



## Avebury WHS Steering Committee

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016

2 PM – 4 PM

Antrobus House, Amesbury

### Minutes

Present:

Andrew Williamson	(Chair/Avebury PC)
Sarah Simmonds	(Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Manager)
Jan Tomlin	(NT General Manager – Wiltshire Countryside)
Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger	(County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council)
Colin Shell	(ASAHRG)
Gill Swanton	(Avebury Environs Group)
Kate Fielden	(Avebury Society)
David Wooley	(Fyfield and West Overton PC)
Henry Oliver	(NWD AONB)
Bill Buxton	(Winterbourne Monkton PC)
Alice Membery	(Deputy Clerk Amesbury TC notes)

<p>These notes are a summary version of September’s meeting prepared by SS. The note taker was unable to produce the draft minutes for the meeting.</p> <p><b>1. Introductions and apologies</b>          Apologies were received from Stephanie Payne, Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Mike Wilmott, Ian Barnes, David Dawson and Jemima Milton, Robin Butler, Phil McMahon, Nicola Snashall, David Andrews</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of the previous meetings and matters arising</b>          Minutes of the last meeting were agreed with minor corrections.</p>	
<p><b>3. Ridgeway National Trail Request for Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)</b>          The Committee agreed to send a letter to Wiltshire Council requesting a year round TRO on the Ridgeway National Trail to prevent damage to sensitive archaeology which is currently being harmed by vehicle use between April and October. There is already a 6 month order during the winter month.</p> <p>The group agreed that a 12 month TRO should be sought.</p>	<p><b>SS to send letter from Steering Committee to Wiltshire Council</b></p>

