

Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan



August 2005



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Avebury World Heritage Site

Management Plan

2005



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Foreword

Dr Robert Bewley, Regional Director South West, English Heritage

The Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986 in recognition of the great achievements of our prehistoric ancestors and the outstanding universal value of these monuments. Avebury forms part of the only prehistoric World Heritage Site in England, recognised and protected by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. This Management Plan, for the period 2005-2011, aims to achieve a broad vision of the quality, significance, condition and management needs of the site and its intrinsic and enduring value. It highlights the international and national significance of the site and shows how its monuments and landscape will be preserved and treasured for all times. It also aims to protect the outstanding universal value of the WHS.

However it also has to gain acceptance and a commitment from all those involved in the management and conservation of Avebury. Avebury, as a place, has an intrinsic value for creating a better quality of life in the United Kingdom, and beyond. This commitment has been developing since the original management plan was published in 1998, not least through the involvement of so many local people, in all aspects of work at Avebury, including the creation of this Plan. However there is still much more that we can learn about Avebury and how best to manage the special challenges it poses.

There has been a huge amount of archaeological research, investigation and excavation in the Avebury landscape in the past decade. This has greatly increased our knowledge and understanding of the range and distribution of sites but also increased the significance of Avebury as a place, not least the medieval settlement and later buildings but also its prehistory. It is widely recognised that the major monuments, the henge, the stone circles, avenues, enclosures, burials, long barrows and Silbury Hill are a significant part of what is visible today but they are only a portion of a rich, deeper and wider, but less visible landscape, which is only starting to be understood.

The collapse of the Duke of Northumberland's 1776 excavation shaft in the middle of Silbury Hill was one of the unexpected events (in 2000) which presented an enormous challenge for all concerned. In the period of this plan the aim is to have stabilised Silbury Hill so that there are no future surprises.

Thus the management and conservation needs are always changing and this new Plan addresses the issues of the long-term management of the major monuments as well as addressing the needs of the other sites and landscapes.

The creation of this Plan has been a collaborative effort, involving many individuals and organisations over several years, but one person has been the catalyst, bringing the Plan to fruition - Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger. As the co-ordinator for this part of the World Heritage Site, we owe her a huge debt of gratitude for her understanding and knowledge of the people, and the past, that makes Avebury such a special place.

Dr Robert Bewley
Bristol
July 2005

Preface

This Management Plan has been written for the Avebury part of World Heritage Site (WHS) C373, Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, located in Wiltshire, England. The Plan has been prepared on behalf of the Avebury WHS Steering Committee following a review of the Plan published in 1998 and consultations with all who have an interest in the management of the WHS. This Plan, for the period 2005-11 is intended to replace the previous document.

A draft version was circulated widely during a three-month consultation period from September to November 2004. The Plan has been endorsed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and will be forwarded by the Secretary of State to the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO in 2005. During the lifetime of this Management Plan there are likely to be changes in the heritage protection system which may have important implications for the protection and management of the WHS. The outcome of the A303 Stonehenge Public Inquiry may also have implications for Avebury and it is intended that the Plan may be subject to amendment in due course. A web version of this document is available for viewing at the following address: www.kennet.gov.uk/aveburywhs.

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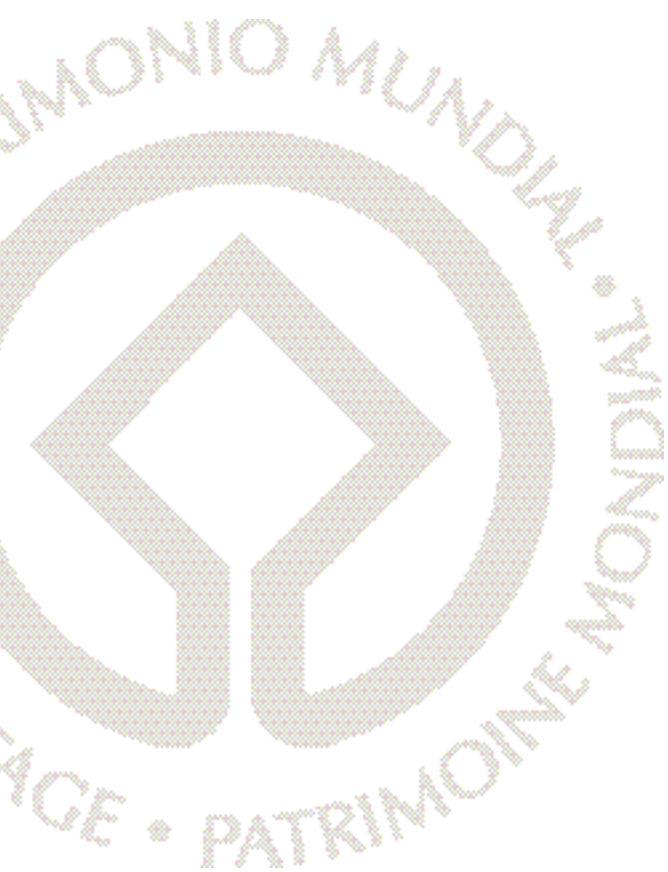
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Avebury Stone Circle

Standing Stones in the north-west quadrant



PART ONE: DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

This part of the Management Plan describes the WHS and assesses its cultural significance, aiming to set the context for the more detailed evaluation of the WHS's management needs in Part Two. The first section (1.0) explores the need for and aims of the Management Plan and evaluates the success of the previous Plan published in 1998. It goes on to describe the methodology and data sources used in the process of developing the Plan. The second section (2.0) describes the archaeological and historic features captured by the WHS designation, and the evolution of its historic landscape through time. The third section (3.0) comprises an assessment of significance. It assesses the cultural values that make the site special, and includes justification for its inscription as a WHS. The final section (4.0) describes the current context of ownership and management responsibilities within the site, and sets out its conservation status.

1.0 THE WHS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2005

1.1 AIMS OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.1.1 This Management Plan aims to protect the outstanding universal values (OUV) of the Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS). At the same time it aims to achieve a broad vision of the quality, significance, condition and management needs of the site and its intrinsic and enduring value. It expresses the vision that *"The World Heritage, international, national and other values of the Avebury WHS will be understood and that they, and the site itself, will be preserved and treasured for all times"*. This Plan aims to ensure that this vision is widely accepted, and to establish the commitment to its realisation.

1.1.2 The development of this Plan in 2003-5 has been based on the implementation of the preceding Avebury WHS Management Plan (AMP98) published in 1998 by English Heritage. A review of the success of AMP98 is set out below in Section 1.4. This new Plan is for the period 2005-11 and is intended to replace the previous document. As before, this Plan has been developed in partnership with the key agencies, organisations and individuals. It is advisory in nature, aiming to:

- set the framework for management
- help to co-ordinate the activities of all involved
- develop mechanisms and partnerships for influencing future management
- generate the commitment to the Plan's priorities which will secure the future of the WHS
- identify and provide suitable encouragement for positive actions which will improve the management and conservation of the site
- develop consistent policies to protect the historic environment within the site.

1.1.3 To further these aims, the Plan presents a set of management objectives based on a strategic view over thirty years and medium-term objectives for five to ten years as recommended in the UNESCO/ICCROM/ICOMOS publication Management Guidelines for World Heritage Sites. The implementation section (Part Four) concentrates on identifying objectives/projects which can be instigated in the short term, during the life cycle of the Plan. New projects with longer development time will emerge during the period of the Plan.

1.1.4 The Plan aims to ensure that these management objectives and policy recommendations are themselves sustainable, and encourage the application of the principles of sustainability to all aspects of the use of the WHS landscape.



Photo: English Heritage

1.2 THE NEED FOR THE PLAN

- 1.2.1 World Heritage Site Management Plans, as well as specific planning guidance, are the United Kingdom's means of ensuring that its obligations under the World Heritage Convention, and associated guidance, are fulfilled. The first Avebury Plan, published in 1998, was designed to have a life span of about five years. This Plan is designed to have a life cycle of around six years.
- 1.2.2 The land within the Avebury WHS is subject to a variety of pressures from modern life such as tourism, traffic, agriculture and development. It has been widely recognised that these pressures, if not checked, can irreversibly damage fragile archaeological remains and their landscape setting. There is a need for a Management Plan to help find an appropriate balance between the needs of the main land use interests, namely: the protection of the historic environment, the quality of the visitor experience and the quality of life of the local community. As examined in more detail in Part Two, balancing these issues is fundamental to the achievement of effective sustainable management and is one of the primary objectives of this Management Plan.
- 1.2.3 The Avebury WHS is part of a dynamic, living landscape which has been evolving over the last ten thousand years. The nature of the landscape, multiple ownership and agencies, and competing land uses creates complex challenges for the management of the site. The Management Plan must, therefore, take a holistic and strategic approach.

1.3 THE SCOPE AND STATUS OF THE PLAN

- 1.3.1 The scope of this Management Plan extends to the Avebury part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS. Whilst it offers an overall framework of objectives, it is not a statutory document. It introduces no new powers nor does it diminish the responsibility of any agency or individual. It can, however, advise, inform and promote better conservation management. In providing a written framework, adopted by the key agencies, the Plan will act as a catalyst for various management initiatives to be implemented within a set timetable, as presented in Parts Three and Four.
- 1.3.2 In developing the Plan, it is intended that it will enhance the existing plan coverage and will serve to inform existing and future management documents relating to the area. Moreover, it is intended that the Plan will inform the production of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), as has been the case for the Stonehenge part of the World Heritage Site.
- 1.3.3 It is hoped that the underlying objectives of the Plan will retain their relevance for at least a generation. It will be updated on a regular basis as the processes of implementation and monitoring are carried out (Sections 16 and 18). It is expected that the final version of the Plan will be officially adopted or endorsed by all of the key agencies involved with the Avebury part of the WHS.

1.4 EVALUATION OF THE 1998 AVEBURY WHS MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 1.4.1 The 1998 Management Plan contained twenty-six objectives for the period 1998-2003. These objectives were based on the identification of the WHS values and key management issues. An evaluation of the extent to which these have been addressed and achieved is an important part of setting objectives for the new Plan for the next six years.
- 1.4.2 The twenty-six objectives set out in the 1998 Management Plan were developed to provide a strategic view over thirty years, as well as in the medium term (five to ten years) and short term (one to five years). The first four objectives (a-d) set out the overall long-term vision for the effective management of the site over a thirty-year period. They have no detailed strategies attached to them, but set the context for the medium and short-term objectives. The first three of these do stay the same in the new Plan. The remaining 22 medium and short-term objectives were divided into four groups with detailed strategies attached to each. Further thought was given to the implementation of these objectives in the context of the Programme for Action in Part Four. Subsequent to the publication of the Plan, an Implementation Plan was developed (December 1999) which further prioritised the objectives and detailed indicative costing.



Monuments and their landscape setting

OBJECTIVES e-k

- 1.4.3 This section of the 1998 Plan emphasises the exceptional nature of the site's archaeological features and the need to protect them from arable cultivation through conversion to pasture. In effect, all major management objectives are subordinate to preserving archaeological features within an appropriate setting. The objective of expanding grassland (objective e) has started to be achieved with a good level of success. The main cause of the success has been the development of a Special Project for Countryside Stewardship (CSS) within the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS. This collaborative project was developed from 1999 by Defra, English Heritage, National Trust and the Avebury WHS Officer and commenced in May 2002. The Special Project element allows for farmers within the WHS to gain higher payments (£420 rather than the usual £280 per hectare) for converting arable land with archaeological features into pasture. The project has been a huge success and as a result six farms have entered land into Stewardship and converted arable areas to pasture in order to protect archaeological features. To date (June 2005) 110 hectares (5% of land in the Avebury WHS) has been converted in this way, protecting fifty monuments. All farms within the WHS with archaeological sites in arable have been visited or contacted in relation to the Scheme and it is anticipated that more land will be reverted in the near future. There has been similar success with this Scheme in the Stonehenge part of the WHS. New developments in techniques for the creation of species-rich semi-natural grasslands have recently been piloted by the Rural Development Service (Defra), the National Trust and English Nature. This type of grassland can provide a more appropriate ancient and natural landscape setting for the archaeological monuments in the WHS. Such land use changes, funded via CSS and the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS), have the additional benefit of complementing the objectives of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan and Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 1.4.4 One of the priority objectives (g) aims at enhancing and protecting the visual sensitivity of key monuments. In relation to this, the main success has been in the improvements to the access and setting of West Kennet Long Barrow. During 2002-3 the landowner of the monument and surrounding area entered into a CSS agreement as part of the Special Project. Working in collaboration with Defra, English Heritage and the National Trust, a successful scheme was developed: a 26 metre wide strip of grass was established around the Long Barrow, taking the ditches out of cultivation and fencing removed; a 16 metre wide grassed access route was established following the removal of existing fencing. This has vastly improved access, the visual amenity and setting of the monument as well as protecting valuable archaeological features from the plough.

