



STONEHENGE & AVEBURY

World Heritage Site



Stonehenge © Historic England



Avebury Henge and Stone Circle © Historic England



The Great Wall of China



The Pyramids of Giza, Egypt

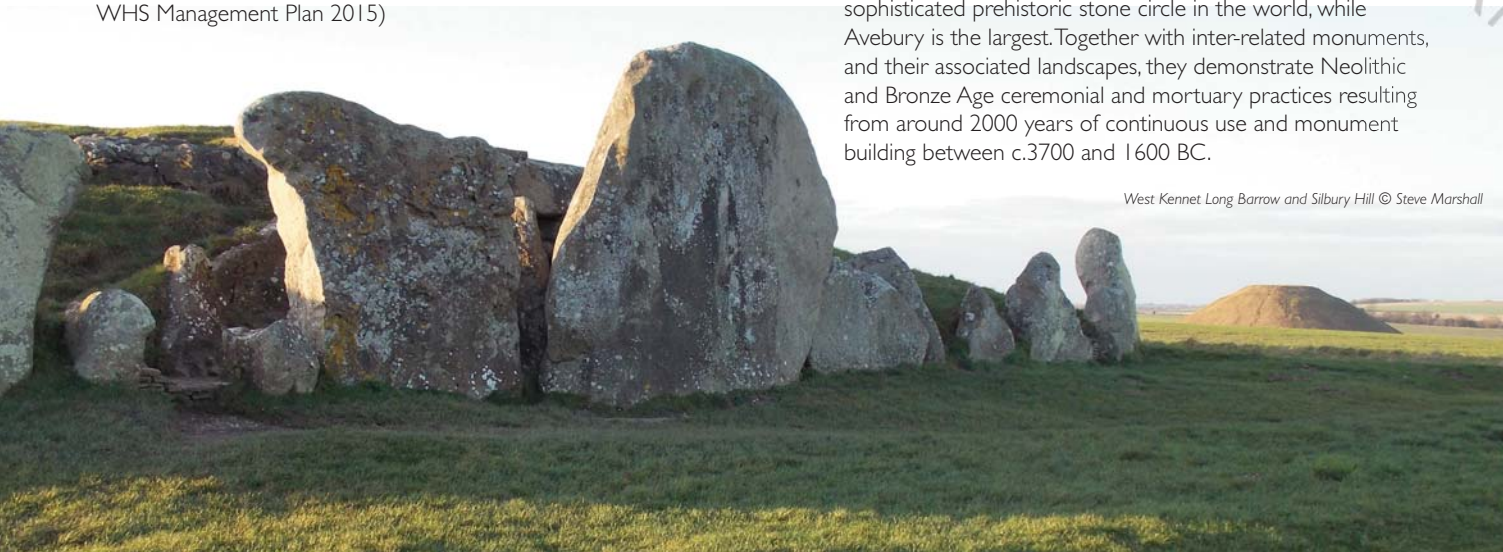


Stonehenge © Mike Goddard

Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Vision

The Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site is universally important for its unique and dense concentration of outstanding prehistoric monuments and sites which together form a landscape without parallel. We will work together to care for and safeguard this special area and its archaeology and will provide a more tranquil, rural and ecologically diverse setting for it and its archaeology. This will allow present and future generations to explore and enjoy the monuments and their landscape setting more fully. We will also ensure that the special qualities of the World Heritage Site are presented, interpreted and enhanced where appropriate, so that visitors, the local community and the whole world can better understand and value the extraordinary achievements of the prehistoric people who left us this rich legacy. We will realise the cultural, scientific and educational potential of the World Heritage Site as well as its social and economic benefits for the community.

(Extract from the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS Management Plan 2015)



West Kennet Long Barrow and Silbury Hill © Steve Marshall

What is a World Heritage Site?

World Heritage Sites are cultural and natural sites of international importance described by UNESCO as being of Outstanding Universal Value they represent the common heritage of the international community. On signing the World Heritage Convention, governments pledge to protect and present their Sites for this and future generations.

UNESCO grants the prestigious World Heritage Site status to sites that meet its strict international criteria. Today there are over 1,000 World Heritage Sites including the Pyramids, Machu Picchu, the Great Wall of China and the Amazon River Basin.

What makes Stonehenge and Avebury a World Heritage Site?

Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site is internationally important for its complexes of outstanding prehistoric monuments. Stonehenge is the most architecturally sophisticated prehistoric stone circle in the world, while Avebury is the largest. Together with inter-related monuments, and their associated landscapes, they demonstrate Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial and mortuary practices resulting from around 2000 years of continuous use and monument building between c.3700 and 1600 BC.

Stonehenge and Avebury became a single cultural World Heritage Site in 1986. The two parts of the World Heritage Site are located 40km apart in Wiltshire. The two landscapes, each covering around 25 square kilometres, are focused respectively on the great stone circles of Stonehenge and Avebury.

