



Avebury WHS Steering Committee
Friday 10th April 2015
10.30 AM – 12.45 PM
Lecture Hall, Wiltshire Museum, Devizes
Minutes

Present:

- Andrew Williamson (Chair/Avebury PC)
- Sarah Simmonds (Avebury WHS Officer, Wiltshire Council)
- Beth Thomas (Stonehenge WHS Coordinator, Wiltshire Council)
- Jan Tomlin (NT General Manager – Wiltshire Countryside)
- Nick Snashall (NT– Archaeologist (Stonehenge and Avebury WHS) NT)
- Stephanie Payne (Land Advisor, Natural England)
- Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council)
- Colin Shell (ASAHRG)
- Gill Swanton (Avebury Environs Group)
- Phil McMahon (Historic England)
- David Dawson (Wiltshire Museum)
- Kate Fielden (Avebury Society)
- Bill Buxton (Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton PC)
- Robin Butler (Avebury Farmers)
- Martin Northmore-Ball (Fyfield and West Overton PC)
- Matthew Maynard (Wiltshire Council - Minutes)

<p>1. Introductions and apologies</p> <p>Henry Owen-John Head of International Advice at Historic England attended the meeting for the first time and introduced himself to the group.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Ariane Crampton, Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Mike Wilmott, David Andrews and Henry Oliver.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of the previous meetings and matters arising</p> <p>KF raised a point regarding the 3rd paragraph on page 4 of the November minutes. She queried whether, in light of there being no route proposal for the A303, the Partnership Panel statement was accurate. It was agreed to leave the minutes without amendment as they reflected the actual statement made by the WHSPP.</p> <p>There were no other points raised and the minutes from the July and November meetings were agreed subject to the correction of a small number of typos.</p>	

3. Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan

- **Update on public consultation**

SS updated the group on progress on the Management Plan. She reported on the public consultation process which took place from 8 December 2014 – 1 March 2015. The Plan documents including a Summary were available on the Wiltshire Council Consultation Portal. The process of consultation complied with the Wiltshire Council Statement of Community Involvement.

The Coordination Unit held 7 public drop-in sessions at the Salisbury, Amesbury, Marlborough, Devizes, Swindon Central libraries, Trowbridge County Hall and Avebury Social Centre and met around 140 people. A meeting was held in Avebury for landowners and farmers to discuss the Plan and any specific priorities and concerns related to the WHS. A similar meeting was held at Stonehenge.

Over 60 people responded to the public consultation using the online snap survey and around 17 individuals and organisations commented by email. The comments were collated by the Coordination Unit and responses drafted. These responses and suggested amendments to the draft Plan were presented to the Project Board and agreed following discussion. The comments and proposed changes can be found in the **Table of Responses to the Public Consultation March 2015** document that was circulated prior to the meeting. These changes are recommended to the Steering Committee for approval by the Project Board.

- **Review and sign off Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan 2015**

The proposed changes were accepted on 9th April 2015 by the Stonehenge WHS Steering Committee. Only one concern was raised in relation to action 147 by Andy Shuttleworth who wanted to emphasise that access to the part of the A344 subject to the Traffic Regulation Order by users other than motorised vehicles was legally required for all users. It was agreed that the wording would reflect this. (The amended wording reads: **Identify management strategies to minimise conflict between users of the section of the A344 which is subject to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) including vehicles, horses, walkers, cyclists and horse drawn carriages.**)

The Steering Committee then went through the **Table of Responses to the Public Consultation** document and signed off the proposed changes. Four small amendments were discussed to the proposed changes and three were agreed by the group. These are highlighted in bold. Page numbers refer to those in the Table not the Management Plan itself.

1. Pg 3 – VisitWiltshire – 9.4.6: Amend the proposed change to read:

*“There is however a parking capacity issue at Avebury so it would not be appropriate to encourage visitors to travel there by car **at peak times.**”*

2. Pg 11 – Avebury Society – 1.3.1: Amend the proposed change to read:

*“The main purpose of the Management Plan is to sustain the OUV of the WHS **by ensuring that** effective protection, conservation and presentation of the WHS and its transmission to future generations...”*

3. Pg 34 – Wiltshire Ramblers – 9.5.11: Amend the proposed change reflect the on-going nature of the situation to read:

*“The Great Stones Way proposed by The Friends of the Ridgeway **has** met with resistance from some quarters and has not been endorsed by Wiltshire Council. Such a route would be best approached through...”*

4. Pg 45 – CPRE Wiltshire – 7.5.(1)2: The group discussed the merits of including additional examples of development in or on the WHS boundary, not just those in the setting such as Solstice Park, as highlighting the need for a Setting Study. No amendments were agreed as the group agreed that the Management Plan addressed issues arising from development in or on the WHS boundary in other sections of the Plan.