- 1.4.5 Objective h focuses on the perceived deficiencies in the boundary of the Avebury WHS and the need to review the boundary. A detailed review has taken place in 2003-4 and recommendations for changing the boundary are included in the new Plan in Section 5.5.
- 1.4.6 In 1999 English Heritage funded a detailed condition survey of the 289 earthwork monuments within the Avebury WHS, as set out in objective i. The results of this study have been extremely useful and have helped to target funding for management agreements and to target the most vulnerable archaeological features for removal from cultivation as part of CSS. The details of the results of the survey appear in Section 5.1.
- 1.4.7 There has been some success since 1998 in optimising the use of agri-environmental schemes and other forms of management agreement (objective m). In particular, the place of the WHS within the priorities for CSS has been addressed by the development of the World Heritage Site Special Project (section 1.4.3), and English Heritage has entered into additional management agreements with two landowners.

Planning and policy framework

OBJECTIVES I-o

- 1.4.8 Objective I focuses on the need to maintain and enhance the rich built heritage features in the site. In part-fulfilment of the strategies relating to this, Kennet District Council published detailed Conservation Area Statements for Avebury and West Kennett in 2003.
- 1.4.9 In 2000 the process of developing a Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) commenced. The plan was circulated for consultation and published in January 2004. As part of the consultation process and the involvement of the WHS Officer, the archaeological and historical importance of the World Heritage Site within the AONB has been acknowledged and the potential for stronger links identified (objective m.3).
- 1.4.10 The Management Plan sets out the need to enhance the protection of the WHS afforded by the Local Plan and planning policy framework (objective n). Kennet District Council's Local Plan has been reviewed and the new Local Plan was adopted in April 2004 (Section 6.2).

Traffic and parking management

OBJECTIVES p-s

- 1.4.11 This section of the Plan highlights a number of possible solutions to the challenges of traffic and parking problems in the WHS . A number of the short-term objectives have been addressed. For example, “gateway” features have been erected leading into Avebury village at the commencement of the 30 mph zone. In addition, WHS road signs have been erected on the main road running through the WHS, (objective q.4), with the aim of raising the awareness of drivers that they are entering a special area.
- 1.4.12 There has also been some success in the implementation of objectives aiming to improve parking. In 2002 the National Trust (in consultation with English Heritage and the DCMS) closed the Central Car Park to visitors, except disabled visitors (objective r.1). By establishing a permit system, the Car Park is now only used by the local community at peak times. This has been undertaken in conjunction with the introduction of charges for parking in the Southern Car Park (objective r.5). The medium-term aim of dispersing some of the parking areas around the WHS (objective r.2) has been considered to some extent by the commissioning of a feasibility study for a possible northern car park. The study, carried out in 2003 and jointly funded by the National Trust and Wiltshire County Council, focused on a possible car park development site on the east side of the Swindon Road, north of Bonds Garage. The study highlighted a number constraints relating to the site location and potential costs of construction.
- 1.4.13 Objective s focused on the need to reduce the reliance on the car by visitors to Avebury and to encourage the use of more sustainable methods of transport. In order to publicise public transport and walking/cycling routes, a “Green Transport” information leaflet was published in 2001 (objective s.1). There has also been collaboration with Sustrans over the further development of the National Cycle Network routes which go via the WHS (Figure 2).

Public access and sustainable tourism

OBJECTIVES t-y

- 1.4.14 The existing partnership approach to tourism management has continued in the WHS (objective t.1 and v). There has been an increase in the number of information panels, signposts and other information, interpreting the outlying monuments and the wider landscape (objective w.3). In 1999 an Interpretation Plan was developed for the site (Objective w.5) which set out a number of recommendations, some of which have been implemented. In addition, there have been two major developments relating to the provision of information and interpretation in the heart of

the WHS. In 2001 Kennet District Council moved its Tourist Information Centre (TIC) to a permanent home in the United Reformed Chapel in Green Street (objective w.6), thereby securing a viable future for this historic building. The National Trust opened the Barn Gallery Exhibition, part of the Alexander Keiller Museum, in 2001. As well as augmenting the level of interpretative material available to visitors, this development also helped to maintain the character of this Grade 1 listed building.

Research

OBJECTIVE z

1.4.15 This part of the 1998 Plan focuses on the need to encourage and promote archaeological and historic research relating to the WHS. In 2001 the Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury World Heritage Site was published and widely disseminated. The Research Agenda has helped to focus research on the key gaps in our knowledge of the past of the area. Since 1998 there has continued to be plenty of excavation and fieldwork conducted in the area resulting in the discovery of new sites as well as augmenting our understanding of others. The number of archaeological records from the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)) has increased by about 20% since 1998. Key projects include the Negotiating Avebury Project 1999-2004. This has confirmed the existence of the Beckhampton Megalithic Avenue (on the south-west side of the Henge monument) and Falkner's Circle, as well as discovering a new enclosure and other features in Longstones Field, Beckhampton. Other examples include the fieldwork and excavation conducted at Silbury Hill in 2002-3 by English Heritage and a geophysical survey of the interior of the Henge in 2003 by the National Trust (see 1.5.9 for additional fieldwork publications).

CONCLUSIONS

1.4.16 Assessment of what has been done to meet the objectives of the 1998 Plan shows that progress has been good. All of the 22 medium and short-term objectives have been at least partially addressed. Of the 66 strategies/policies relating to these, 40 (60%) have been addressed (30 completed and 10 partially addressed). These include most of strategies identified as of priority in the Implementation Plan of December 1999. Most of the relevant strategies not yet addressed are carried through into the revised plan for 2005-11.

1.4.17 The most progress has been made in objectives relating to Public Access & Sustainable Tourism (t-y), Research (z) and the Monuments and their Landscape Setting (e-k). The least progress has been made in the objectives relating to Traffic & Parking Management (p-s) and Planning and Policy Framework (l-o).

1.4.18 Overall progress has been considerable. Some of these objectives and projects would have happened anyway, but many of the achievements are the results of co-operation between different organisations and partnerships, an approach fostered by the Plan. The success means that the new Plan had to be largely re-written with a number of new objectives.

1.5 METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

1.5.1 The process of developing this revised Management Plan began in 2003. A lot of the groundwork had already been undertaken during the preparation of the 1998 Plan. There are two crucial elements to the Plan development process:

1.5.2 1. *Consultation*

The process of consultation and the full involvement of all stakeholders, especially the local community, are considered to be vital to the long-term success of the Plan. A three-month public consultation period was held during 2004, which included an exhibition and presentation to the local community. The draft Plan was also made available to a wider audience via the Internet at www.kennet.gov.uk/aveburywhs.

1.5.3 2. *Data collection*

The collection and full understanding of all available data relating to the broad spectrum of the significance of the WHS is of key importance. In 1996-7 four projects were undertaken to aid the collection of data for the 1998 Management Plan and are still relevant to a large extent in the context of the revised Plan. Where available, more recent data has been used to update the previous figures.

Visitor Management Study

1.5.4 A six-month consultancy project was undertaken by the ASH Consulting Group in 1997 in order to develop objectives and mechanisms for identifying public access and sustainability priorities in the Avebury WHS. The principal components of the study included a series of local community discussion workshops which were held in May 1997; a programme of visitor questionnaire surveys conducted in April 1997; and an examination of interpretation provision within the site. Since 1997 some additional visitor data has been made available by the National Trust. (Section 8.2).

Traffic Management Study

- 1.5.5 This study, undertaken by the TPK Partnership in 1997 sought to identify and understand existing transportation and parking issues and to identify positive improvements. The study was based on the analyses of traffic/parking and speed/flow surveys undertaken. It also examined personal injury collisions that have occurred within the WHS during the preceding three-year period, in order to address issues relating to road safety. The data has since been augmented by new parking survey data gathered in 2003 as part of the feasibility study conducted by Parkman and traffic count data provided by Wiltshire County Council.

Landscape Assessment

- 1.5.6 This project, undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates in 1997 appraised the physical, historical and cultural influences on the character of the existing landscape. The principal components of the study included: an appraisal of the physical environment, land uses and historic landscape features; a review of the existing planning framework and protections/designations; an analysis of the visual significance, and landscape setting of key monuments; and identification of strategic aims and objectives for landscape and archaeological site management.

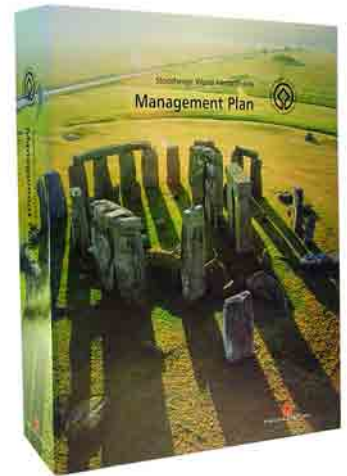
Geographical Information System (GIS) Database

- 1.5.7 From 1996 English Heritage has developed and maintained a spatial database for the Avebury WHS. This database is held within a Geographical Information System (GIS): an integrated set of skills and computer-based tools for the collection, storage, analysis and display of geographical data. A version of the database is held and used by the World Heritage Site Officer in the office at Kennet District Council.
- 1.5.8 In order to fully understand the landscape context of the site, the area covered by the GIS incorporates 13 by 12 kms centred on Avebury. This also forms the wider WHS research study area. The foundation of the database is the archaeological data registered in the SMR, OS map and height data. Information from the consultancy projects, particularly the landscape assessment, has been integrated into the database. The database has been used to aid the production of statistical and mapped information for the production of the Research Agenda (2001) and the Management Plan. It is a powerful tool both for management and research within the Avebury WHS.

Recent Publications and Documentation

1.5.9 Since the publication of the AMP98 there have been a number of studies, reports and documents produced which contain important data used in the development of the 2005 Management Plan. These include:

- Avebury World Heritage Site Monument Condition Survey 1999
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2004
- Conservation Area Statements for Avebury and West Kennett 2003
- Avebury World Heritage Site Interpretation Plan 2001
- Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan 2000
- National Trust property management plan 2004 and visitor figures
- Papers relating to revising the Local Management Agreements (2004-5) EH/NT
- Avebury Archaeological Research Agenda 2001
- UNESCO Operational Guidelines (revised) 2005
- Stonehenge A303 Inquiry papers.



1.5.10 In addition, there has been a series of major publications relating to fieldwork on archaeological sites and monuments in the WHS which have contributed to a greater understanding of the site and are reflected in the 2005 Management Plan.

They include:

- Landscape Plotted and Pieced by Peter Fowler (2000)
- Sacred Mound, Holy Rings. Silbury Hill and the West Kennet palisade enclosures by Alasdair Whittle (1997)
- The Harmony of Symbols; the Windmill Hill causeway enclosure by A. Whittle, C. Grigson and J. Pollard (1999)
- Avebury: Biography of a Landscape. J. Pollard and A. Reynolds. (2002)
- Avebury. M. Gillings and J. Pollard (2004).

2.0 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE AVEBURY WORLD HERITAGE SITE

2.1 THE WHS AND ITS BOUNDARY

2.1.1 The Avebury part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS is situated on the western edge of the Marlborough Downs in north-east Wiltshire. The Marlborough Downs and Vale of Pewsey landscapes are of national importance, recognised by their inclusion within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Avebury WHS lies wholly within the AONB.

2.1.2 The Avebury complex of sites and monuments represents a unique surviving example of outstanding human endeavour in Neolithic times and later. Avebury Henge and stone circles, Silbury Hill, West Kennet Avenue and other associated sites are important within the open setting of the North Wessex Downs. Seen in juxtaposition to later historic features, small villages, designed parklands and large manor houses, the ancient monuments greatly contribute to a distinctive historic and cultural landscape. The particularly rich assemblage of archaeological sites, both visible and buried, provide a vivid record of past landscape patterns and use. These monuments and features have exerted a considerable visual and cultural influence on the surrounding landscape for almost 5,000 years.

