



Avebury WHS Steering Committee
Wednesday 13th April 2016
10.30 AM – 12.30 PM
Brewhouse Meeting Room, Manor Annex, Avebury
Minutes

Present:

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| Andrew Williamson | (Chair/Avebury PC) |
| Sarah Simmonds | (Avebury WHS Coordinator) |
| 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) |
| Kate Fielden | (Avebury Society) |
| Sarah Nichols | (Fyfield and West Overton PC) |
| Henry Oliver | (NWD AONB) |
| Bill Buxton | (Winterbourne Monkton PC) |
| Robin Butler | (Avebury Farmers) |
| Phil McMahon | (Historic England) |
| David Andrews | (VisitWiltshire) |

<p>1. Introductions and apologies</p> <p>Sarah Nichols was standing in for Martin Northmore-Ball (Fyfield and West Overton PC)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Mike Wilmott, Ian Barnes, David Dawson and Jemima Milton</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of the previous meetings and matters arising</p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.</p> <p>6.0 The Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework will be launched at the 30th Anniversary Conference in November.</p>	
<p>3. Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan</p>	

<p>3.1 Endorsing the Plan</p> <p>SS updated the group on endorsement of the Plan by key delivery partners. The majority of WHS partner organisations have now endorsed the Management Plan. SS presented the Plan to the NWDAONB Council of Partners who endorsed it in March. VW will endorse the Plan at a forthcoming meeting. We await notification from the MoD.</p> <p>3.2 WHS Coordination Unit Action Plan 2016/17</p> <p>SS had circulated the action plan for the WHSCU prior to the meeting. She presented the priorities originally identified for the WHSCU over the next year. The work is based on the presence of two coordinators however Beth Thomas will be leaving the Unit in June. Resources will therefore be reduced and there will need to be some adjustment to the action plan that is now too ambitious. SS will need to further prioritise actions from across the WHS with BT and focus on these until adequate resource/support is re-established for the Unit.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the change in resource, the group agreed with the actions identified in plan circulated. When asked if there were further actions the group thought important two other areas were discussed.</p> <p>Monument Condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to monitor the condition of the WHS was raised. The action related to the Condition Survey clarifies that this is due in 2020. Funds will need to be identified by the relevant partners including HE in advance of this. Awareness of this should be raised within the relevant organisations by their representatives on the Steering Committee. The WHS Condition Survey shows the trend across the WHS. In addition to this there is regular monitoring by managers including the NT and work by HE on monitoring and highlighting Monuments at Risk. NS will be taking forward Action 18 related to reviewing all the results of monument condition monitoring to prioritise necessary management interventions by WHS partners to address threats. <p>Burrowing Animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group discussed burrowing animals which are growing threat to monument condition highlighted by the Condition Survey in 2010 and in other monitoring. SP added that a baseline study was undertaken by NE in 2010. The planned Burrowing Animal Strategy (Action 16) will look at engaging landowners in monitoring badger activity on their land. CS suggested possible badger-proof fencing to create a badger-free zone. He also suggested establishing a hedgehog reserve which could necessitate the removal of badgers. RB added that despite articles reporting that badgers do not eat hedgehogs there is evidence that they do. SN suggested that gaining political support would be helpful. Government should be lobbied to adopt policies on burrowing animals to ensure protection of the monuments. SP reported that the weight of legislation on badger protection would make this challenging. It would be particularly challenging for those attributes of OUV that are currently unscheduled and as such have 	<p>NS to review priorities for monument management based on monitoring results</p> <p>SP to seek resource to move forward with work on the Burrowing Animal Strategy.</p> <p>SS to discuss possible approach with SP.</p>
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no legal protection.

- NS and PM raised the issue of how to avoid simply transferring burrowing to as yet unaffected monuments in the landscape if badgers are excluded from currently affected areas. MPK suggested that it was important to choose battles carefully depending on the particular circumstances for each monument. Excavation may be appropriate for particularly badly-affected monuments.
- The Burrowing Animal Strategy will review existing best practice and consider possible landscape-scale responses. NS added that Historic Scotland had produced some interesting work. There had also been a day conference at the Society of Antiquaries. AW questioned if additional resources were required to deliver solutions. NE will be a key partner in moving work on the Strategy forward particularly in light of the reduction in resources for the WHSCU from June. SP emphasised that the WHS is a priority area for NE. She will seek additional resources for moving forward with work on the Strategy.
- NS added that the greatest threat was in fact still from ploughing and that encouraging farmers to remove sensitive archaeology from cultivation was therefore probably a more pressing priority.