The group noted that the term World Heritage Property (WHP) appears on pg 8. This is already included in the glossary as a synonym for World Heritage Site; the term used in the UK.

The Steering Committee approved and signed off the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management.

SS

ACTION: Make agreed changes to the draft Plan

- **Next steps**

AW thanked every member of the Steering Committee, and their parent organisations, for their work towards the production of the Management Plan.

The proposed changes will be incorporated into the Plan and it will be sent to the editor for checking. At this stage no further material changes can be made to the Plan – only minor typographical or grammatical corrections or the removal of unnecessary repetition.

The Plan will be sent to the DCMS for approval, who have been kept apprised of progress on the document, prior to printing hard copies of the finalised, approved, Management Plan.

Members of the group were also asked to arrange for their parent organisations to adopt or endorse the plan as a matter of priority following the launch.

<p>ACTION: to forward Plan to DCMS</p> <p>• Management Plan launch</p> <p>The Management Plan will be launched at three separate events:</p> <p>Monday 18th May – Avebury Wednesday 20th May – County Hall, Trowbridge Thursday 21st May – Stonehenge</p> <p>ACTION: Send invites to all members of the Committee and others who have been involved in the preparation of the Management Plan and its future delivery.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
<p>4. Update on Avebury WHS Transport Strategy</p> <p>SS reported on the Avebury WHS Transport Strategy. The report was brought to the joint meeting in November and the changes suggested at that meeting have been incorporated. The document was signed of by the chairs of the Steering Committees in December.</p> <p>The Transport Strategy contains design principles and recommended schemes: the design principles will now inform all work undertaken related to highways. The larger schemes will require funding to be identified and then undergo a period of public consultation. SS and Laura Gosling attended a public meeting held in Avebury and parish council meetings in Winterbourne Monkton and Lockeridge to introduce the Strategy. It was generally well received. The scheme recommending the closure of the B4003 had raised concern for some but SS emphasised that no detailed scheme had yet been worked up and that full public consultation would be required.</p> <p>AW stressed the need for the Steering Committee to find innovative funding solutions as further cuts to government funding were assured for the short to medium term.</p>	
<p>5. Action Plan 2015/16: Emerging priorities</p> <p>SS reported that she and Beth would be meeting with partners following the launch of the Management Plan to discuss its implementation. They will arrange meetings with all organisations to discuss the approach to implementation where they are lead or key partners. A table of the actions included in the Management Plan will be made available to all members of the Steering Committee in excel spreadsheet from that will make them easy to sort by priority and lead partner.</p> <p>ACTION: Circulate actions table</p> <p>AW was keen to see the Steering Committee taking up a more active role in promoting the implementation of actions and attempting to secure funding streams. It</p>	<p>SS to circulate actions table</p>

<p>was suggested that the Steering Committee identify a set of priority actions and champion their delivery. This will be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>HOJ recognised that the current 176 agreed actions in the plan were a result of the hard work and level of partner and community participation and engagement that had gone into the production of the Plan. He congratulated SS and BT on the necessarily comprehensive and complete first joint Plan. He encouraged the group to be aware of the management plan 6 year production cycle and consider streamlining future revisions.</p>	
<p>6. Report from WHS Partnership Panel</p> <p>AW provided the group with an overview of the discussions of the Partnership Panel: work on producing a scheme for the A303 is likely to take some years although the commitment to fund a solution by the Government is encouraging. The plan to relocate of the Royal Artillery Museum to the area is at an early stage, no site has been secured yet although the current timescale is estimated at around 2018/19 depending on the results of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid. Early discussions with the representatives of the Royal Artillery Museum regarding possible sites including Larkhill have been encouraging as they were very open and willing to engage with the WHS and respond to its sensitivities.</p> <p>The Steering Committee discussed the implications of the relocation especially regarding car parking as this is currently a significant pressure at Stonehenge, as well as the impacts of possible firing demonstrations on the setting of the WHS. BT explained this would be addressed in partnership with the MoD through the planning application process.</p> <p>AW ran through the discussions relating to the Avebury WHS. The Steering Committees have the potential to more actively look to fund improvements for the WHS. This was highlighted through the recent work led by AW on the creation of the Avebury World Heritage Charity.</p> <p>The group welcomed these developments but also raised the concern over secure, long-term funding for the WHS Coordination Unit so that it would be able to wholly focus on implementing the Management Plan action. CS emphasised that this be a priority of the WHSPP. Andrew Williamson again emphasised the need for innovative funding streams to be identified and explored by the group.</p> <p>ACTION: Add funding and budgets to the agenda of the next WHSPP meeting</p>	<p>SS</p>