2.1.3 Since December 1992 the World Heritage Committee has recognised World Heritage Cultural Landscapes as a category of cultural site. This decision was made to help deal with the conceptual and practical difficulties with the assessment of rural sites which contain both cultural and natural values. Although the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS is not officially recognised as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape (and could not have been at the time of nomination), a recent UNESCO publication (Fowler 2004, Annex C) does include this site as one of 70 nominated to the World Heritage List prior to 1992 which could be considered as a cultural landscape if it was to be re-nominated. Although the Avebury landscape is clearly not designated as a Cultural Landscape, it has been described as a cultural landscape for many years, as a means of emphasising that individual monuments do not exist in isolation. According to the nomination document, the site comprises a number of named and associated monuments which together form a “landscape without parallel”.

- 2.1.4 The boundary of the Avebury WHS (Figure 2) encloses an area of 22.5 square kilometres (2,250 hectares). The boundary follows modern and topographical features and has no real significance in visual or archaeological terms. However, it does clearly enclose the six key prehistoric monuments in “guardianship” (in care of the State) which are specifically mentioned in the WHS designation documentation.
- 2.1.5 The trackway known as the Ridgeway is included within the boundary. Indications of ancient field systems dominate the land crossed by the Ridgeway. The inclusion of the land between the Ridgeway and the eastern boundary of the WHS brings within it part of the magnificent landscape of Overton Down with its well-preserved ancient settlements and field systems (and incorporating part of the Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve). The western border of the WHS was drawn around the base of Knoll Down in order to include the arc of land running from West Kennet Long Barrow to Windmill Hill. The boundary and the definition of a buffer zone for the WHS are reviewed in more detail in Section 5.5.

Archaeological and historic features of the WHS

- 2.1.6 Avebury is one of a small number of areas in southern Britain which appears to have acted as a focus for ceremonial and ritual activities during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Avebury is one the richest and most varied of these areas. As such the Avebury landscape forms a palimpsest of archaeological features (Figure 3).
- 2.1.7 The Avebury area has a long history of arable cultivation, which over time has dramatically altered the landscape and ancient earthworks, especially the burial mounds and field systems. Many of the features are not now visible on the ground as the earthworks have been levelled by ploughing. Their levels of survival, condition and importance varies, and this is reviewed in detail in Section 5.1.
- 2.1.8 The most definitive database of archaeological sites is held by the SMR at Wiltshire County Council. It records some 383 sites within the WHS, exclusive of find scatters, of which about a third are prehistoric funerary and ceremonial monuments. Sixty-seven areas, including 166 individual sites, are protected as Scheduled Monuments (SMs). These figures include a number of new sites identified from aerial photographs by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now English Heritage) in the course of the Avebury Mapping Project (part of the National Mapping Project). These sites have been added to the SMR after the publication of the 1998 Avebury Plan. The number of new archaeological records represents an increase of around 20%.

The Built Heritage

2.1.9 The built heritage, comprising architecture and building styles of all periods, is a valuable asset to the character of the area. Within the WHS the main settlement areas are in Avebury village, Avebury Trusloe, and West Kennett (all Conservation Areas) and Beckhampton, which between them contain eighty-five listed buildings. The historic buildings within Avebury, Trusloe and West Kennett have a distinctive character because of their relationship to the monuments and the landscape.



Avebury Church

2.1.10 Avebury village is of Saxon origins, and now lies mainly along the High Street. The church, with traces of its Saxon fabric and its very high nave is the dominant feature and is a conspicuous landmark. On the north side of the village, the manor house, barn and associated buildings lie within a parkland landscape dominated by lime avenues.

Features of Nature Conservation Interest



Sheep grazing on Fyfield Down Nature Reserve

2.1.11 Within the site there are many features of interest for their nature conservation value. The wetlands, permanent pasture, downlands, sarsens and buildings provide habitats, which sustain species of national or international importance. In particular, the sarsens fields on Overton and Fyfield Down are valuable for their lichen communities of national importance, due to the unusual exposure of hard rock, and the clear, unpolluted air. This helps to distinguish these downs as a National Nature Reserve (NNR).

2.1.12 Flower rich unimproved chalk grassland, commonly known as chalk downland, is one of the richest wildlife habitats with a wealth of wildflowers and butterflies. It is an internationally threatened habitat. Wiltshire contains over half of Britain's remaining unimproved chalk grassland, and it can be found at several places in the WHS, in particular on, Avebury Down, and Silbury Hill (both designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest), the Henge and Windmill Hill. The overall importance of quality of the landscape is reflected in its inclusion within the AONB.

2.1.13 The River Kennet, which flows through the WHS, has species-rich and diverse flora and abundant aquatic invertebrates. The river also has important historic, visual, and landscape characteristics and was clearly significant for the location of several of the key Neolithic monuments in the area.

2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 2.2.1 The Avebury WHS and its hinterland is primarily an agricultural landscape with large fields and long uninterrupted views. The landscape is full of surviving visible and buried archaeological monuments and features of great antiquity. Crossing the area east to west, the main A4 follows its modern course from Marlborough to Cherhill (Figure 2). It is joined by the A361 Devizes Road at Beckhampton, which runs through a wide, shallow dry valley, and the A4361 from Swindon, which passes through the village of Avebury.
- 2.2.2 The region within which Avebury is located has been divided (based on the 1997 Landscape Assessment by Chris Blandford Associates) into nine principal landscape areas on the basis of landform, landcover and overall visual character. A detailed description of each area is presented in Appendix A of the AMP98.
- 2.2.3 Windmill Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow and Silbury Hill, together with the Avebury Henge, West Kennet Avenue and The Sanctuary, comprise the six 'guardianship' monuments specifically included in the designation documents. In addition to these, the Overton Hill barrows, the Ridgeway barrows and Waden Hill are considered to be important visual features that inter-relate with the key monuments to form the nucleus of the WHS. Analysis of the pattern of present intervisibility between key monuments provides not only an insight into the possible functional and religious links between sites in the past but also provides a basis on which to facilitate clearer appreciation of the monuments and their landscape setting, and better management.

Physical Influences

- 2.2.4 The majority of the Avebury and surrounding area lies on chalk of the Upper, Middle and Lower series. The western escarpment is formed from Upper Greensand and Gault Clay above Corallian deposits. To the south, the Pewsey escarpment is Middle Chalk, below which lies the largely Lower Chalk and greensand of the Vale of Pewsey. Clay-with-flints deposits cap some of the summits; colluvial, alluvial and river terrace deposits fill the more substantial valleys.
- 2.2.5 The skeletal form of the Marlborough Downs reflects the underlying Cretaceous chalk. The smooth, rounded chalk downs form a broad elevated plateau with a strongly undulating topography. Numerous dry valleys or coombes are characteristic chalk landscape features, formed as a result of Quaternary periglacial conditions as surface streams cut deep valleys into the frozen chalk. Today there are few water features found over the porous chalk bedrock. The chalk bedrock weathers to form typically light, free-draining calcareous soils on steep slopes and hill tops, with deeper soils found in small coombes and valley bottoms.

Some of the clay-with-flints deposits on the downland slopes give rise to more stony soils, some of which are acidic. On the plateau to the west the soils are heavier and contain more clay and are prone to seasonal waterlogging. Along the river valley there are calcareous loamy soils over gravel, affected by groundwater and flooding.

- 2.2.6 Sarsen stones are a particular feature of this chalk landscape. The stones are isolated remnants of weathered tertiary sandstones bonded together by a hard silica cement. The main concentration of sarsens is on Overton and Fyfield Downs. The distinctive concentration of sarsens in the coombes below is a result of solifluction, resulting in the transportation of the stones down the slopes and into the valleys.

2.3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE AND DISCOVERY OF AVEBURY

- 2.3.1 The landscape of today is the product of a series of major changes through which its character has been transformed by the interaction of natural and human processes. While the basic landforms remain the same, its superficial covering continues to be subjected to change. Some periods of landscape change have been more rapid and more radical than others. From an archaeological and historical perspective, change is the one enduring characteristic of the landscape and this will continue to be the case.

- 2.3.2 A summary of the key events in the development of the Avebury landscape is provided below as a context for the later discussion of the setting of archaeological and historic features in the present-day landscape. A full description of the historical development of the landscape is included in the AMP98 as Appendix D.

- 2.3.3 Following the last glaciation the landscape would have been open grassland, with tree cover increasing as the climate grew warmer. The first phase of the West Kennet Long Barrow was established between 3,900 - 3,600 BC, with further barrows and the Windmill Hill enclosures appearing within the now wooded landscape. From about 2,850 BC construction of the main Avebury monuments began on a long low ridge. The Henge appeared first, with the West Kennet Avenue added later, to link The Sanctuary with the main complex. At some point around this time the Beckhampton Avenue, which runs from the western Henge entrance and terminates at the Longstones Cove was constructed. The precise date and place in the sequence of the Beckhampton Avenue is presently unclear, but from its physical relationship to an earlier enclosure in Longstones Field, it is most likely to be from the period 2600-2300 BC, as is the West Kennet Avenue (Gillings and Pollard 2004, page 76).

- 2.3.4 Silbury Hill was built later in a highly visible location situated near what are now the Swallowhead Springs. The Palisade Enclosures at West Kennett were probably constructed around this time too.

More extensive clearance for cultivation brought about an increase in soil movement. Many Bronze Age field systems, burials and settlements scattered the downland, establishing early patterns of land division. With shifts in weather patterns during the Iron Age, land in cultivation may have been diverted to lower ground.

2.3.5 In Roman times a large settlement covered land on the east and south side of Silbury Hill, straddling the road to Bath. Agriculture was probably mixed, and there is evidence that the earlier fields were being re-used. By the 5th century a decline in Roman markets resulted in less intensive farming. Later, a new Saxon settlement was established at Avebury. At Domesday most downland was pasture, with little woodland and meadows along the Kennet valley. The 12th and 13th-centuries saw an expansion of settlement and farming onto the downs.

2.3.6 In the 14th century poor harvests caused marginal arable land to be returned to pasture, farmsteads were abandoned and villages shrank. Avebury was particularly affected and migrated further up the hill into the great Henge where superstition led to the burying or destruction of the standing stones from the medieval period onwards. Common downland was enclosed on Windmill Hill in the 16th and 17th centuries, with further enclosures taking place in the 18th and 19th centuries. There was an increase in designed elements within the landscape, with the 17th century parkland at Avebury Manor, and the planting of beech clumps on the skyline Ridgeway barrows.

2.3.7 In common with many other downland areas, major change appears to have taken place in the area during World War II and subsequently into the 1960s. Large areas of pasture were ploughed up. Boundaries were removed to make fields even larger although the nature and quality of the boundaries that were removed is uncertain. The other principal effects of the conversion to arable and the overall intensification of farming have been: the loss of grassland of visual and wildlife interest; the loss of marginal wildlife habitats; damage to archaeological features; and soil erosion on the steeper slopes. The extent and rate of erosion are not known, but it seems likely that the process of soil erosion, which has been in progress on the downs for thousands of years, is being accelerated. The effect of current farming practices on the sites and monuments within the WHS is reviewed in Section 5.1.

The Discovery of Avebury

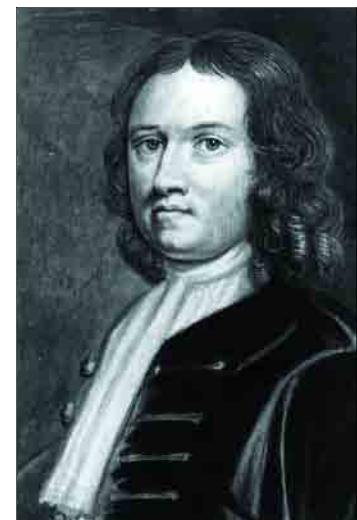
2.3.8 The Marlborough Downs, and the archaeological monuments in the vicinity of Avebury, have been a focus of attention for antiquarians, authors and artists for several hundred years. This attention reflects the major focus on Avebury for the development of archaeology as a discipline, and also the creative inspiration derived from the area and its landscape.

2.3.9 John Aubrey and William Stukeley were key personalities in the development of archaeology. They both ‘discovered’ the forgotten village and surroundings, giving a record of them as they found them. John Aubrey ‘found’ the village within the stones in 1649 while hunting on the Marlborough Downs. He recorded many details in his *Monumenta Britannica* and brought Charles II to visit in 1663. Aubrey mapped the positions of the stones, of which there were many more than there are now, recorded the West Kennet Avenue, Silbury Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow and The Sanctuary. He was struck profoundly by the landscape, and ‘declined’ Royal orders to excavate the area for archaeological investigations.