Roads and Traffic

- Another threat reflected in the Condition Survey was the impact of roads and traffic. There are a number of actions in Management Plan related to this at both Avebury and Stonehenge. Work on these actions is being taken forward and is included in the WHSCU action plan.

WHS Setting Study

- PM emphasised that the WHS Setting Study was a priority that needs to be maintained.

30th Anniversary Conference

- AW suggested that with limited resources the 30th Anniversary Conference should not be a priority. NS and MPK felt that it was still a priority to raise awareness and support. In addition several international speakers had been secured including Serge Casson from the University of Nantes as well as Alison Sheridan from Scotland. The Director of the UNESCO WH Centre, Mechtild Rössler, has also agreed to produce a short welcome video. The programme is targeted to expand support for the WHS. SS will require support once BT has left with the organisation of the conference which will require a large amount of work. The Conference will be widely advertised and tickets on sale in May/June.

A303 Scheme

- KF commented that the conference celebrating 30 years of inscription will be taking place at a time of threat to the WHS in the form of the proposed tunnel scheme. PM emphasised that there was as yet no published scheme for the

A303 and that HE would not support any scheme that would damage the Site. It would support a scheme that would improve it. NS added that the NT would only support a scheme that would enhance the WHS. KF added that OUV could not be protected; it was the WHS that required protection. PM said that in addition HE would take the awaited UNESCO/ICOMOS report very seriously. HO advised that the group should be able to openly discuss the issue of the A303 and any proposed schemes without the NT and HE feeling that they were being attacked. AW added that for the Avebury Steering Committee the only focus was to ensure that the inscription and World Heritage status was not put in jeopardy.

3.3 Avebury WHS Steering Committee priority actions

The group referred to the issues at 3.2 above.

Adequate support and resource for the WHSCU to function effectively

- CS also emphasised the need for the group and individual partners to ensure the WHSCU has proper support and adequate resources to function effectively following the departure of one of the coordinators BT. This should be taken to the WHSPP meeting the following week. It needs to be emphasised that both core funding of the roles is required and project funding.
- PM assured the group that HE will work with Wiltshire Council to ensure that the workload can be delivered. MPK said that heritage funding had been cut by 25% and it was hard to meet aspirations although the Council would do its best to deliver.

WHS Woodland Strategy

- GS suggested the release of the document is a priority. Space for Nature, replacing the Marlborough Downs NIA, needs to have clear guidance so that it does not plant in areas that would be harmful to the WHS as identified by the Strategy. NS will ensure it is finalised and released. There is only one small area of work to complete.

Visitor Erosion

- KF raised concerns over erosion on the Henge. NS reported that repairs were planned by the NT in the near future. Sacrificial turf will be used.
- KF raised concerns about the use of drapes at West Kennet Long Barrow by EH after these had been so controversial on the Henge. She highlighted the action in the Management Plan requiring a review of the approach and the consideration of less intrusive measures. Alternatives should have been carefully considered and discussed by the Steering Committee. SS circulated a report on work at West Kennet prepared by Heather Sebire. NS added that there had been no damage to archaeology as all work was in areas that had been disturbed and/or built up in the past.

Interpretation Framework

- AW underlined that this was a priority action for Avebury to ensure consistency across WHS partners. The NT is planning to progress with this in the near future led by Ros Cleal.

AW/CS to ensure WHSPP address urgent need to ensure adequate resources are provided for WHSCU