<p><b>4. World Heritage Site Plaque and Boundary Signs</b></p> <p><b>4.1 Plaque</b></p> <p>SS reported that the World Heritage Site plaque marking the inscription of Stonehenge and Avebury was under preparation. The group discussed the There will be a plaque at both Stonehenge and Avebury. The plaque is required by UNESCO at all WHSs. It will be installed by EH on the visitor centre during the Children’s Takeover Day in November. The NT will identify a position in the farmyard area at Avebury. There will be an event on the Saturday before the conference to launch the plaque which the NT has kindly agreed to host. Members of the Committee will be invited. The design options were shown to the group. Funding is from EH, the NT and the Avebury WHS Charity. This will complete action 127 of the WHS Management Plan.</p> <p><b>4.2 Boundary Signs</b></p> <p>The boundary signs will be located on the road as you enter the WHS landscape in line with action 125 of the Management Plan. The position has been agreed with Highways at both Avebury and Stonehenge. The ones on the A4 in the east will be moved further back to</p> <p>SS circulated the design which is very close to the ones that are currently in place on the A303 at Stonehenge. Funding at Avebury is from Wiltshire Council for replacement signs. At Stonehenge Historic England (HE) are funding the signs.</p> <p>HO said that it would be preferable to have a signage scheme in place for the whole WHS before deciding on boundary signs. SS pointed out that although this would be ideal but the boundary signs could be delivered while there was an opportunity to do so. The schemes for signage within the WHS is likely to take a good deal longer to agree and can be delivered separately.</p> <p>The group approved the signs.</p>	<p><b>SS to finalise with HE and NT</b></p> <p><b>SS to finalise with Wiltshire Council Highways</b></p>
<p><b>5. 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS reported that the programme for the conference was now finalised. Remaining titles and abstracts are being sent in by speakers.</li> <li>• The group congratulated SS on the range and quality of the programme</li> <li>• The CEO’s of partner organisations will be there including: English Heritage, Historic England, National Trust and the Leader of Wiltshire Council.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. WHS Coordination Unit update</b></p> <p>SS circulated her report on progress made by the WHSCU since the last meeting which included details of the wide range of work undertaken by the WHSCU. She thanked partners for their help in delivering the actions.</p> <p>SS highlighted in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the publication of <i>Megalith 2016</i></li> <li>• work with Google Institute and UCL on the WHS in 30 Objects</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary events and work on 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference taking place on 19 &amp; 20 November. SS advised that tickets were selling very fast. There will be a reception on the evening 19<sup>th</sup> in Devizes Town Hall that members of the Committee are invited to attend</li> <li>• Work on designing a new structure for the WHS Coordination Unit and new job roles as well as recruitment of an officer to support the her role of WHS Partnership Manager</li> <li>• SS thanked partners including EH and the NT for their work with her on the plaque and boundary signs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. Partner updates: implementation and opportunities for partnership working</b> Partners provided brief oral updates.</p> <p><b>National Trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WHS Walking Challenge has had over 500 walkers sign up. There are 8 walks suggested covering 50 KMs in both the Stonehenge and Avebury landscapes. This has proved so popular it will be continued next year</li> <li>• The NT are working with the WHSCU on the plaque design and launch event</li> <li>• Fiona Reynolds will be presenting at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference. NS will also be presenting with HE and NE on Countryside Stewardship in the WHS</li> <li>• JT reported that she will be providing office space for SS to drop in and work in the WHS whenever she feels it would be useful to be on site. This will be at Stonehenge Cottages and the Estate Office at Avebury. The group welcomed this generous and very useful offer</li> </ul> <p><b>Historic England</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM sent an update reporting that HE has granted S42 licences for geophysical survey, including further landscape-scale survey in Avebury &amp; environs by Tim Darvill and Fritz Luth/DAI, and GPR over the site of the inner circle within the great henge by Dr Mark Gillings/Leicester University.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wiltshire Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Archaeology Service has dealt with the provision of advice on over 200 Countryside Stewardship applications across Wiltshire including some within the WHS</li> <li>• Planners are working on an initial review of Housing Site Allocation which should be announced in January 2017. These sites should not affect the WHS.</li> <li>• An early review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy will begin next year. The WHS Coordination Unit will be consulted on this review</li> <li>• Preliminary advice on WHS Setting Study from the Landscape Officers has been provided</li> <li>• Highways has been working on the new WHS boundary signs</li> <li>• They have also been working with Highways England as statutory consultees on a solution for the A303</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural England</b></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dawn Enright, NE historic environment specialist, has been working with HE/ WHS team on the WHS conference. NE chair Andrew Sells will attend and DE and SP are working on a poster for the conference.</li> <li>• Wiltshire Chalk Grassland Partnership Meeting- NE held a meeting with biodiversity partners (WWT, AONB, BC, RSPB etc.) on 19<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the potential to explore HLF and other potential funding bids. The areas will include WHS and there is an opportunity to build in heritage / cultural multi –objective benefits as well as wildlife benefits. Looking initially to do further work on GI mapping habitats , historic features and running ecological network model for areas not previously covered by previous projects- this will include the WHS. Trying to secure GI specialist time for this internally or using student placements. Any ideas on GI help appreciated or student courses to approach. The map groundtruthed will then enable us to highlight opportunities for protecting archaeology and linking and improving connectivity between habitats, and produce chalk grassland strategy.</li> <li>• Fyfield Downs NNR - A volunteer group was set up last winter. A small group of volunteers work with Ben Cooke every Wednesday. Through the summer they have been assisting Ben with installing new gates, new signage, fence repairs and survey work. From October they will be assisting in undertaking a programme of scrub and woodland management which is part of the NNR management plan. One of the main tasks will be to clear trees and scrub where it is obscuring sarsen stones. This will enhance the habitat for rare lichens and ensure that the landscape, site context and relationships of the geomorphological features of interest are enhanced.</li> <li>• SP has been working with landowners and Nick Croxson, HE on Monument conservation works in both halves of the WHS. In Avebury this included agreeing future project works at East Kennet Long Barrow which will include badger survey/ exclusion, further tree and scrub work and tree/ scrub planting on non-archaeologically sensitive areas to replace landscape features valued by the local community. A landscape study/ design will be produced using woodland strategy data.</li> <li>• Burrowing Animal Strategy. SP has discussed some initial potential ideas with Nick Croxson and internal specialists.</li> </ul> <p><b>North Wessex Downs AONB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HO reported on AONB projects. These are currently relevant although no directly related to the WHS</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. Parish Council and other Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short updates were provided by the 3 parish councils</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9. Report from/to WHS Partnership Panel</b></p> <p>AW reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The last Partnership Panel was held in Bath which provided the opportunity for an interesting comparison of approaches to managing a WHS in a different context. This included their approach to establishing a WHS trust</li> <li>• The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events and conference programme were discussed</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update on the A303 was provided</li> <li>• The next meeting of the WHSPP is 6<sup>th</sup> October</li> </ul>	
<p><b>10. ASHRG Report</b> CS provided an update from ASHRG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASHRG is a very active and well supported group</li> <li>• CS reported on a summary presentation on the Durrington excavation. Neither theory held before the dig was completely correct. The excavation revealed that loose chalk had been used to backfill holes giving the ambiguous readings.</li> <li>• The World Heritage Site Research Framework will be launched at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in November</li> <li>• Brian Edwards has requested short biographical contributions on local figures from history who were involved with research in the WHS</li> </ul>	
<p><b>11. Information exchange and AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS informed the group that Highways England was offering to present to the Committees on the A303 public consultation scheme near the start of the period. The group welcomed the proposal. As Avebury is part of one WHS it is important the both Committees attend.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SS to inform the group of dates for extraordinary meeting</b></p>
<p><b>12. Date of next meeting</b> The next meeting of the Avebury WHS Steering Committee will take place at 10.30 AM on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2017.</p> <p>A sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45 PM</p>	