John Aubrey
Courtesy of The Ashmolean Museum

2.3.10 By the time William Stukeley came across Avebury in 1719, many of the stones had gone, deliberately broken and cracked by fire and cold water by the locals. The stones were subsequently used for building material required for the expanding village. Stukeley recorded the area from 1719-1724, witnessing the destruction of The Sanctuary.



William Stukeley
Courtesy of The Ashmolean Museum

2.3.11 Systematic excavation took place in 1908 when Harold St George Gray investigated the Avebury ditch, establishing its Neolithic date. Windmill Hill had escaped notice until the early years of the 20th century when plentiful scatters of flint and pottery were found. Plans in 1923 to build a Marconi wireless station were dropped by the government, but around this time OGS Crawford, the Ordnance Survey’s archaeologist, contacted his friend Alexander Keiller who bought the site and excavated it with Harold St George Gray.

2.3.12 In 1934, Alexander Keiller turned to the village of Avebury, acquiring most of the land on which the circle stood. He excavated methodically and embarked on his remarkable campaign of ‘megalithic landscape gardening’. This opened up the interior of the Henge, removing buildings and cottages. This also involved restoration and reconstruction of substantial parts of several of the important monuments - not only Avebury itself, but also Windmill Hill and the West Kennet Avenue - making them far more visible features in the landscape than they had been for hundreds if not thousands of years. Keiller subsequently bought Avebury Manor in 1937, creating a museum in the stables. Keiller’s contribution to the Avebury landscape is still evident today and has had a significant influence on modern perceptions of the site. Since Keiller’s time there has been a range of excavation and survey work on the archaeological features within the WHS. These have continued to inform our understanding and perception of its historic development.

3.0 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AVEBURY WHS

3.1 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1.1 This section identifies the attributes which make the Avebury WHS of value to society today. Places or sites which are culturally significant are those which help an understanding of the past, enrich the present and will be of value to future generations. The process of defining cultural significance is multidisciplinary in nature, so that all potential qualities are considered.
- 3.1.2 Assessing the significance of the Avebury WHS is in many ways the most important and the most subjective section of the Management Plan, as it involves making value judgements by today's society. The judgements reflect on the relationship between the past and present, rather than any intrinsic value that the monuments may have had to their builders. Despite the subjectivity of this exercise, it is hoped that the assessment of cultural significance reflects a consensus of the views of all individuals and groups involved in developing the Management Plan.
- 3.1.3 The identification of the significance of the Avebury WHS forms the basis of, and underpins the whole Management Plan. This approach should help to ensure that the values that make the WHS important are not diminished. The significance of Avebury relates to a collection of exceptional qualities. Sites and monuments may be culturally significant at different levels, some of international or World Heritage (outstanding universal values), others of national, regional or local importance. Section 3.2 below sets out the World Heritage Committee's view of the outstanding universal values of the Avebury WHS at the time it was nominated to the World Heritage List. Sections 3.3 to 3.6 describe values of the site in a wider context as they are currently perceived. These other values have been defined as: cultural heritage; landscape and nature conservation; educational and research; social; economic. It is recognised that these values overlap quite considerably, but together they do cover the full range of the site's significance.

Table 1: Avebury WHS Summary of Significance

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE	KEY VALUES	SPECIFIC VALUE AREAS
World Heritage	<i>Outstanding Universal Values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represents a masterpiece of creative genius ● Represents an important interchange of human values ● Testimony to a distinctive past culture ● Authenticity
Cultural Heritage	<i>Archaeological</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rich archaeological landscape spanning 10,000 years ● Palaeoenvironmental deposits ● Rich artefactual collection in the Alexander Keiller & Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes
	<i>Historical & Documentary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The historic built heritage ● Archives and documents in the Alexander Keiller & Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes ● Antiquarian archives, off-site documents and resources
Landscape & Nature Conservation	<i>Landscape & Historic Land use</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mosaic of landscapes and habitats ● North Wessex Downs
	<i>Nature Conservation & Biodiversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key habitats and species
Educational & Research	<i>Archaeological & Historical Resource for Formal Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time depth ● Range and complexity
	<i>Scope for Informal Learning About the Past</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A wide range of visitors ● Unique on-site museum
	<i>Potential for Archaeological & Historical Research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prehistory ● Romano-British, Saxon and later history
Social	<i>Creative Inspiration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Antiquarians, authors & artists
	<i>Spiritual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The spirit of place ● Spiritual use of the site
	<i>Recreation and Access</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access for All ● Volunteering
	<i>Local Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Symbiosis of village and ancient monument ● A living village ● Local community role in the management of the site
Economic	<i>Farming</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The agricultural resource ● Integration of farming with environmental management
	<i>Tourism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Income generation
	<i>Support for Local Economy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local employment

3.2 WORLD HERITAGE: OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUES

3.2.1 In 1972 UNESCO adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The United Kingdom ratified the Convention in 1984. The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS was inscribed on the WH list in 1986.

3.2.2 For a site to be included on the World Heritage List it must be demonstrated that it is of international significance and has outstanding universal value (OUV). It must meet at least one of six criteria set out in the Operational Guidelines. The inscription of Avebury and Stonehenge onto the List recognises that together they fulfil three criteria, as set out below:

(i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius

(ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in monumental arts or town planning and landscape design

(iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared.

3.2.3 In addition to meeting the above criteria, a cultural WHS should satisfy two further conditions relating to its authenticity and management:

- the site must meet the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship, or setting
- the site must have adequate legal protection and/or traditional protection and management mechanisms to ensure its conservation.

3.2.4 When the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites WHS was inscribed on the WHS List a Statement of Significance was not required. Therefore it has been necessary to rely on the Justification for Inscription in the 1986 nomination document as the official statement of its OUV. Thus, the following section is derived from the text of the nomination document. The need for a revised Statement of Significance endorsed by the World Heritage Committee is set out as Objective I.3.

The Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site.

- 3.2.5 The Justification for Inscription in the 1986 nomination document states that: “Stonehenge and Avebury are the two most important and characteristic prehistoric monuments in Britain. They represent the Henge monument par excellence, as the largest, most evolved and best-preserved prehistoric temples of a type unique to Britain. Together with the associated sites and monuments they provide a landscape without parallel in Britain or elsewhere and provide an unrivalled demonstration of human achievement in prehistoric times”.

Avebury WHS and its Outstanding Universal Values

- 3.2.6 The following section attempts to set out the qualities, which make the WHS of international significance. It is a combination of these which give the site its “outstanding universal values”.

Criterion i

Masterpieces of creative genius

- 3.2.7 Within the 22.5 square kilometres of the site the monuments are of exceptional size and interest, including remains of the largest stone circle in Europe, one of the three largest henge monuments, the largest prehistoric mound (Silbury Hill), the longest stone avenue (West Kennet), one of the longest Neolithic burial mounds (West Kennet Long Barrow) and one of the largest causewayed enclosures (Windmill Hill). Additionally, the numerous well-preserved Bronze Age round barrows comprise one of the greatest concentrations in the country.
- 3.2.8 Avebury stone circle is the largest stone circle in Europe. The Henge consists of a huge outer bank and ditch, within which were an outer and two smaller inner stone circles of standing stones. In all some 180 local, unshaped stones were used. Leading from two of the four causewayed entrances of the circle were two avenues of parallel standing stones, connecting the great circle at Avebury with other ritual monuments.
- 3.2.9 Avebury Henge was partially restored in the 1930s following excavation. It still remains one of the best preserved and most enigmatic of the stone circles of Britain.

Criterion ii.

Represents an important interchange of human values on developments in monumental arts

3.2.10 The six key Neolithic monuments specifically mentioned in nomination documents which were constructed around 6,000-4,000 years ago, give testimony to the mortuary ritual and ceremonial life of the earliest farmers in Britain. Taken individually, some of these monuments have exerted considerable cultural and visual influence over the landscape around them for over 5,000 years; but taken in combination with other monuments, they represent a unique surviving example of a prehistoric ritual landscape. They are distinctive, providing a rare example of a specific combination of monuments which emphasises the importance of the area. Moreover, these monuments are likely to have had a wider influence on contemporary and later societies elsewhere. The related site of Stonehenge was in the 12th-century considered as one of the wonders of the world by the chroniclers Henry de Huntington and Geoffrey de Monmouth and the focus of study by the great architect Inigo Jones in the 17th-century. Similarly, the creative inspiration derived from the Avebury monuments and landscape has caused the area to be the focus of attention of antiquarians, artists and authors for hundreds of years.

Criterion iii.

Testimony to a distinctive past culture

3.2.11 The key monuments within the WHS are rare surviving examples of monument forms, testimony to a distinctive period of monument-building belonging to the period of the earliest farmers in Britain. The discovery and study of these monuments and associated sites have given insight to the mortuary ritual and ceremonial life of these early people, their physical appearance, lifestyle, society, culture and achievements. The collection of many thousands of artefacts (housed in the Alexander Keiller Museum and the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes) discovered during the excavations of some of the key monuments in the WHS are important parts of our knowledge of the ritual and ceremonial practices associated with the monuments, as are the setting of the monuments in the landscape and the relationships between them. Other finds from archaeological investigations, such as palaeoenvironmental deposits, are valuable to our understanding of the wider use of the landscape in Neolithic and Bronze Age times for ceremonial and ritual activities.

3.2.12 The monuments and associated sites together with the artefacts found during the archaeological fieldwork provide opportunities to study a distinctive past culture. As detailed in the Avebury Research Agenda, there is considerable potential for further archaeological discoveries.

3.2.13 In addition to meeting the above criteria, the Avebury WHS also satisfies the two further requirements relating to its authenticity and management:

Authenticity

3.2.14 Taken together, the sites and monuments comprising the Avebury WHS are a unique survival. Although the environment and land use has clearly changed since Neolithic times, the great antiquity and authenticity of the key prehistoric monuments is without question. This has been proven by the many episodes of excavation that have taken place over the last three hundred years. The monuments maintain their integrity of form, materials and setting.

Legal protection & management mechanisms

3.2.15 The existing planning constraints and mechanisms provide an appropriate framework for the protection of the site and are generally considered to be adequate both in their extent and their application. Overlapping layers of designations for conservation offer protection and reflect the national importance of the archaeological, landscape, nature conservation and built heritage features within the site. The Local Plan supports and reinforces these national designations with further local designations, notations and detailed planning control policies which seek to control unacceptable change within the WHS and surrounding area. English Heritage, on behalf of the Secretary of State, is responsible for the six key monuments in guardianship and the Alexander Keiller Museum and its collections. The National Trust is delegated the management of these in conjunction with English Heritage. There are a range of voluntary grant and management schemes in place within the WHS such as Defra's Countryside Stewardship which promote environmentally sensitive land management. In addition, there has been a management plan for the Avebury part of the WHS since 1998.

3.3 CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

Archaeological

Rich archaeological landscape spanning 10,000 years.

Avebury stone circle, around 40km to the north of Stonehenge is the largest prehistoric stone circle in Europe. It forms the nucleus of a remarkable Neolithic and Early Bronze Age complex of ritual and funerary monuments. The nomination includes the associated sites of The Sanctuary, Silbury Hill, West Kennet Avenue, West Kennet Long Barrow, and Windmill Hill.

- 3.3.1 In addition to the six key “guardianship” monuments described above, the WHS landscape contains an outstanding concentration of archaeological sites, demonstrating human activity in the area for more than 10,000 years from the Palaeolithic to post-medieval and modern. In particular, there is a concentration of monuments from early prehistory. Some of these monuments, such as the Overton Hill barrows and Silbury Hill, are still prominent and influential in the landscape. Others are just as important, but today their remains lie buried beneath the soil, such as the extensive West Kennet Palisade Enclosure complex.

Palaeoenvironmental deposits

- 3.3.2 Studies have identified important biological and sedimentary evidence, which helps us to understand the interaction of humans and their natural environment throughout the prehistoric period.

Rich artefactual collection in the Keiller Museum

- 3.3.3 The Alexander Keiller Museum contains a unique collection of many thousands of artefacts discovered during excavations at some of the key monuments in the vicinity. The artefacts from the Windmill Hill Causewayed Enclosure in particular are nationally significant as it was one of the first to be excavated, becoming a classic “type site”, important in the development of the discipline of archaeology in the 20th-century. Nearby, Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes also contains valuable collections from Avebury and associated monuments.

