

Avebury WHS Steering Committee

Tuesday 25th April 2017

10:00-12:00

Wiltshire Museum, Devizes

Minutes

Present: Andrew Williamson	(Chair/Avebury Parish Council)
Sarah Simmonds	(Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Manager)
Liam Wiseman	(Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Officer)
Alistair Sommerlad	(WHS Partnership Panel Chair)
Nick Snashall	(WHS Archaeologist)
Rachel Foster	(Assistant County Archaeologist)
Henry Oliver	(NWD AONB)
Colin Shell	(ASAHRG)
Kate Fielden	(Avebury Society)
Stephanie Payne	(Natural England)
Grant Lock	(ICOMOS UK)
David Woolley	(Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council)
Bill Buxton	(Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council)

Apologies: Gill Swanton, Sarah Nichols, Jemima Milton, Jan Tomlin, Robin Butler

Item	Matters Arising	Action
1.0	Introductions and apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies received. The death Paul Robinson was reported as well as dates for those who wished to attend his funeral. His great contribution to WAHNS and thereby the WHS was recognised. 	
2.0	Review minutes of the last meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the last meeting were agreed with minor corrections 	
3.0	Progress report on Avebury WHS Transport Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AW: 30mph signs are in place and appear to be effective. The Avebury Transport Group has successfully raised £19000 for Atkins to producing more detailed plans for work on the A4 at Beckhampton and West Kennett. This work is designed to calm traffic and reduce the urban 	

	<p>impact of the roundabout in line with the Avebury WHS Transport Strategy. Wiltshire Council via CATG has provided half, APC a quarter, the local community has also contributed to the pot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Council Highways are engaged with the project and will be drawing up a brief for Atkins • Another scheme in the Transport Strategy is likely to be more controversial; the proposed closure of the B4003 to traffic due to damage to archaeology. Evidence is required to demonstrate usage to review the scheme. Alternatives have been reviewed by Atkins in the preparation of the Strategy and closure would prevent damage and deliver the most setting, safety and access benefits. • BB reminded the group that people from Winterbourne Monkton use the B4003 frequently to get to Marlborough • DW said that his parish were not consulted about the scheme. CS confirmed that the Strategy had been review by the Steering Committee including a representative from Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council. They had been consulted on and had signed off the Strategy. SS reiterated the scheme had been designed to prevent damage and address a number of other issues including setting, access and safety. In additions any closure would require a large scale consultation during which all communities and the wider public would be invited to comment. • CS stated that the archaeological damage has been well documented. BB asked why nothing has been done before. CS thought it may be due to the it was because of the potential public opposition to losing a convenient cut through. • CS explained that there is a major issue with large vehicles meeting on the road being unable to get past each other. Buses are also impeded by large vehicles, though they should not be going down there anyway. Buses need reminding to stay on their routes • AW there are also more people than ever parking on the verge. NS commented that this is troubling as a lot of work was done between the NT and Wiltshire Council to improve this area. 	<p>SS to contact bus companies to remind them to avoid B4003</p>
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	<p>The solution based on building up the verge can quickly be ruined by vehicles pushing out into the verge when they pass. HO added that it is not even heavy vehicles, any car can cause damage. SS confirmed that Atkins have looked at the vehicle damage and it is not only large vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB asked who is responsible for dealing with this damage. NS advised that it is Wiltshire Council. SS added this is clearly a priority which needs addressing. CS agreed as the edges of the road are in some places within the Scheduled Monument. RF added that the archaeology is really suffering due to vehicles on the road • RF suggested Wiltshire Council be approached. NS added that it is not however a long term solution to just keep building up the area with chalk each time • SS suggested we will need a Task and Finish Group to tackle this. Evidence needs to be gathered to support proposed solution • KF queried whether we could restrict vehicle size on the road for 6 months to see if that makes an impact. SS replied that Atkins had identified that this would create new problems as it will require a lot of new signage and that it is also difficult to enforce. HO erecting new signs in the ground also creates damage to the archaeology and its setting. The issue of continued access for farmers will also need to be considered • NS added that we will need to consider how best to engage and consult on solutions • AW updated on the footpath and signage initiative in the WHS. A meeting was held with LW, Hilary Makin, Stephen Leonard and Tim Lewis. Have potential costings for way marking but need to decide on the final design. SS added that it needs to be consistent across the WHS and not only in Avebury parish. Wooden with a WHS symbol is preferable. Meetings will continue to be held. 	<p>WHSCU to organise initial Task and Finish Group meeting with appropriate invitees to look at interim measures for damage limitation. This can be expanded at a later date as longer term solutions are considered.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Visitor facilities: Provision of public toilets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW handed over chair duties to AS due to representing Avebury Parish Council • AS introduced the issue, stating that the many thousands of visitors to Avebury have limited facilities during their visit. Issues in the way of 	