Stonehenge is one of the most impressive prehistoric megalithic monuments in the world due to the sheer size of its megaliths, the sophistication of its concentric plan and architectural design, the shaping of the stones, uniquely using both Wiltshire Sarsen (a sandstone) and Pembroke Bluestone, and the precision with which it was built.

At Avebury, the massive henge, containing the largest prehistoric stone circle in the world, and Silbury Hill, the largest prehistoric mound in Europe, demonstrate the outstanding engineering skills which were used to create masterpieces of earthen and megalithic architecture.

There is an exceptional survival of prehistoric monuments and sites within the World Heritage Site including settlements, burial grounds, and large constructions of earth and stone. Today, together with their settings, these monuments and sites form landscapes without parallel. They would have been of major significance to those who created them, as is apparent by the huge investment of time and effort they represent. They provide an insight into prehistoric culture, and are evidence of its impressive achievements in technology, architecture, and astronomy. The careful siting of monuments in relation to the landscape helps us to further understand the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

The finds from excavations at Stonehenge and Avebury can be seen at the museums in Avebury, Devizes and Salisbury.



Photo © Mike Goddard

Protecting and Presenting the World Heritage Site: What's been achieved so far?

Conservation

- Since 2000, landowners have restored over 740 hectares of arable fields to grassland to prevent plough damage and enhance the setting of prehistoric monuments as part of an exemplary partnership project between Natural England, Historic England and the National Trust
- The stabilisation and conservation of Silbury Hill
- Development of the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Climate Change Risk Assessment

Landscape

- Closure of the A344 reuniting Stonehenge with its Avenue and greatly improving the setting of these and other monuments
- Undergrounding of electricity cables at Overton Hill at the gateway to the Avebury part of the WHS

Interpretation

- Provision of a new world class visitor centre at Stonehenge and interpretation of the surrounding landscape

Research

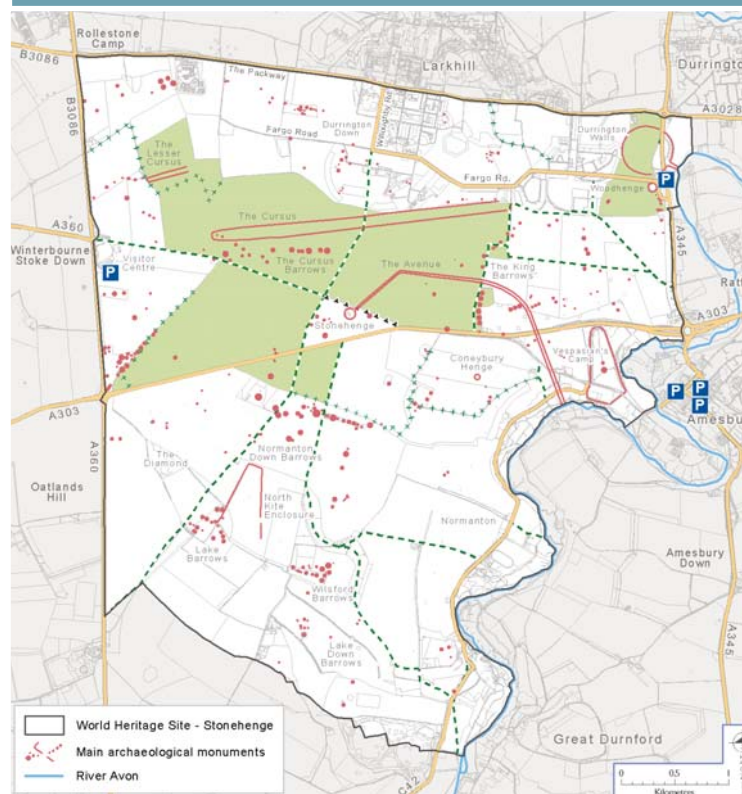
- Recent archaeological research has led to major discoveries and greater understanding of both landscapes

Community

- Annual newsletter, Megalith, and a Stonehenge and Avebury website to inform the wider community of the work of the World Heritage Site
- Working with the community to produce the Avebury WHS Residents' Pack

STONEHENGE

Stonehenge and Woodhenge are both in the care of English Heritage, much of the landscape surrounding them (owned by the National Trust) is accessible to the public. Access to the rest of the World Heritage Site is restricted to public rights of way and permissive paths. Explore the landscape with guided walks and downloadable trails from the National Trust website.



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Stonehenge and the Avenue © Historic England

Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site Management Plan 2015



The Management Plan sets out the overall strategy for achieving the correct balance between conservation, access, the interests of the local community and the sustainable use of the Site, whether for recreation and tourism, or agriculture. The overarching aim of the Management Plan is to protect the Site to maintain its Outstanding Universal Value as

agreed by UNESCO while providing access and interpretation for visitors and local people, and allowing its continued use for sustainable agriculture and tourism.

The Plan outlines the significance of the Site, key issues, long-term aims and policies. It contains a detailed action plan for delivery by partners, maps and much supporting information in appendices.