Historical & Documentary

The historic built heritage

- 3.3.4 The historic built heritage, including a range of vernacular buildings in and around Avebury is of great interest and importance, especially in the light of its juxtaposition with the prehistoric monuments. Indeed, many of the local buildings have been in part constructed from broken sarsen stones taken from the stone circles and avenues as they were dismantled. Both the villages of Avebury and West Kennett are designated as Conservation Areas. The listed buildings in Avebury, the parkland and associated features, form an important grouping, especially within the triangle of the Grade 1 listed manor, church and barn.

Archives and documents in the Alexander Keiller Museum

- 3.3.5 The Alexander Keiller Museum contains a unique collection of documents and archives relating to the archaeological excavations and restoration of the stone circles. These include photographs and rare cine film from the 1920s. This evidence also contributes to our knowledge of Avebury village in the 1930s. Additional valuable information is held by Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes.

Antiquarian archives & off-site documents and resources

- 3.3.6 Antiquarians such as John Aubrey and William Stukeley, amongst many others, have contributed a great deal to our knowledge of Avebury in earlier times. Their surviving writings, drawings and maps of Avebury and surrounding area are an invaluable part of the site archives. Many of these archives are housed in other institutions.



View towards The Ridgeway from Waden Hill

3.4 LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION VALUES

Landscape and historic land use

Mosaic of landscapes

- 3.4.1 The Avebury countryside is an extraordinary mosaic of landscapes indicating its long history of occupation by people interacting with their environment. One important feature is the sarsen stones which have been “harvested” for millennia for the construction of monuments and buildings.
- 3.4.2 The Avebury landscape includes dry valleys, a river valley and (a combination of both) a winterbourne valley whose stream is entirely dependent on the height of the water table in the porous chalk subsoil.
- #### ***North Wessex Downs***
- 3.4.3 Avebury is on the northeastern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB which extends through large parts of Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.

Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

Key habitats and species

- 3.4.4 The nature of the countryside with sweeping downland and the numerous buildings in and around the villages provide a wealth of habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna, some of which are nationally important. These key habitats are often exemplified by key species in the WHS. Chalk grasslands support a wealth of wildflowers, grasses and insects, as indicated by the presence of the nationally scarce round-headed rampion at Avebury. The arable and grassland mosaic, created by mixed farming provides the diversity of habitats required by much of the typically downland species, such as, brown hare, skylark, lapwing, tree sparrow, corn bunting, and some rare arable plants.
- 3.4.5 Standing and fallen sarsen stones are important for their lichens, with thirty two species recently counted on one stone. One species is a sarsen stone specialist, *Buellia saxorum*, which is prominent in the WHS.
- 3.4.6 Vernacular agricultural buildings can also provide important nesting opportunities for farmland birds such as the tree sparrow and roosting sites for bats. Avebury supports particularly important colonies of Natterers bat in some of the barns.
- 3.4.7 The chalk streams including the Winterbourne and the headwaters of the River Kennet together with their water meadows are important habitats for a range of species including water vole.

3.5 EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH VALUES

Value as an archaeological & historical resource for formal education

- 3.5.1 Around 6,000 individuals currently use the on-site museum each year visiting in formal educational groups. Two aspects, which are particularly a feature of Avebury offer scope for formal teaching:

Time depth

- 3.5.2 The monuments in the WHS offer a particularly extended and complete chronology, from the Mesolithic period to the Anglo-Saxon and later periods. Even within the Neolithic period Avebury is unusual in offering the chance to study sites of different dates within the period. The emphasis on chronology within the National Curriculum in England is particularly important for the site, and this is emphasised in the Alexander Keiller Museum and Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes.

Range and complexity

- 3.5.3 The Avebury monuments are complex in development and in terms of construction and use. Contemporary with them is a large body of evidence relating to settlement, use of the landscape and past environments, all of which are used in the consideration of past societies in a formal educational context.

Scope for informal learning about the past

A wide variety of visitors

- 3.5.4 Avebury attracts a wide range of visitors, giving many their first experience of British prehistory. The scope for providing visitors with information to satisfy a developing interest in Avebury, or in prehistory or archaeology in general is enormous.

A unique on-site museum

- 3.5.5 The close association of sites with the archaeological material derived from them in an on-site museum is very unusual within the UK, especially associated with a prehistoric site.

Potential for archaeological and historical research

- 3.5.6 It is recognised that the state of our knowledge of the prehistoric and later periods in Avebury's history is incomplete. For some periods the Avebury landscape has a very high potential for major new discoveries.
- 3.5.7 The Avebury landscape also has potential for research in related fields such as historical geography, history, geology, ecology, as well as scope for developing research into scientific dating and archaeological prospecting.
- 3.5.8 An Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury WHS was published in 2001. Two aspects in particular were identified as significant in this work.

Prehistory

- 3.5.9 Despite four hundred years of interest in the monuments of the Avebury area there is still much to learn. Because of the scale of past investigations, there is a well-developed framework of comparative material but there are significant gaps in knowledge relating to the main monuments. These relate to rudimentary levels of knowledge, such as dating, form and development of the sites. In addition, little is known about contemporary settlement at the time of the monuments, in the fourth to second millennia BC, and work in both these areas has great potential for adding to knowledge of Neolithic and Bronze Age society in Britain.

Romano-British and later history

- 3.5.10 The Research Agenda highlights the great significance of the history of the area after the main period of the prehistoric monuments. Avebury is unique in terms of the degree to which village and monuments are interwoven, but the relationship between later settlement and Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeology is even more complex. From the Iron Age through to the Anglo-Saxon period and up to the present day the scope for investigating the influence of the monuments on the pattern of use of a landscape is highly significant.

3.6 SOCIAL VALUES

Creative Inspiration

Antiquarians, authors and artists

- 3.6.1 The creative inspiration derived from Avebury and its timeless landscape has caused the area to be the focus of attention for antiquarians, artists and authors for hundreds of years. Authors such as William Gilpin, Samuel Pepys and Sir John Betjeman have written about Avebury. The artist Paul Nash was inspired to create a series of paintings when visiting the area in 1933. More recently, the attractiveness of Avebury and the surrounding downland has inspired a wide range of creative works by both professionals and amateurs.

Spiritual

The spirit of place

- 3.6.2 Monuments such as the Henge and Stone Circle, Silbury Hill and West Kennet Long Barrow are enigmatic in their nature and function and are viewed by some as mystical and timeless places. They inspire the imagination and a sense of connection with our ancient ancestors. Some visitors view the Avebury monuments as having some astronomical significance.

Spiritual use of the site

- 3.6.3 Avebury is still a “temple” for a number of visitors. The site has much symbolic or spiritual importance to different groups and individuals who view the site as a sacred place. Pagan and neopagan festivals are observed on at least 8 occasions during each year with large numbers of people attending the Summer Solstice in June. It is recognised that a wide range of people with a diversity of spiritual views do visit Avebury and not all would define themselves as pagan, neopagan or “new age”. However, within this document the term pagan is used to refer to visitors who come to the site and view it as a sacred place, particularly at Solstice and the other festival days.

Recreation and Access

Access for All

- 3.6.4 Since the major monuments were placed into guardianship from the late 19th century they have been accessible to the public free of charge. The exception since 1976 has been Silbury Hill where for a combination of safety and conservation reasons the public has been excluded from direct access, although a viewing area is provided nearby.
- 3.6.5 The natural beauty of the countryside, its easy accessibility, and the fascination of the stones make it a popular place for visits by people of all ages, nationalities and interests. It can be enjoyed on many different levels from simply fresh air and countryside through to a study of prehistory.
- 3.6.6 Some of the WHS is readily accessible to visitors with disabilities. Almost all the National Trust buildings apart from the first floor of Avebury Manor are wheelchair accessible. Disabled parking in the Central Car Park gives access to the centre of the site.

Volunteering

- 3.6.7 The management of major parts of the site by the National Trust, the country's largest conservation charity, opens up a wide range of opportunities for volunteering by people of all ages. The various activities on offer create a wide range of personal development opportunities and help people to achieve goals and deepen their understanding of many aspects of life and intellectual achievement.

Local Community

Symbiosis of village and ancient monument

- 3.6.8 The Avebury Henge is very unusual for an archaeological site, with a village straddling the prehistoric earthworks. The juxtaposition of the village, with its complex components from Saxon to modern, with the prehistoric monument adds to its attraction and appeal. The local community is augmented by a large public community of national and international visitors.

A living village

- 3.6.9 Avebury and Trusloe together comprise a thriving local community which has its own intrinsic values to its inhabitants and to the district, with its aesthetic appeal, amenities and social centres. For the community of about 250 households, the local amenities (a pub, social centre, church, general store/post office, bookshop and school) are an important part of daily life and a source of local employment. Members of the local community farm the land and manage the local shops and facilities.

Local community role in the management of the site

- 3.6.10 Avebury has an active Parish Council continuously involved in the various working groups who help to manage the WHS. In particular, the local community were consulted widely on the development of the WHS Management Plan. The neighbouring Parish Councils which also partially fall within the WHS are included in the working groups.

3.7 ECONOMIC VALUES

Farming

The agricultural resource

- 3.7.1 Agriculture is the dominant land use within the WHS and the most formative influence on the landscape as we see it today. The agricultural land is mainly used for arable production, although there is some grazing of sheep and cattle. Currently 60% of the WHS is in arable agriculture and 35% in pasture. In addition, some of the permanent pasture is used as gallops for racehorse training. There are a dozen farms with land wholly or partially within the WHS. The largest single landowner, the National Trust, own a farm at the heart of the WHS which is farmed by a tenant.

Integration of farming with environmental management

- 3.7.2 A number of farmers and landowners within the WHS already subscribed to agri-environmental schemes such as CSS. As the area is so rich in features with archaeological, nature conservation and landscape values, there is much potential for the further development of agri-environmental schemes.

Tourism

Income generation

- 3.7.3 Avebury attracts around 350,000 annual visitors, the majority of whom arrive by car. The local authorities regard Avebury as one of the major drivers of the tourist economy in Kennet District and within the region. At a local level tourism provides income and employment to the local economy and businesses. As entrance to the monuments in Avebury is free, relatively little direct income is generated. Some revenue is raised by the National Trust through its giftshop and restaurant as well as from museum entrance, car parking fees, holiday let accommodation and rental from its local properties.



Support for Local Economy

Local employment

- 3.7.4 A number of jobs, both year round and seasonal, are created by the National Trust and by local businesses such as shops and pubs providing services to visitors. Some of these facilities such as the local Post Office would not exist in a village the size of Avebury if it were not for the additional business generated by tourism. To some extent there are training opportunities for local people wishing to develop skills in tourism and heritage management, catering, retailing and conservation although in reality many people taking up employment in these areas are from outside Avebury.

4.0 CURRENT MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

4.1 OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ROLES

- 4.1.1 The Avebury WHS is an artificial entity, characterised by diversity of ownership, management agencies and land use. The WHS boundary includes parts of a dozen different farm estates and land holdings. The National Trust is currently the largest single landowner in the WHS, holding a third of the area for permanent preservation.

4.1.2 The roles and interests of several other agencies are intertwined in the current management climate at Avebury. In addition to the land use and planning function of the local authorities (Kennet District Council and Wiltshire County Council), the following bodies also have statutory responsibilities that influence the future protection and management of the WHS:

- Countryside Agency
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- English Heritage
- English Nature
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Parish Councils (Avebury, West Overton, Berwick Bassett & Winterbourne Monkton).

4.1.3 In addition to the National Trust, a number of other charitable and volunteer bodies are also involved including ICOMOS, and the Avebury Society. Active local archaeological, wildlife, and community groups also have an interest in the WHS.

4.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER EXISTING MANAGEMENT AND STATUTORY PLANS

4.2.1 The designation of the area as a WHS and the existence of a Management Plan are significant in terms of the protection they afford to an extensive area, helping to secure the future character and quality of the landscape. In this way, the Avebury WHS Management Plan serves a different purpose from a number of other existing management, strategic and statutory plans. The WHS Management Plan dovetails with and supports a range of existing plans, which cover the Avebury area and have been taken into account in the drafting process.

They include:

- Kennet Local Plan (Adopted April 2004) and Landscape Conservation Strategy
- National Trust Estate Management Plan (2004)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan (2004)
- Stonehenge WHS Management Plan (English Heritage 2000).