7. ASAHRG Report

CS provided an update on ASAHRG. As a result of delays to the research framework its launch will not coincide with the Management Plan launch and it is instead timetabled for the end of this year. The final draft will be sent to ASAHRG members shortly for comment.

ASAHRG received a presentation from Amanda Chadburn on the significance of astronomical solar alignments for the Stonehenge part of the WHS and how these alignments should be taken into account in terms of managing the setting of the Site.

8. WHS Coordination Unit and Partner Updates

All updates provided were verbal. There were no written updates.

SS reported that she and BT had been heavily involved in finalising the Management Plan. SS has attended a scoping meeting with GS and CS regarding the Ridgeway National Trail where it had been agreed that a technical group would be formed to examine the solution to providing an adequate surface while protecting the sensitive archaeology of the Ridgeway. This will be based on the survey undertaken by GS, CS and Peter Fowler.

MPK informed the group that the Wiltshire Core Strategy had been adopted on the 20th January this year. It is due to undergo a partial review around saved policies, of which there are 3 that affect the WHS. This will be open to public consultation from 13th April to 26th May. Further information is available through the Wiltshire Council website.

HOJ provided the group with an update on the current status and roles of English Heritage and Historic England. The lead contact for Historic England on the Steering Committee will remain Phil McMahon.

BB brought up the issue around the use of lay-bys as unofficial car parking locations as well as issues arising from HGV and coach traffic on the condition of the roads and verges around Avebury in particular the B4003. There was a discussion around appropriate measures to address these concerns. The Transport Strategy has taken these issues and options into account and should inform any further decisions on managing traffic concerns.

RB raised concerns around any planned narrowing of the A461. He welcomed the fact that no such scheme was included in the Transport Strategy.

DD notified the group of upcoming research excavation work in the Vale of Pewsey over the next three years that is being carried out by the University of Reading and Historic England. SS informed the group that Jim Leary would be presenting on this at the forthcoming ASAHG meeting. A site visit will be arranged in the summer

JT announced that the full portfolio restructure at the NT was now complete and that Hilary Makins was now the Countryside Manager for Wiltshire Countryside and Abbey George has been appointed the Marketing and Communications Officer.

<p>NS informed the group that dates have been confirmed for excavations this year – this is the final year of the Between the Monuments project on the West Kennet Avenue site.</p> <p>AW reported from Avebury Parish Council that £2,400 was raised to fill the gap in funding for the Between the Monuments dig at Avebury. This was through a mix of local fundraising, Area Board grants, and private donations. The Parish Council has also been reviewing the application for a street-trader license and its implications for the WHS. Bed & Breakfast accommodation in the village is doubling following a successful planning application.</p> <p>GS updated the group on the current progress of the Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area – the project is in its last year and there is ongoing work to raise more funding to continue work.</p>	
<p>9. Information exchange and AOB</p> <p>Gill Swanton updated the group on communication she had received from the Rural Policing team; they will be changing their methods of communication following their restructure.</p> <p>ACTION: Update the group on contact procedures for the Rural Policing team</p> <p>KF informed the group of progress on a campaign aimed at avoiding damage caused by road building around Stonehenge – it has reached 17,000 signatures.</p> <p>BT asked members of the Steering Committees to pass on any good news stories as soon as possible so that they could be included in the upcoming edition of Megalith.</p> <p>ACTION: Send good news stories for Megalith to BT</p> <p>ACTION: Forward a copy of Megalith to HOJ</p>	<p>GS, SS</p> <p>All</p> <p>BT</p>
<p>10. Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Avebury WHS Steering Committee will take place at 10.30 AM on 6th October at the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes.</p>	