	<p>opening additional toilets include ownership, maintenance, costs and insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW stated that there are publically available toilets but not actual public toilets. He added that it is unacceptable for the residents to have to provide facilities for visitors. There is the potential for partnership working to help in establishing public toilets • AW explained some of the previous potential solutions offered, including Red Lion staff opening and closing toilets and the NT leasing out the toilets to the APC for them to run. Issues to do with insurance complicated matters and made this idea unfeasible. • NS provided information on the toilets that the NT does provide and their opening hours and management. Toilets are currently behind the Great Barn and by the Coach House café and are open during opening hours. The Coach House toilets are usually only open during the summer busy season. • AW said that APC has expressed an interest in leasing the Coach House toilets with the NT paying for the insurance with the maintenance leased out to the Parish Council. The PC is currently reviewing this offer. The maintenance and upkeep of the interior would be the responsibility of the leasee • NS suggested that operational details were best discussed outside the committee • AW asked the Committee for an opinion on whether it was acceptable that Avebury had no public toilets. It was agreed that the letter circulated the evening before the meeting was provided too late to be considered at the meeting. • AW raised issues regarding how it was unsanitary and that it caused stress for both visitors and residents. • AS suggested that if the Committee came to a consensus that there should be public toilets, then there should be assistance from the Council to help solve this problem. HO agreed, however councils are cutting public services generally so help may be difficult to get. • AW argued that this is a WHS open 24 hours a day with a large number of visitors and there 	
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	<p>must be facilities for them. NS stated that the NT does operate toilets during its opening hours. AW felt this was not adequate and added that they are not easily accessible for everyone. NS added that there were many issues with staff operating toilets late at night due to anti-social behaviour . This can make them feel very unsafe. Toilets are also often damaged when left open at night.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS reflected that currently the lease appears to be the only way to move forward due to the insurance issues with multiple organisations running the toilets. If Wiltshire Council is willing to help then we should approach them to resolve the situation. AS has spoken to Cllr Wheeler in an attempt to begin appropriate discussions to resolve this • AW suggested that the best thing to do at the moment would be for the NT to continue running the toilets but have all of the toilets in Avebury opened up at all times under their operation. AW suggested they use their income at Avebury for this. NS underlined that the NT are a charity and income is spread across the charity for conservation purposes. Money from Avebury is used for conservation across their properties. Avebury simply does not have the budget to spend on additional public toilet facilities. • HO stated that we can all agree that some provision of public toilets was highly desirable within the WHS. SS suggested that the resolution needs to be found outside the meeting with all relevant partners present. • BB suggested that was an NT responsibility. • AW said it was not possible to accept the terms of the lease as there are no hard figures from the NT yet. • AS reiterated that we need to gather the major stakeholders regarding this issue together in order to resolve this. For public toilets this includes Wiltshire Council. • KF added that we should acknowledge that Stonehenge and Avebury are different due to opening hours and visitor numbers and that we should have adequate facilities across both sites as part of the WHS • BB still didn't understand money issue, more visitors equals more money. NS actually more 	<p>NT and APC to talk to Wiltshire Council to decide on next steps</p>
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	<p>visitors equals more conservation, money goes back into conservation and charity work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW closed the discussion stating that this is an important discussion point and should be taken forward by relevant parties and Wiltshire Council 	
5.0	<p>World Heritage Site Coordination Unit Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS circulated update from the WHSCU on the work they had been doing. Noted in particular were: • The introduction of Liam Wiseman into the Unit and completion of his induction/unit restructure • Successful delivery of the WHS 30th Anniversary Conference • Installation of boundary signs and WHS plaques • The start of work on the burrowing animals strategy • Ongoing work on Megalith and other communications • Continuing to organise meetings and response to the A303 project • Continued secretarial duties at meetings • 30 Objects Google Cultural Institute exhibition • Beginning the process of transitioning a WHS Trust • Full update to be circulated with the draft minutes 	
6.0	<p>Partner organisation updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RF gave a brief update for Wiltshire Council: the Historic Landscape Characterisation completed is now completed and can be found here: http://www.wshc.eu/our-services/archaeology/24-our-services/archaeology/113-historical-landscape-characterisation-project.html . The project was sponsored by Historic England and has created landscape resource of over 14,500 records to create an accurate representation of the Wiltshire landscape, especially useful for those researching the area • Wiltshire Council and Salisbury Museum have successfully identified funding for the new archaeology store • RoW team are looking at implementing a TRO along the Ridgeway in the Avebury WHS working with WHSCU and National Trails as well as other partners 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS reported for the NT that they had completed the Annual Countryside Works and replacement of sacrificial turf. • Also completed fieldwork they were undertaking with Liverpool University. Information can be found on the FragmeNTs blog. • The NT participated in the burrowing animals strategy scoping meeting. • Landscape walks have been successful and there are more upcoming walks. HO willing to help publicise these walks 	
7.0	Parish Council Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AW reported that the Parish Council have discussed the right to bid for the United Reform Chapel in Avebury, there was no interest in purchasing the Chapel for a community scheme. There was support to consider it becoming a World Heritage Centre, as suggested in the Management Plan. • A defibrillator is also being installed in the High Street • BB reported that RoW around Windmill Hill are having serious issues with off roaders churning up the paths 	
8.0	WHS Partnership Panel Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS discussed the meeting on the A303 project held prior to end of public consultation and the response from the WHSCU. Partnership Panel is also looking at forming a WHS Trust and there is an upcoming meeting to discuss this further 	
9.0	ASAHRG Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS distributed WHSCU response to everyone present, then discussed the previous ASAHRG meeting held in January. He celebrated the launch of the Research Framework. Also had large focus on archaeological investigation undertaken for the A303 project 	
10.0	Information Exchange and AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO Annual AONB forum to be held at the Memorial Hall in Uffington focussing on Rights of Way, arts and tourism. They are partnering with the Ridgeway Trust. All welcome to attend if interested 	
11.0	Date of next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 19th October 2017, venue TBC 	