4.3 ENGLISH HERITAGE, THE NATIONAL TRUST AND THE LOCAL MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS (LMAs)

4.3.1 Historically, and currently, the responsibilities of English Heritage (EH), and its predecessors, and the National Trust (NT) in and around Avebury have been closely intertwined. The 1983 National Heritage Act established the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage) as the main advisory body to the Government on the conservation of the historic environment. The UK Government has also accorded EH a key role in promoting, co-ordinating and monitoring management plans for WH sites in England. Thus, the three main roles of EH at Avebury are:

- as a general promoter/supporter, advisor and monitor of the conservation and management of the WHS
- as a statutory advisor to the Government on the designation of and control of works within SMs and listed buildings
- directly as the land manager of the six prehistoric guardianship monuments and the Alexander Keiller Museum and its guardianship collections.

4.3.2 The guardianship monuments within the WHS are managed by EH on behalf of the Secretary of State, although since 1994 their day-to-day management has been devolved to the National Trust under a series of Local Management Agreements (LMAs) for ten years. This is not now the case for Silbury Hill, which has been managed directly by English Heritage since 2000 and is unlikely to be included in the renewal of the LMAs. These are legal agreements between EH and the NT and involve payment to the NT for their services. The Alexander Keiller Museum, located just outside of the Henge, has been the main provider of displays and interpretation of the monuments for almost seventy years. The collections, owned by the state, and in guardianship, have been managed by the National Trust since 1994 under a twenty-five year local management and loan agreement. Additional material from Avebury is housed in other museums such as the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes.

4.3.3 Since 1943 the National Trust has acquired some 1,600 acres of freehold land now within the WHS – almost a third of the designated area (Figure 4). Much of this is farmland let on secure Agricultural Holdings Act tenancies and is therefore not managed in hand by the Trust. However, some of the most important SMs have been taken out of plough to protect them from further damage and public access is available into much of the historic landscape via permissive paths and open access areas.

- 4.3.4 As the largest landowner within the Avebury WHS, the National Trust is an important agency for influencing management through its short and long-term estate management activities. The Trust was founded in 1895, and was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1907 (the National Trust Act 1907) to promote 'the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation lands...of beauty or historic interest'. A key aspect of the 1907 Act of particular relevance to the Avebury WHS Management Plan is that 'inalienable' National Trust land cannot be subject to compulsory purchase without invoking a special parliamentary procedure. This implies that inalienable land under the ownership of the National Trust within the Avebury WHS is unlikely to change hands, and therefore presents a very long-term and unique contribution to the preservation of the WHS. 89% of the land owned by the Trust in the WHS is inalienable.
- 4.3.5 In 1944, although remaining in Trust ownership, the Henge, the northern (reconstructed) end of West Kennet Avenue and Windmill Hill were placed in guardianship with the then Ministry of Works. The Ministry and subsequently the Department of the Environment (DoE) directly managed these monuments until 1994. The guardianship responsibilities of the former Ministry and DoE are now exercised by EH.
- 4.3.6 Since 1994 the guardianship monuments have been managed by the National Trust, under a Local Management Agreement (LMA) with EH. Similar agreements were established under which the Trust managed three other guardianship monuments at Avebury not owned by the Trust – The Sanctuary, West Kennet Long Barrow and Silbury Hill. However since the collapse of a vertical shaft in 2000 Silbury Hill has been once again in the direct care of English Heritage.
- 4.3.7 Ten years experience of operating the LMAs has provided both organisations with valuable experience and understanding which will enable the successor agreements to better harness their respective expertise. The new arrangements will be backed by a set of conservation statements and schedules of work detailing the responsibilities of both parties in relation to day to day monitoring, maintenance and management and prioritised capital works and repairs. These programmes will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 4.3.8 Since the original 10-year LMA run out in April 2004, a temporary agreement has been in place between English Heritage and the National Trust. The cost of renewing a longer-term agreement is currently under discussion between the two organisations. There is a funding shortfall which has been identified and negotiations are on-going about how this is to be resolved. The resolution of this outstanding issue is crucial and should be addressed as soon as possible (see Objective D.2).

4.4 THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- 4.4.1 A number of villages and hamlets are located within and adjacent to the WHS which together comprise the homes of several hundred people. The three main settlements within the WHS comprise Avebury and Avebury Trusloe, West Kennett and Beckhampton. The parish of Avebury lies at the heart of the WHS, but parts of the parishes of West Overton and Winterbourne Monkton also fall within its boundary.
- 4.4.2 Avebury village itself lies at the heart of the WHS and the community can be viewed in some ways as an archetypal English village in terms of its development and component parts. It comprises a small village of Saxon origins, with its old houses clustered around the church and High Street. The juxtaposition of the village with a large monument of international renown, however, creates an atypical identity, especially with the influx of visitors to the Henge and village on almost a daily basis. Avebury is thus both an archaeological site and a village. In many ways their histories are so intertwined, as they have been for centuries, that the management of the two cannot be separated.
- 4.4.3 The modern settlement of Avebury comprises Avebury village and Avebury Trusloe, a community of about 250 households. Avebury village is composed of mainly old residential houses oriented along the High Street and Green Street, also including a mobile home park just to the north of the village. A number of local amenities are also located in this part of the village: the church, the local pub, social centre, junior school, general store and post office. There are also a number of small local businesses, most of which cater for the needs of tourists as well as locals. Avebury Trusloe, to the west across the river, is a more secluded part of the village with its mixture of 20th-century council houses (many now privately owned), individual cottages and farmhouses and a high status manor house.
- 4.4.4 The Avebury community is diverse, displaying a range of social characteristics. The residents comprise a mixture of 'old families' who have been in residence for several generations, and more 'recent' arrivals. The local community expresses its views about the monuments and the identity of the village through the Parish Council and Avebury Society (both represented on the WHS Steering Committee).

4.5 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- 4.5.1 No additional planning powers are conferred under UK planning law for a WHS. The detailed basis for development control and use of land within the WHS and the surrounding area is set out by policies contained within the Kennet Local Plan, adopted in April 2004. These policies provide a detailed interpretation of strategic land use and environmental protection policies for the area as determined by the Wiltshire Structure Plan (2001). Specific policies are contained within the Local Plan which give importance to the WHS in development control decisions. The protection of the landscape and archaeological features and their settings are given precedence over all other demands for development and land use within the WHS.
- 4.5.2 There have been changes in the local planning system as a result of the recently enacted Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill. The implications of these changes are discussed further in Section 6.0. In addition, the Government's review of the heritage protection system in 2003-4 may well, during the lifetime of this Plan, result in new types of protection for the historic environment, including World Heritage Sites.
- 4.5.3 At the national level, the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements set out the broad policy framework for the planning process. Government policies on sustainable development in rural areas (PPS 7, 2004), protection of historic buildings and sites (PPG15, 1994), archaeology (PPG16, 1990), transport (PPG13, 1995), tourism (PPG21, 1992) and renewable energy (PPS22) are particularly relevant here. Local planning authorities are required to take these into account in the preparation of their development plans. The WHS designation reflects the internationally acknowledged value of the Avebury complex as one of the most important Neolithic complexes in Western Europe. PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment, 1994) highlights the outstanding international importance of a WHS as a key material consideration in the planning process, and the need to have rigorous policies to protect them as well as WHS management plans.
- 4.5.4 A range of designations reflect the national importance of the archaeological, landscape, nature conservation and built heritage features within the WHS (Figure 5). The Local Plan supports and reinforces these national designations with further local designations, notations and detailed planning control policies which seek to control unacceptable change within the WHS and surrounding area. These features are irreplaceable assets and can be considered to comprise the critical environmental capital of the WHS. A review of heritage protection legislation has been announced by the Government (DCMS June 2004) in response to a recent consultation exercise.

4.6 DESIGNATIONS FOR CONSERVATION

Landscape and nature conservation designations

- 4.6.1 **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):** designated in 1971 by the Countryside Commission under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The AONB designation confers formal recognition by the Government that the natural beauty of the landscape in the area identified is of national importance. The WHS lies wholly within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 4.6.2 **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** designated by English Nature under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to protect the nationally important nature conservation and geological interest of sites include Fyfield Down and Silbury Hill. Much of the Fyfield Down SSSI is also subject to additional designation as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in recognition of its special nature conservation interest.
- 4.6.3 **Area of High Ecological Value (AHEV):** the Local Plan identifies two distinct areas within the WHS as AHEVs (Fyfield Down SSSI/NNR and West Down) due to their nature conservation importance.

Designations for the historic environment

- 4.6.4 **The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site:** was nominated in 1986 by the Secretary of State for the Environment, on the advice of English Heritage, for inscription onto the World Heritage List compiled under the 1972 World Heritage Convention. The Convention provides for the protection, conservation and presentation of the monuments and landscapes, regarded as some of the most important Neolithic complexes in Western Europe. The WHS designation does not however provide for special specific legislative controls over development, as is the case for special areas such as National Parks.
- 4.6.5 **Guardianship Sites:** the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979 allows for ancient monuments and adjoining land to be taken into State Care with the agreement of the owners through the signing of Deeds of Guardianship. When a monument passes into guardianship, the state has a duty to maintain it and has full control over its management. This procedure was first introduced in the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882. Silbury Hill and West Kennet Long Barrow were taken into guardianship in 1883. The Henge, northern part of West Kennet Avenue and Windmill Hill were placed in guardianship in 1944. Additional land around the Long Barrow was taken into guardianship in 1963 and The Sanctuary gifted to the State in 1932.

- 4.6.6 **Scheduled Monuments (SMs):** inclusion of ancient monuments and sites on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) confers recognition of the national importance of such monuments. SMs are afforded statutory protection and require Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for works affecting them. English Heritage is the Government's statutory advisor on SMs and the control of works via the process of SMC. There are currently sixty-seven SM areas (including 166 individual sites) within the WHS.
- 4.6.7 **Archaeological Zone Maps:** the County Archaeology Service has identified a number of non-scheduled areas where they are likely to object to possible new developments across the District. These areas have been included in the Kennet Local Plan. This notation seeks to protect non-scheduled areas of archaeological potential from damage by new development. There are ten of these areas within the WHS.
- 4.6.8 **Conservation Areas (CAs):** these are areas of special, local or regional architectural or historic interest and character, the preservation and enhancement of which is the responsibility of the local planning authority. Within the WHS, the villages of Avebury, Trusloe and West Kennett contain Conservation Areas.
- 4.6.9 **Listed Buildings:** buildings of special architectural or historic interest are designated and graded by the DCMS. Specific controls apply to all works, both external and internal, that might damage a listed building's special interest. Any works must be authorised via an application for listed building consent (LBC) made to the local planning authority. There are 84 listed buildings within the WHS.

4.7 THE AVEBURY WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING COMMITTEE

- 4.7.1 In 1989, English Heritage in co-operation with the National Trust and others, undertook the production of a management strategy for the Avebury WHS. This resulted in the setting up of a Working Party, which has met on a regular basis since 1989. The Working Party was re-named as the WHS Steering Committee in 1999 and is currently chaired by EH. It has a membership which includes representatives from bodies with statutory functions within the WHS as well as from local amenity societies.

Membership of the Avebury WHS Working Party currently comprises representatives of the following organisations and agencies:

- English Heritage
- Wiltshire County Council
- Avebury Parish Council
- Winterbourne Monkton and Berwick Bassett Parish Council
- English Nature
- Kennet District Council
- The National Trust
- Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council
- ICOMOS UK
- The Department for Culture, Media & Sport
- The Avebury Society
- Wiltshire Archaeology and Natural History Society
- Avebury Local Farmers Group.

4.7.2 In September 1992 English Heritage published a Management Statement for the Avebury WHS. The purpose of the Statement was to establish a strategy for co-ordinated management to assist the various agencies with responsibilities in the WHS. The Statement also proposed the establishment of two subgroups to the main Working Party. The two groups, established in 1992 and 1993, deal with archaeology and historical research (AAHRG) and traffic and visitor management (TVM). AAHRG is an informal group of academics and archaeologists who meet to co-ordinate and promote research within the WHS. The TVM Group meets three to four times a year and is currently chaired by the National Trust.

4.7.3 The Steering Committee and its subgroups provided the main stimulus for the development and implementation of the World Heritage Site Management Plan (1998) and this revised version has been the main forum for discussion and the building of consensus reflected in these documents. Members of the Committee and subgroups can be regarded as “Trustees” of the WHS and it is likely that they will continue to play an important role in the implementation of the 2005 Plan, and its monitoring and review.