The Plan was published in 2015 after wide public consultation. It has been endorsed by the UK government and key stakeholders including Wiltshire Council the local planning and highways authority. The Plan has been lodged with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris.

The priorities of the 2015-2021 Management Plan are to:

1. Protect buried archaeology from ploughing and enhance the setting of sites and monuments by maintaining and extending permanent wildlife-rich grassland and managing woodland and scrub
2. Protect monuments from damage by burrowing animals
3. Reduce the dominance and negative impact of roads and traffic and ensure any A303 improvements support this
4. Improve the interpretation and enhance the visitor experience of the wider landscape
5. Ensure any development is consistent with the protection and, where appropriate enhancement of the monuments and their settings and the wider WHS landscape and its setting
6. Spread the economic benefits related to the WHS to the community and wider county
7. Encourage local community engagement with the WHS
8. Encourage sustainable archaeological research and education to improve and communicate our understanding of the WHS.



Avebury Henge and Stone Circle © Historic England

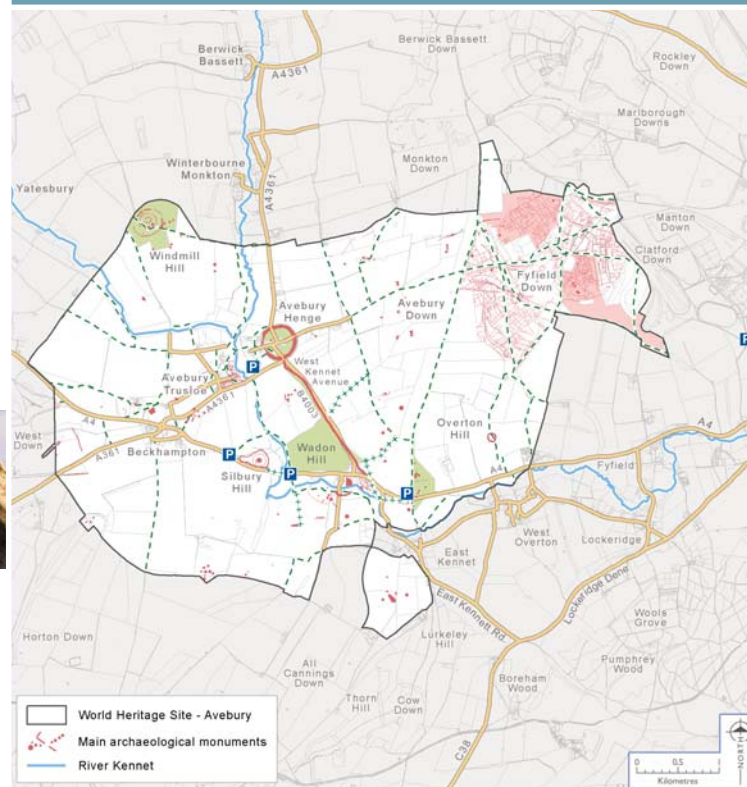
Implementing the Management Plan

Delivery of the Plan is not the responsibility of one single organisation but a joint responsibility and commitment shared by all the partners involved in the management of the WHS from individual landowners to national agencies. The range and number of partners involved in its management means that co-ordinated partnership working is essential for achieving successful outcomes for the WHS and the communities living and working in and around it. There has been an excellent track record of organisations and community groups working well together in both parts of the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS and it is anticipated that this will continue.

The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Panel and the Stonehenge and Avebury Steering Committees play an essential role in encouraging, guiding, overseeing and monitoring progress as well as reviewing and updating the Management Plan. The WHS Coordination Unit plays a pivotal role in facilitating, coordinating and enabling implementation of the WHS Management Plan.

AVEBURY

There are a number of rights of way around the Avebury WHS including the Ridgeway National Trail. There are areas of open access land and permissive paths which enable visitors to explore the wider landscape. Avebury Henge is open access. Downloadable walks are available on the National Trust and Ridgeway National Trail websites.



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- Roads
- - - Rights of way
- . - . National Trust permissive paths
- Natural England open access
- National Trust open access
- P Car parks

Exploring the World Heritage Site: Stonehenge and Avebury

Historic England publishes a 1:10 000 scale OS map which provides a map of the archaeology and access options across both landscapes. It can be purchased locally or online.



West Kennet Avenue, Avebury © Steve Marshall



How is the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Managed?

Ownership and management of the Site are shared between English Heritage, the National Trust, the Ministry of Defence, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wiltshire Council, landowners, farmers and householders. Many others are actively involved and work in partnership in the WHS, including Natural England, Highways England and parish and town councils. The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Coordination Unit oversee and help to implement the Management Plan.

The Coordination Unit is based at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham and hosted by Wiltshire Council with support from Historic England.

To view the full Management Plan online go to www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org


To find out more about the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site please contact us at:

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Further information on visiting
Stonehenge and Avebury WHS

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www.visitwiltshire.co.uk
www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

To find out more about
World Heritage Sites
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/>



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