire Council and English Heritage that they have money allocated in their budgets for funding their respective coordination posts for 2013.

JM thought that all partners should contribute in future. JT and NS stressed that the National Trust would not be able to make a financial contribution to this aspect of the WHS. The National Trust already put money into other aspects of WHS management and projects. JM suggested that an illustration of exactly where the National Trust allocates their financial contributions would be very useful.

AW proposed that it would be useful to find out how much each partner contributes of the management of the WHS. CY agreed that it would be beneficial to have an overview of who spends what and where. SS added that she was waiting to receive this information for Avebury from partners in relation to the evaluation of the WHS Management Plan.

GH asked how vulnerable each costing/funding option is. Whichever option is chosen it needs to be a sustainable financial model. The WHS should not rely on a limited number of partners alone, in this case Wiltshire Council and English Heritage, for financial security. Everyone puts in sums of money into the WHS management but this is a separate issue. The coordination unit is a core cost for which sustainable funding needs to be secured.

CS asked if it's worth going ahead with the governance review at all if we don't know it's financially feasible.

CY suggested that before a financial model for funding the unit is decided on, it would be best to find out what money is currently being spent where to inform the discussion.

**ACTION:** All partners to provide estimates of their financial contributions to their management of the WHS including its coordination function to SS by 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013

**e) *Do you have any suggestions, in addition to those included in the Governance Review, on how the World Heritage Site could be managed to ensure its continued protection and gain maximum benefit from its status?***

SS reminded the Committee how much of an asset the WHS is, rather than a burden. We need to be clear about the benefits we wish to gain in addition to those already delivered and invest in achieving these. This is supported by a studies included the Price Waterhouse Cooper work for DCMS in 2008.

BT commented that an annual public forum/communications event was suggested by the Stonehenge Steering Committee, and that it would be a relatively cheap and effective means of promoting the WHS.

HO agreed that the forum event ties in with the Egeria report's suggestion of holding an annual conference. AW agreed it would help attract more support, and CY said that good models at other WHSs exist for this kind of event.

#### **4.2 Next steps:**

The discussion reflected cautious support for the general proposals but also the need to develop further details of all aspects including the roles and relationships of the proposed groups. The Steering Committee will need to consider these more detailed proposals before agreement can be reached.

CY reported that the Stonehenge Committee had agreed to set up a small working group to consider the recommendations in detail and develop an action plan and timetable for implementation. The working group should consist of EH, NT and Wiltshire Council plus the two WHS Officers. In addition, a community representatives from both Stonehenge and Avebury will be essential to ensure local views are taken into account. AW ,the chair of Avebury Parish Council, will take on this role for Avebury.

The working group will meet and discuss the proposals in detail and suggest a timescale for implementation. Proposals will be brought to the next WHS Committee meeting.

**ACTION: English Heritage to lead on setting up the working group to look at implementation**

#### **5. WHS Officer update**

SS highlighted aspects of the written report circulated prior to the meeting including: progress on the update of the Avebury Management Plan and completion of the stakeholder review of issues and objectives that will form the focus of the afternoon workshop; work with the Parish Council on traffic issues to inform the WHS Traffic Strategy; work with local school who attended Youth Summit in Greenwich as part of the WHS education project "Making Sense of our Sites"; site visit and seminar with masters students from the Institute of Archaeology University College London some of whom undertake placements on WHS projects at Avebury; early work on a potential joint WHS website/portal; funding has been received from SW WHS s for a promotional film on the WHS; sharing methodologies developed at Avebury on the WHS boundary review and Arable Reversion POportunities mapping with Stonehenge; on-going pre-application and planning advice within the WHS.

SS confirmed that National Character Areas (NCA) is missing from a sentence in the report

at paragraph 1.3 on page 2, following an enquiry from HO.

**ACTION: SS to coordinate with HO on WHS input to Natural England's NCA**

## **6. English Heritage update**

Further to the circulated report, DV stated that there are now three new functional groups that will whose members will be involved with aspects of Avebury WHS. The single Stonehenge and Avebury Curatorial Unit no longer exists.

DV stated that there will be more updates to follow about EH's restructuring, and gave a large thank you to ACh for her work in Avebury and Stonehenge. MPK requested that the committee write to ACh to formally express their gratitude for her valued work on the WHS.

AW queried whether details of the Local Management Agreement (LMA) could be made public. The agreement details the conservation actions that the NT agrees to undertake in relation to Guardianship monuments and the funding that EH will contribute to this. It is a contractual agreement between the NT and EH. DV will check whether this information can be made public.

**ACTION: Chair to write to ACh to thank her for her valued contribution to the WHS**

**DV let AW know whether details of the LMA agreement can be made public**

## **7. National Trust update**

The report was circulated and highlights given. The WHS Woodland Strategy led on by the NT and funded by NE is in final draft form. SS suggested that a presentation could be given on the Woodland Strategy at the next committee meeting.

KF asked how many visitors the NT had this year to Avebury Manor. JT stated that there was a definite increase in the number of visits, but lots of people make return visits. There were approximately 70,000-80,000 visits made to Avebury Manor this year.

NS explained that the NT has looked at the impacts of increased visitor numbers. They have received no complaints about road blockages and have seen no damage to monuments from additional footfall. Visitors to the Manor do not tend to visit the wider WHS. There however have been increased numbers visiting the Alexander Keiller museum so people will be learning more about the WHS.

NS talked about implications of ash die-back at Avebury. A survey of the ash trees within the Avebury estate shows that the dozen trees there are currently unaffected by the fungus. The site will be monitored carefully and remedial action considered as per advice from the national NT advisors.

Following expert advice on tree health, the ranger team will be reducing the canopy of a sycamore close to the south sector entrance to the Henge by 30-40%.