NS to finalise WHS Woodland Strategy and enable its release

NT to repair visitor erosion with sacrificial chalk

<p>4. WHS Coordination Unit update</p> <p>SS had circulated her report on progress made by the WHSCU since the last meeting which included details of the extensive work undertaken by herself and BT. She thanked partners for their help in delivering the actions and emphasised the need for continued support which will be particularly important when the capacity of the WHSCU is reduced and until additional staff are appointed. SS thanked BT in her absence for all her hard work for the Unit and said she would be very much missed.</p> <p>The group expressed appreciation of the new WHS leaflet which had now been published and is available to partners through SS.</p> <p>HO thanked SS for her excellent presentation to the AONB Council of Partners.</p>	<p>All to contact SS if they would like copies of the new WHS leaflet to distribute</p>
<p>5. Partner updates: implementation and opportunities for partnership working</p> <p>Partners provided brief oral updates.</p> <p>National Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS reported on a new initiative by the NT; a walking challenge in the two WHS landscapes. It raises awareness of the WHS and is badged with the 30th anniversary logo. It also encourages walkers out into the wider landscape to explore further afield. The formal launch is on Monday 18th March. DA said that VW will help advertise this if NT sends the details. • NT is having an initial meeting with EH to shape early stage thinking with regard to the Avebury Learning and Interpretation Framework (Action 99). Other WHS partners will be involved as the project takes shape. The aim will be to deliver the framework in the 2017. • Education visits have expanded exponentially since prehistory was placed on the curriculum. The NT has developed a package of tours for schools, guided visits, leaflets and talks. They are exploring how to work most effectively with David Dawson at Wiltshire Museum. • Ros Cleal and NS supported the WHS Arts Symposium in February • NS and PM fed into the initial scoping by SS for the Setting Study. <p>Historic England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM reported that he had given some development advice although there have not been any very significant proposals in the period. • PM had fed into discussions on the early stages of the Setting Study which should be a high calibre document • PM and Nick Croxson who is responsible for Heritage at Risk met with SS and NS to discuss damage to the B4003 West Kennet Avenue road. On-going damage is apparent. There is no instant solution and work will continue to look at the proposals in the Avebury WHS Transport Strategy. • PM gave advice on West Kennet Long Barrow repair work and will be looking at a suspected hole in Silbury Hill • PM will be attending the meeting on how to further progress with implementation of the WHS Transport Strategy in May. 	

NWD AONB

- HO also contributed to scoping the Setting Study and will be attending the meeting on implementation of the Transport Strategy.
- The AONB lead action on the WHS Landscape Strategy is not scheduled until 2019
- The AONB has completed its Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) work and is hoping to produce an I Spy style guide for historic features in the landscape. Initially they have used the remaining HLF grant to develop a website. The NWDAONB Forum focused on the HLC and how it can be used by the public including parish councils. A leaflet will be produced and the website will be launched in the next few months. SS has been part of a working group.
- Undergrounding of electricity cables at Barbary Castle to the north of the WHS is not happening as no mutually acceptable route can be identified. We are still awaiting progress on the planned Gunsite Lane. Undergrounding in the WHS.
- The AONB has supported an initial partnership bid to the LEP in Oxfordshire supporting rural tourism. Feedback is awaited on its success.
- The programme of work for the NWDAONB has been agreed for the forthcoming year. Elements that relate to the WHS include the Story of the NWD. In addition subtle, uncluttered signing of the AONB is being considered. There should be partner discussion on this and equally on any WHS signing/branding initiatives.
- Leader has reopened. The programme manager is Dawn Hamblin who is based in the Hungerford office.

VisitWiltshire

- DA reported that it had been another record year in 2015 with visits to the South West up by 15% and spend by 14%. Overnight stays in Wiltshire have shown an increase of 10% which reflects the aims of the Management Plan. There is still a lack of accommodation however there have been two or three for B&Bs in the WHS.
- VisitWiltshire gained the award for Best Destination website and social media in the county. The new VW brochure has the WHS on the front and features a piece on the 30th anniversary.
- £5 million was made available by the Government to spend as part of the South West Growth Fund. Unfortunately there was an extremely short period to complete this spend; between December and March. Projects focussed on overseas marketing, business support training and HD filming.
- VW has hosted press visits to the WHS with the help of the NT and EH. Rich Steves, a famous American European travel show host and writer, will be coming to film in the near future.
- BB asked if there was any possible pressure that could be exerted on the owner of the former pub in Winterbourne Monkton, the New Inn, to move forward with its conversion into a B&B in line with the planning permission granted when change of use was agreed. DA suggested BB send him an email and he would look into the matter. BB added that he had sent an email to Cllr. Jemima Milton as well. CS suggested that brewers might be encouraged

to provide accommodation in their pubs. DA is working on producing an itinerary based on a brewery trail. DA offered assistance to anyone with ideas and needing assistance.

- VW is undertaking positioning work with Calne to produce an A4 trail called the Great West Way running along the corridor from London to Bath. It has the potential to become England's premier long distance route like the Wild Atlantic Way in Ireland. It is not focussed on driving but will encompass all modes of transport within the corridor.

Wiltshire Council

- MPK reported on the Council's actions. Two thirds of their lead partner actions have been begun.
- The HLC will be launched in May. Tom Sunley can talk about this at a future meeting.
- Some progress has also been made on museum storage in Wiltshire.
- The Council has suffered the biggest cuts in recent years: 26%. This has resulted in a management restructure. Development related workload has increased which puts extra pressure on as budgets are lower.

