

**Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site  
Archaeological and Historical Research Group  
Notes of Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
Antrobus House, Amesbury**

**Present:** Martyn Barber; Sarah Simmonds, Rachel Foster, Dan Miles, Gill Swanton, Colin Shell, Bruce Eagles, Matt Leivers, Olaf Boyer, Mark Bowden, Kate Fielden, Brian Edwards, Richard Osgood, Dave Field, Steve Marshall, Kerry Donaldson, David Sabin, Nick Baxter, Josh Pollard, Amanda Chadburn, Nick Snashall, Sarah Poppy (guest), David Bullock, Chris Moore, David Dawson

### **1. Apologies and Introductions**

**Apologies:** David Roberts, Susan Greaney, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Martin Papworth, Phil McMahon, Sian Williams, Jim Leary, Julie Scott-Jackson, Jonathan Last, Timothy Darvill, Ian Barnes, Briony Clifton, Michelle Drisse, Jude Currivan, Bob Clarke, Katy Whitaker, Ros Cleal, Andrew David, Heather Sebire, Ian Barnes, Nikki Cooke, Sian Williams

Amanda Chadburn attended in a personal capacity not representing Historic England.

**Review of Membership:** Carly Hits was nominated as a new member by Brian and seconded by Josh Pollard. Olaf Bayer was nominated by Dan Miles and seconded by Martyn Barber.

### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

#### **2.1 Minutes**

8. The procedure for reporting suspected damage to a monument is to send a report directly to Historic England, who will then investigate the situation.

11.1 GS thanked all who had attended Open Farm Sunday which was a great success.

### **3. Monitoring of the Research Framework**

N/A

### **4. Current Archaeological and Historical Research**

#### **4.1 Living with Monuments Project fieldwork, 2017 - Josh Pollard and Mike Allen**

JP and MA reported on the initial results of their fieldwork. MA outlined environmental evidence that pointed to a more open landscape that may have encouraged Mesolithic activity and have led to later monumentalisation. Work to be done on looking for boundaries of openness.

#### **4.2 A303 Road Improvement Scheme: Preferred Route - David Bullock Project Manager (Highways England) and Chris Moore Archaeological Advisor (AECOM)**

The presentation was the same as that given to the Scientific Committee on 5th October.

DB described in detail the new route and changes made in response to feedback received during the non-statutory consultation. This included avoiding the solstitial alignments and amendments made in response to geophysics and excavation results for example realignment to avoid impacts on long barrows in the west and severing links in the Diamond Group. Other extensive mitigation measures were outlined. Reasons for restrictions to the canopy length were presented.

Impacts outside the WHS in the Till Valley were discussed and the need to take into account ground water survey and design to take into account extreme events.

A commitment was given for a member of Highways England to attend every ASHRG meeting to ensure that their advice was fed back to HMAG and would thereby inform the project.

Questions and observations from the group included:

- Where the work compound areas will go. The objective is for these to be outside the WHS. Also out of visual impact. Solstice Park was suggested.
- Where would archaeological mitigation fit in the timetable? Once consent is given there is a large window while PFI arrangements are put in place. There is a legal right to access land as part of the enabling works phase. CS indicated that there was a need for extensive work for example excavation to identify Beaker Flat Graves; geophysics is not enough. There is a need to see if there are further Flat Graves associated with the Wilsford GI Barrow. A programme of trial trenching is planned.
- DF supported the idea of moving West Stoke roundabout to enhance the setting of barrow cemetery. West Stoke is one of the most important barrow cemeteries of which few are extant in the country. Greater enhancement for the Wilsford and Lake barrow cemeteries would be welcome. This is one of the most important access areas to Stonehenge. Cover more of the road here to allow people to walk around between the barrow cemeteries. HE responded that a land bridge becomes a tunnel at greater than 150m and that economic balances needed to be struck.
- DF asked about light pollution and the extent of modelling work undertaken or planned. Aim to reduce. Aim for an unlit roundabout.
- BE asked about the turning circle for long boring equipment. HE answered that it will bore West to East and return East to West. It will need to turn within the footprint of the scheme. If this is not possible it will be dismantled and turned. Material cut away from above will go to River Till Bridge. The tunnel spoil is under discussion with Natural England to assess if it is suitable for habitats. A fill for Wilton Quarry was suggested. The spoil will need to be squeezed dry if there are extreme weather conditions.
- Options are being looked at for a green roof.
- Maintaining access as a BOAT between Byway 11 and 12 was discussed. SS commented that to provide benefit to the historic landscape and the desired

legacy it should be a high priority to remove motorised vehicles from the byways other than for landowner access. It will be necessary to work with Wiltshire Council to achieve this. Chalk/grass sward restricted byways would be desirable. HE reiterated that Wiltshire Council is responsible for this task.

- KF raised the point that UNESCO had asked for ASAHRG to be fully involved in the Scientific Committee. HE advised that the Mission Report was addressed to DCMS, HE and HMAG and that these bodies should be approached if there is any problem with the level of involvement. The Scientific Committee do have the opportunity to recommend that other representatives are invited to join. HMAG have invited Highways England to attend ASAHRG on a regular basis to take feedback from its members.

**ACTION: DB to forward links to technical appraisal**

## **5. Review of current opportunities for dissemination of research including recent and forthcoming publications**

### **5.1 Seeing the Light**

DD reported on the *Seeing the Light of Day* archives project funded by the Arts Council. There are sessions in Bristol and Exeter in November. The report is due next week.

### **5.2 Wiltshire Archaeology Conference 2018**

Wiltshire Archaeology Conference will take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 in Devizes.

### **5.3 WWI Archaeology Conference 2018**

This is provisionally planned for the Garrison Theatre in November 2018

## **6. Other Research Opportunities**

### **6.1 County Archaeology Update**

6.1.1 Removal of MoD Sewage Treatment System

6.1.2 Bridge over the Avon at North Newington

## **7. Review of Monitoring**

### **7.1 Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan**

Work on establishing an independent Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Trust is underway.

SS reported that work on the Burrowing Animal Strategy would recommence once the new WHS Officer is in post.

A review of damage to the West Kennet Avenue from traffic has been undertaken and solutions for its protection are being discussed

The WHS Setting Study brief requires finalisation and a final partner review before proceeding

Megalith was published in summer and has proved particularly popular. Copies are available from SS for distribution

**8. Representative's report from/to the WHS Committees and Partnership Panel**  
CS to report on current research and response to Preferred Route

**9. Opportunities for site/excavation/archive visits in 2017**

N/A

**10. Date of next meeting**

Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> February. Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham

**AOB**

**11.1 Citizen Science Augery**

MA mentioned a research opportunity related to the Living with Monuments project. Data from augery by volunteers who will be trained will be valuable to the project. DM suggested merging with local primary school visits.

**ACTION: MA to provide information to the group**

**11.2 Our Portable Past**

AC enquired if there was still a metal detecting policy in the WHSMP. SS responded that it was discouraged in the Plan and an action to work with landowners to achieve this.

**11.3 Avebury Album**

SM introduced his new album inspired by Avebury. An extract was played and enjoyed by the group.