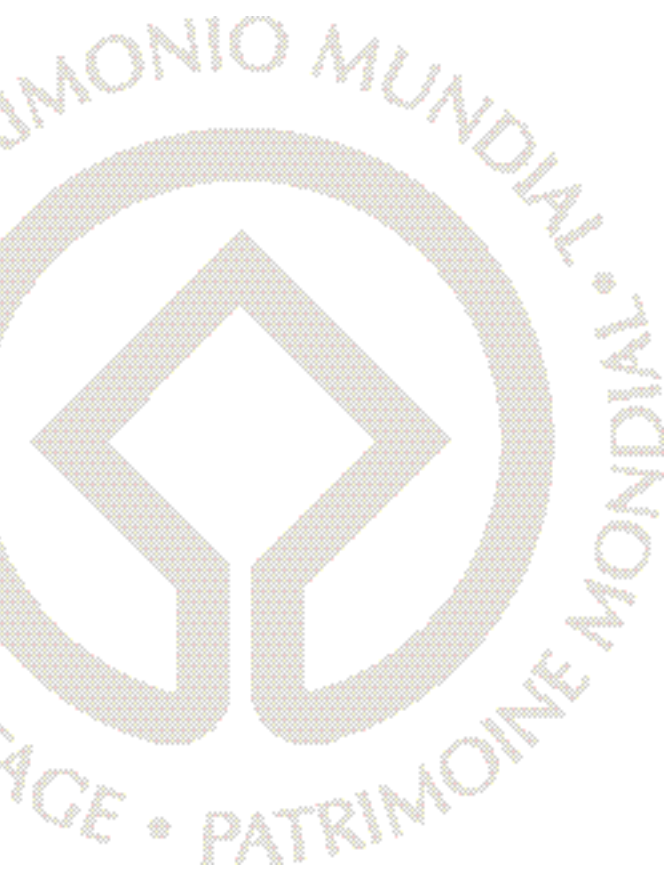
4.7.4 No formal stakeholder analysis has been carried out in the Avebury WHS. It has been suggested that a detailed analysis of the needs of key stakeholders would help to identify common interests and achieve a commitment in terms of the implementation of the Plan and funding. It is intended that such an analysis will be carried out in the near future (see Objective S.7).



4.8 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STONEHENGE PART OF THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

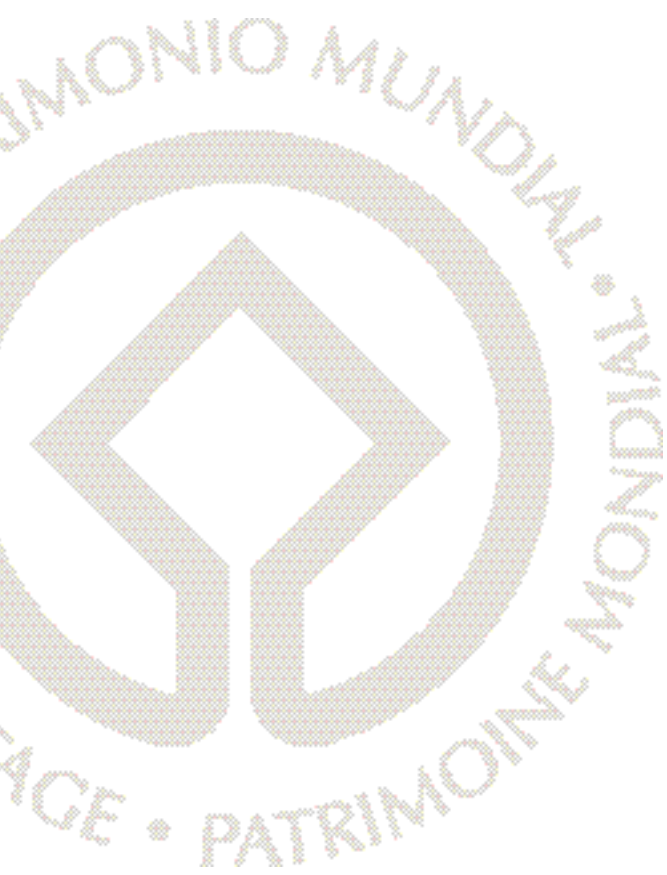
Since the publication of the Stonehenge WHS Management Plan in 2000, and the appointment of a WHS Co-ordinator for Stonehenge in 2001, there have been many opportunities to develop closer links between the two parts of the WHS. It is clear that there are some advantages in looking strategically across both parts of the WHS, especially in terms of developing objectives relating to sustainable tourism, interpretation, education and archaeological research (see Objective S.1). Guidance in the UNESCO Operational Guidelines calls for a management system or mechanism to ensure the co-ordinated management of the two parts of the WHS. The case for and against greater integration of the individual management plans and management arrangements will need to be examined in the next few years in consultation with the Steering Committees and key stakeholders.







Excavation in 2003 of a buried sarsen stone
Beckhampton Avenue



PART TWO: EVALUATION & IDENTIFICATION OF KEY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

This part of the Plan contains the descriptive baseline information used to support the identification of a number of management issues. A total of fifty-nine issues related to the management needs have been identified, using information and data collected from a range of surveys, research and consultations. The issues will allow for consistent decision-making over time and should remain relevant for five to ten years. This then provides the basis for the identification of management objectives and strategies outlined in Part Three. This section comprises a rapid assessment of the current situation in the Avebury WHS to be used as a baseline for ongoing monitoring in the future. It is recognised that several of the issues are currently being addressed and the Plan will be updated accordingly.

The issues have been identified and classified into five issue groups, with each issue set out before or after the relevant corresponding paragraph. The first section (5.0) examines land use and condition of the monuments and their immediate setting, and analyses the visual significance of the key monuments and their wider setting. The second section (6.0) assesses the current planning and policy framework and the protection they provide for the monuments, their setting, and the historic environment of the WHS. The third section (7.0) sets out the transportation issues relevant to management of the Avebury WHS. The public access and sustainability section (8.0) reviews the current context of visitor management at Avebury with the aim of identifying the main issues of relevance to its future management. The final section (9.0) focuses on the potential of archaeological research to enable informed management of the WHS.

5.0 THE SETTING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES IN THE WHS

5.1 LAND USE AND CONDITION OF SITES AND MONUMENTS

Issue 1 Regular assessment of the condition of monuments in the WHS is an essential monitoring and management tool.

5.1.1 In 1999 a monument condition survey was undertaken to review the physical condition and vulnerability of the 289 field monuments (earthworks) within the Avebury WHS and to identify a framework of appropriate management options. The work was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in accordance with a consultancy brief issued by English Heritage during July 1999, and represents the results of a desktop study and field assessments undertaken between October and December 1999.



Top of Henge bank showing signs of visitor erosion

Approach

5.1.2 An integral part of the study was the development of novel methods for systematic recording and assessment of field monument condition, vulnerability and management requirements. At the time the survey was largely a unique attempt (except for the MARS Project on which it was partially modeled) to undertake this kind of study. A two-stage approach was used, comprising a desk-study review of existing documents and a wide-ranging field assessment of condition, vulnerability and management requirements, focusing on archaeological, ecological and aesthetic aspects of field monument character. Results from the desk study and field assessment were collated in an Access database. The condition assessment was organised according to a series of eighteen Historic Landscape Units, which were developed during preparation of the 1998 WHS Management Plan.

Issue 2 *There is still cause for concern about the condition and ongoing damage to some of the archaeological monuments within the WHS.*

5.1.3 The archaeological field survey examined all 289 of the recorded earthwork sites within the WHS. It identified a range of condition, damage and management problems. Key findings were:

- of the 289 monuments examined 40% no longer survived as above ground earthworks
- 16% were considered to be well preserved, 17% moderately well preserved, and 14% very poorly preserved.

5.1.4 The principal problem identified was the extent to which the monuments within the WHS were still subject to plough damage. This survey suggested that 148 sites (51.2% of the total) were either being actively damaged by the plough or were very vulnerable to plough damage. Other main causes of damage were: visitor erosion (4.8%) burrowing animals (17.3%) and vegetation or tree damage (12.5%).

Management Recommendations

5.1.5 A range of management recommendations were made. The principal short-term recommendation was removal of monuments from arable cultivation. 15% of the monuments within the WHS were regarded as being seriously and rapidly damaged by their continued ploughing and it was recommended that the removal of these monuments from arable cultivation should be a priority.

Issue 3 *There is a need to repeat the monument condition survey of all sites on a regular basis, building on the established methodology. This should include accurate monitoring of erosion rates for sites in cultivation.*

5.1.6 The results of the monument condition survey conducted in the WHS in 1999 provided good baseline data on the condition of all monuments. These were put to use immediately to target limited funding for management agreements and agri-environmental schemes. The real benefit is as a monitoring tool if the survey is repeated at set intervals. It is intended that this will be repeated on a regular basis in order to monitor the success of the management measures taken. The methodology should build on the 1999 approach but will need to evolve with respect to emerging new technology (e.g. GPS, hand-held computers, software, digital photography, airborne lidar survey) and experience from other surveys. It will be important to include monitoring of erosion rates for sites still in cultivation. It is also important that the results of the 1999 survey are incorporated into the GIS as soon as possible and that the results of the next repeat survey can be quickly and directly incorporated.

Issue 4 *Scheduling has increased the survival rate of monuments in the WHS. However, a good proportion of Scheduled Monuments within the WHS are still adversely affected by agriculture.*

- 5.1.7 Currently there are 166 individual archaeological items within WHS which are scheduled, falling into 67 SMs. Following reassessment as part of the Monuments Protection Programme, which included field visits made in 1995-6, some individual items have been amalgamated (or "grouped") to become new SMs. The most recent and largest SM has been designated on Fyfield Down, mainly as a result of the new discoveries brought to light by Peter Fowler's fieldwork. This area covers around 3 square kilometres (30 hectares) and includes several complexes of settlements and field systems.
- 5.1.8 The comparison of results from the condition survey for the survival and condition of SMs and non-SMs show interesting trends. In general, as might be expected, the SMs show a proportionately greater level of survival than the non-SMs. i.e. only 21% of SMs no longer survive as above ground earthworks.
- 5.1.9 The comparison of the survey results show that the SMs within the WHS were deteriorating at a more rapid rate than the non-SMs sites although it is suggested that some percentage of this may be due to the fact that the non-SMs sites are proportionately in a worse condition. The survey suggested that only 28% of the SMs within the WHS were stable and under no predictable threat. This meant that 72% of the SMs within the WHS were displaying some evidence of deterioration or continued vulnerability to either land use or visitor pressure.
- 5.1.10 As part of its review of heritage protection legislation, the Government has announced (DCMS June 2004) that it will now review the operation of the Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order of 1994 in order to protect SMs from damage by ploughing.

Issue 5 *As a result of recent discoveries, there is a need to review the scheduling within the WHS. A number of new sites probably should be scheduled and others extended.*

- 5.1.11 In the last five years archaeological investigations and fieldwork have confirmed the existence of a number of new monuments as well as enhancing our understanding of known sites. The majority of these are likely to be considered as of national importance and worthy of scheduling. These sites include the group of monuments in Longstones Field, Beckhampton (including the line of the Avenue); the whole of Falkner's Circle; and the whole of the West Kennet Palisade Enclosures complex. A comprehensive review of all SMs and potential SMs in the WHS should be carried out as soon as possible.
- 5.1.12 In June 2004 the Government (DCMS June 2004) announced that it will make changes in legislation in order to create a single unified "register" of historic sites and buildings which will incorporate World Heritage Sites. There will also be an integrated consent regime to be administered by local authorities. These changes should be closely monitored for their potential impact on the protection currently given to the Avebury WHS.

Issue 6 *Landscape management units have been identified within the WHS, which could be used further for the development of monument and landscape management strategies.*

5.1.13 As described in detail in AMP 98 section 5.2 (and appendix J), the WHS has been divided into eighteen landscape units resulting from the 1997 Landscape Assessment. The key factor in the definition of these units has been that they should reflect physical and long-term land use characteristics, which have influenced the survival of different aspects of the historic environment. These landscape units are not intended to demarcate areas that have always had the same coherent character. Indeed, in various instances rather different areas might be defined if, for example, only archaeological remains were considered. These areas were successfully used as compartments for the fieldwork and analysis of the 1999 monument condition survey data. They have the potential to be used as management compartments for the WHS and for the further development of monument and landscape management strategies and practices.