Natural England

- SP reported that NE Facilitation Fund was supporting Making Space for Nature which has taken up much of the work of the Marlborough Downs NIA.
- A stewardship application related to East Kennet is being assessed by the NE team.
- Funding has been provided for work on East Kennet Long Barrow. Tree works have been completed. Some funding is left for research into the badgers affecting the site.
- Ben Cooke the Reserve Manager at Fyfield Down has been very active with his volunteer group. SMC has been sought for two interpretation boards and there will be a watching brief when they are installed.
- BC and Stuart Holmes are working on getting the recorded walks with Peter Fowler into a usable format. Any ideas on who could assist with this welcome.
- There may be an opportunity for support from NE for projects related to the 30th Anniversary.
- Internal discussions on the badgers in the WHS have started.

6. Parish Council and other Updates

Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council

- SN reported that the Parish Council had written to SS to express concern over the possible closure of the B4003. SS confirmed that any such proposal would be subject to substantial public consultation.
- A 20 mph limit is being explored for the village following a fatal accident.

Avebury Parish Council

- AW reported that APC had considered two small planning applications in the WHS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW had met Cllr Whitehead with a representative of the Traffic Group and SS. There was an agreement to move the 30 mph sign further north of the henge for both safety and setting improvements. The Traffic Group is also hoping to find funding to commission a design for schemes set out in the AWHs Transport Strategy for West Kennett and Beckhampton. RB suggested extending the 30 mph speed limit to Avebury Trusloe. AW explained that this had been put to Cllr Whitehead but he did not think it was feasible. • There is no update from the group exploring the reuse of the URC chapel in the village. • Two new B&Bs have opened in the Parish. <p>Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB expressed concern over people parking illegally in the lay-by on the West Kennet Avenue <p>Avebury Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Society expressed concern over recent planning applications in the village. • There is a talk on Blick Mead planned for the autumn. 	
<p>7. Report from/to WHS Partnership Panel</p> <p>AW reported from the WHSPP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group supported the need for a Setting Study • Panels will be put in place at both Stonehenge and Avebury to indicate their World Heritage status in line with UNESCO guidelines • The Panel supports the establishment of a WHS trust to seek funds to protect and enhance the WHS. The coordination function could transfer to the trust. 	
<p>8. ASAHRG Report</p> <p>CS provided an update from ASAHRG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were three interesting presentations on research projects in the WHS and its setting • Sadness was expressed on the death of both Lord Avebury. A great appreciation for his work on protecting the WHS was expressed. The death of Peter Tate was also sadly regretted and his importance in WHS acknowledged. He had been the custodian in the museum and the public face of Avebury for two decades. Mike Pitts wrote an obituary in British Archaeology. 	<p>KF to send SS the address of Peter Tate's widow. SS to send a note.</p>
<p>9. Report from the Stonehenge WHS Committee meeting March 2016</p> <p>SS reported the concern over litter in the WHS at Stonehenge and the length of time it takes to clear this and fly tipping. She asked if there was a similar problem at Avebury.</p> <p>The group commented that there is a similar problem on the A4 between Cherill and Avebury.</p>	<p>BT to add concerns at Avebury to letter to</p>

	Wiltshire Council
<p>10. Information exchange and AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW encouraged partners to take into account the changed conditions at Stonehenge (parking now charged and alcohol was banned) in preparations for Solstice management. RB expressed concerns over where the vehicles would go if the Ridgeway were closed. If vehicles are parked on farmland, it will be difficult to deal with at the weekend without a solicitor. Police numbers are also lower. A holistic comprehensive approach is needed. This will be addressed at the next operational planning meeting. • AW reported that the Avebury WHS Charity has offered a contribution to the conference to help bring in international speakers, possible future translation of leaflets and a contribution to the WHS plaque. • NS reported that the NT will be partnering with Mike Parker Pearson and Vince Gaffney to explore what is beneath the bank at Durrington Walls. The Steering Committees will be invited to the excavation. • GS reported that the talk at Alton Barnes with a 1960's film from Ray Sutcliffe on the building of the experimental earthwork had been very successful. • RB reported that there will be a Space for Nature Open Farm Sunday on 5 June on his farm in Avebury Trusloe. Avebury Day will take place on 10th September. DA offered to promote these events via VW. 	
<p>11. Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Avebury WHS Steering Committee will take place at 2 PM on Thursday 29th September, 2016 in Antrobus House in Amesbury. It will follow the Stonehenge WHS Steering Committee meeting in the morning.</p> <p>A sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45 PM</p>	