CS raised the issue of tree damage to the southwest entrance bank. It was established that this group of trees is the responsibility of Wiltshire Council highways department.

**ACTION: ACr identify the correct person from Wiltshire Council Highways to contact regarding tree damage on the southwest entrance bank of the henge**

## **8. Wiltshire Council Update**

Further to the circulation of the report ACr highlighted the main areas of work related to the WHS: the timetable for finalising the Core Strategy has been revised because Wiltshire Council had to carry out more consultation on changes to the policy related to wind turbines; MPK noted that the Historic Landscape Characterisation programme was going well and Tom Sunley who is managing the project would be happy to give a presentation at a later date; MPK requested that she is notified of any monuments people would like to put forward for conservation related work part of the Monument Management Scheme (Objective F)

HO is concerned that the draft Core Strategy is unsound in an important area that could affect the setting of the WHS where it relies on the buffer of the North Wessex Downs AONB. He thinks that the document has not really looked at landscape and habitat impacts and hopes to continue discussion with Wiltshire Council to resolve these issues before the examination in public. AONB officers have already met and been in discussion with officers and the planning inspector.

HO believes that the policy related to the WHS in the draft Core Strategy is good.

### **9. Natural England update**

The report was circulated. GH requested that people please take the opportunity to respond to the Natural Character Assessment consultation. It is reliant on local information and feedback.

BB asked if NE had responded to the environmental impact study of the proposed Great Stones Way. HO stated that their response was positive regarding the concept of linking the two halves of the WHS but that the GSW proposal itself required a great deal more work on an appropriate route and robust management and monitoring arrangements.

**ACTION: All to respond to draft National Character Areas when the consultation begins. SP to provide the link for circulation**

### **10. Parish Council Update**

AW raised the following points:

- Scottish and Southern Energy have a further funding available to underground cables.
- APC request that WHSs are added to the circular recommending 40mph speed limits in certain areas
- Regarding brown signage, they have been in discussion with Wiltshire Council. If the speed limit is reduced then the sign size can be reduced too
- A geophysical investigation of the sports field will be undertaken
- Increased visitor numbers has caused concern particularly with regard to parking in the High Street. They are meeting regularly with JT to address issues.
- Work is progressing on the Community Traffic Plan and a number of walk and talk session have taken place as part of this

### **11. Report from AAHRG**

- Two substantial research projects are underway: the Stones of Stonehenge Project and the Between the Monuments Project.
- Progress continues on the WHS Research Framework
- Repairs are planned for West Kennet Long Barrow in 2013
- The next meeting will be held in History Centre in Chippenham in January. There will be an opportunity to look at the new Historic Environment Record (HER).

### **12. Report from the TVM**

SS chaired the last meeting of the group and therefore reported back in place of JT.

- Need to ensure through close partnership working that the Avebury Community Traffic Plan and its recommendations solutions are developed with reference to the wider framework of the WHS Management Plan and emerging WHS Traffic Strategy
- General comments on issues and objectives in WHS management plan review – objectives need to be evidence-based and achievable. Focus on making the roads and traffic less dominant in the WHS and facilitating ease of movement and an improved experience of its attributes of OUV for visitors and residents
- Feedback on Governance Review: replacement of TVM by task and finish groups supported but need to retain within the new structure a forum for partners to discuss and resolve issues around proposed projects in light of the objectives of the WHS Management Plan objectives and to encourage efficient partnership working. Local voices need to carry weight in any new structure.
- Great Stones Way was not awarded the Leader grant for the northern section including Avebury.

### **13. Information Exchange and AOB**

GS said that the Report being prepared for the Ridgeway surface protection project is being assembled and finalised; it will be circulated soon.

MNB raised the issue of a poor planning decision made by Wiltshire Council. The new grain store given permission at the south of West Overton will have a negative impact on the village related to the movement of large lorries. The decision is merely diverting the impacts of inappropriate development away from the WHS and onto the village. SS commented that the development was within the setting of the WHS and will potentially still have an impact on the WHS. The increased pressure for large agricultural buildings has been noted as an issue during the review of the WHS Management Plan.

HO highlighted the 'Stepping Stones' project, which is part of the Big Chalk package, joining up chalk grassland areas. He is grateful to NE for their input into this.

HO circulated a new North Wessex Downs AONB visitor guide leaflet; please distribute liberally and contact him for more copies if you wish.

MPK commented that the WHS gateway signs are starting to fade, and suggested that they are replaced. SS will include this in the updated Management Plan. It is an issue which came up during the review.

**ACTION: SS to include an action to replace WHS gateway signs in the updated Management Plan**

### **14. Date of Next Meeting**

The meeting normally held in May would be moved to **April** to make any next steps for the Governance Review easier to manage. A date will be circulated in due course.

**ACTION: SS/BT to confirm the next steering committee meeting date and circulate**

## ACTIONS

Item No.	Action and Person Responsible
1	Chair to send a letter to SR to thank her for her hard work and support of the WHS
3	HO to copy committee members into his consultation response and circulate details of the consultation
4.1 d)	All partners to provide estimates of their financial contributions to their management of the WHS including its coordination function to SS by 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2013
4.2	English Heritage to lead on setting up the working group to look at implementation
5	SS to coordinate with HO on WHS input into Natural England's NCA
6	Chair to write to ACh to thank her for her valued contribution to the WHS DV let AW know whether details of the LMA agreement can be made public
7	ACr identify the correct person from Wiltshire Council Highways to contact regarding tree damage on the southwest entrance bank of the henge
9	All to respond to draft National Character Areas when the consultation begins. SP to provide the link for circulation
13	SS to include an action to replace WHS gateway signs in the updated Management Plan
14	SS/BT to confirm the next steering committee meeting date and circulate