Issue 7 *The expansion of the population of badgers in the Avebury area is causing an increasing amount of damage to upstanding and buried earthwork monuments.*

5.1.14 In recent years archaeologists in the south-west and other parts of England have noticed many new badger setts appearing in archaeological monuments. This appears to be as a result of an increasing badger population, probably as a result of climate change and the expansion of suitable habitats. Badgers can be extremely destructive to archaeological deposits as their setts can be deep and extensive. Many parts of Wiltshire now have a considerable problem, including the Avebury WHS. Even since the completion of the monument condition survey in 1999, there has been an increase in the amount of damage caused by badgers to upstanding and buried earthworks in the WHS.

5.1.15 In view of this, English Heritage started an excavation project in 2003 to assess the amount of damage which badgers can do to ancient monuments, and further work is planned for the next two years on two sites in Wiltshire. Additionally, there have been monitoring visits by various agencies to SMs and other sites, noting badger damage as appropriate. It is clear that some sites are now badly scarred by badger setts. However, no systematic work has yet been done to survey and monitor the badger populations in the WHS. This work is currently being planned by the National Trust and WHS Officer and a badger working group was established in 2004.

5.1.16 Although badgers are a protected species, they can be excluded from ancient monuments and other archaeological sites with the appropriate licences from Defra or English Nature. However, this is only a partial solution, as the exclusion must be accompanied by appropriate protective measures for the monument, otherwise the badgers will simply dig another sett nearby. Such protective measures can be extremely costly, although new and cheaper techniques are being tested for their effectiveness. The question of how to deal with badgers is currently under discussion at a national level as there is an obvious conflict between the need to preserve archaeological monuments and animal welfare issues. Tackling the badger damage being caused to monuments in the WHS is of the highest priority.

5.2 AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE

Issue 8 Although there have been some minor changes, the land within the WHS is predominantly in arable use.

5.2.1 The dozen farms with land in the WHS (Figure 4) are all large, with a mean average of 490 hectares (1210 acres). Two farmers, including the main tenant of the NT land, have all their land within the boundary of the WHS. The land use in the WHS illustrated in Figure 3 indicates that 60% of land within the WHS is currently in arable. This is reduction of 5% since the publication of the AMP98.

5.2.2 Cropping is dominated by winter wheat; other cereal crops include winter and spring barley, and winter oats. Oilseeds comprise linseed and oil seed rape. Forage maize is grown on livestock farms which have cattle for dairy and/or beef production. Grazing for the latter and for sheep tends to be a mixture of permanent and rotational grass. There is a piggery within the WHS. Land use also includes a large racing yard at Beckhampton, with gallops in the western part of the WHS. There are also gallops in the east of the WHS on Fyfield Down, Clatford Down and Manton Down. There are two smaller racing yards at North Farm and East Kennett and many of the farms in the area offer livery accommodation.

5.2.3 Figure 3 shows that 35% of the WHS is now in pasture. The main areas of permanent pasture are found on Overton and Fyfield Downs (which is also an SSSI and NNR), Windmill Hill, Waden Hill, and alongside the Kennet and other watercourses. The introduction of set-aside has been the main change in arable rotations in the last ten years; before that crops such as oil seed rape and linseed were introduced as break crops into rotations.

5.2.4 Generally, farmers do not farm the land within the WHS in any different way from other land. The main exception is on Overton and Fyfield Downs, where the land is farmed in accordance with a management plan agreed with English Nature; but even in this case, there is no difference in the way that the SSSI is farmed inside and outside the WHS.

- 5.2.5 The nationwide outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001 had a direct and detrimental impact on the livelihoods of farmers in the Avebury area, as elsewhere in the country. The impact was relatively short-lived and no long-term changes in farming methods were brought on by the outbreak.
- 5.2.6 Over half of the farms within the WHS have CSS agreements operating. This represents a major development as only three were signed up in 1998. This is explored further in the section below.



Bronze age burial mound isolated by arable cultivation

Balance Between Arable and Pasture & Management of Monuments

Issue 9. Arable agriculture has had an overwhelming impact on the survival and condition of the monuments and still poses the greatest general threat to the physical survival of monuments in the WHS. Conversion of some areas to permanent grassland would be more appropriate for the protection of monuments.

- 5.2.7 As confirmed in the results from the condition survey, monuments under arable are vulnerable to plough erosion, particularly on slopes or crests. It is important to note that it is not necessarily the most substantial earthworks that are the most vulnerable to plough damage, nor the rate of erosion the only critical factor. When the base of ploughing has reached a critical archaeological horizon (e.g. the turf line of a buried soil beneath a barrow, the top of a burial

or cremation urn, or an intact Roman floor) only a very small extra depth of cultivation can result in loss of vital information. The conversion of arable areas to permanent grassland constitutes an appropriate land use for the protection of monuments.

5.2.8 The increase in take up of Countryside Stewardship within the WHS since 1998 has resulted in the conversion of 110 hectares of arable into grassland specifically for the protection of archaeological remains. This is a significant change and amounts to around 5% of the landholding in the WHS. However, a large proportion of archaeological monuments are still vulnerable to plough damage under arable regimes. It is still desirable to convert at least a



Defra Countryside Stewardship panel at West Kennett

further 100 hectares to grassland within the WHS for their protection. It is recognised that whilst arable areas may well not be appropriate in archaeologically sensitive areas, there is scope to retain a reasonable amount of arable in other areas. Cultivated land is important as a habitat for a number of rare arable flowers and for birds which are becoming rare such as corn bunting, grey partridge as well as tree sparrow (see section 3.4.4).

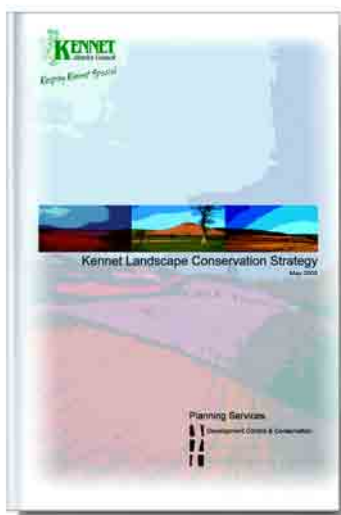
Tree Cover and Hedgerows

Issue 10 Hedgerow planting and restoration and tree planting are important for their potential impact on archaeological remains and the character of the very open landscape.

5.2.9 Within the WHS, the tree cover appears to be almost entirely the result of deliberate planting, whether as plantations at enclosure, hedgerow trees, barrow-top planting, formal avenues or recent plantations for game/amenity. Recent plantations are a matter of concern since they are not always well sited and do not necessarily reflect the underlying character of the downland landscape. However, there is now a requirement for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be submitted to the Forestry Commission for proposed tree planting within the WHS. Under the current legislation, Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/2228), WH sites are considered as “sensitive” areas with no thresholds in terms of the area of planting before an EIA is required. As well as directly protecting the key monuments and their immediate setting, the Regulations should help to maintain the open downland landscape character of the WHS and surrounding area.

5.2.10 There is a need for a strategy for trees and woodland in the WHS, which should be developed in conjunction with the National Trust (building on their treescape plan for Avebury) and other landowners. The strategy should stress the need to take pre-emptive action against potential wind-throw which can have disastrous consequences (e.g. in 1987 when the trees on the King Barrow ridge near Stonehenge came down). In addition, a policy statement on the restoration of hedgerows and trees for nature conservation purpose for the WHS should be developed. It should address the potential conflict of interest between the need to protect archaeological sites and possible adverse impacts of new plantings.

5.2.11 In 2001 Kennet District Council (KDC) developed a Landscape Conservation Strategy for the



District. It contains detailed information on the enhancement priorities for the different landscape types identified and provides guidance on the Council's policies relating to trees and developments. The policy also contains a targeting strategy for the Council's landscape conservation grant scheme. This document has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance (SPG) linked to the Local Plan. The Avebury WHS falls within three of the identified landscape types, the Avebury Plain (1), Horton Down (2) and the Marlborough Downs (4). The priorities for enhancement of these areas are detailed and cover a range of issues relevant to the protection and enhancement of the archaeological features in the WHS and their setting. For example, the Strategy encourages the removal of inappropriate or intrusive signage, fences, belts of trees and scrub. It also encourages the removal of

tree clumps from burial mounds and their relocation to archaeologically less sensitive sites. The WHS Management Plan will help to support the implementation of the Landscape Strategy as much as possible as it relates to the WHS landscape.

5.3 LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND MONUMENT MANAGEMENT

Issue 11 The specific targeting of the WHS as a special Countryside Stewardship project with enhanced payments has led to the increase in uptake in the Avebury area.

5.3.1 CSS is a ten-year voluntary agri-environmental scheme funded and operated by Defra. It is targeted at the positive management, restoration and (re)creation of specific landscapes and habitats and associated wildlife, landscape and historic features.

5.3.2 Until recently, the uptake of CSS in the Avebury WHS was poor, as the financial incentives for farmers to enter the ten-year agreements were not attractive. The national calculation for CSS payment rates for the conversion of arable to grassland is 70% income forgone (£280 per hectare). In 1999 discussions began between Defra (then the FRCA, an executive branch of MAFF), the National Trust, English Heritage and the WHS Officer about the development of a

special scheme for the Avebury and Stonehenge WHS. Agreement was reached on how this scheme would operate in 2001 and Defra confirmed that landowners in the WHS would be entitled to enhanced payments for specifically protecting archaeological remains through the conversion of arable areas to grassland. To provide better financial incentive, a payment rate calculation equivalent to 100% income forgone was made, amounting to £420 per hectare. A good deal of interest in the special scheme was expressed by local farmers in an open meeting held with Defra in 2001 and the scheme has been up and running since 2002. Three landowners in the Avebury WHS have since entered a CSS agreement with large areas converted from arable to grassland. An additional three landowners have added to their existing CSS agreements by converting areas from arable to grass. In total 110 hectares have been converted between 2002 and 2004. The new Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS) from 2005 will be providing funding for the creation of species-rich, semi-natural grassland, and allow establishment by natural regeneration. These more natural grasslands will help create a more ancient landscape setting for the archaeological features in the WHS.

Issue 12. Defra is in the process of replacing Countryside Stewardship with a new system of agri-environment grants. The impact of this on the WHS is currently unclear.

- 5.3.3 A national review of farming subsidies and agri-environmental grants has been undertaken and an overhaul of the existing system has been put into effect. CSS will no longer be available for new applications after financial year 2004-5
- 5.3.4 The new Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS) has been designed to build on, improve and extend the success for CSS. It will form the primary environmental grant offered to farmers, administered by Defra. The Scheme is split into two levels: an Entry Level Scheme, which aims to encourage a large number of farmers to deliver simple yet effective environmental management; and a Higher Level Scheme, which applies more rigorous environmental management measures. The Entry Level Scheme primarily targets the following: diffuse pollution, loss of biodiversity, loss of landscape character, and damage to the historic environment. The Higher Level Scheme has the following objectives: wildlife conservation, protection of the historic environment, maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character, promoting public access and understanding, and resource protection. It will require the production of a whole farm environmental plan.
- 5.3.5 Unfortunately, it is as yet unclear how this will impact on the farmers recently signed up to the enhanced payment WHS special scheme when their initial ten-year agreement period has terminated. It is hoped that the agreed enhanced payment rate equivalent to 100% income foregone will still be available in ten years, as well as to farmers entering new agreements from 2005 onwards.

Issue 13 Some monuments within the WHS would benefit from an increase in management agreements.

5.3.6 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 makes provision for voluntary management agreements between English Heritage and landowners in relation to SMs. Owners of agricultural land are encouraged to manage field monuments for an agreed period of time to benefit the conservation and enhancement of the site. This also has the effect of restricting potentially damaging agricultural activities on or adjacent to such sites. Management prescriptions might include scrub control, respecting a buffer zone for ploughing around a monument, control of burrowing animals, or establishment of appropriate grazing regimes. To date, only a few management agreements have been secured for SMs within the WHS, although two have been secured in the last three years.

5.3.7 It would be beneficial to undertake an assessment of SMs within the WHS with particular condition problems, which would be appropriate for management agreements. Those monuments on land unlikely to be included in CSS and ESS should be a priority.

Issue 14 The renewal of the LMA documentation and development of conservation statements for the key monuments in guardianship would help to target management actions.

5.3.8 English Heritage and the National Trust are currently discussing the detail of the legal documentation and finances relating to the renewal of the ten-year local management agreements (LMAs) for the key monuments in guardianship in the WHS. The initial LMA ran out in April 2004 and has not yet been renewed on a permanent basis. The LMAs and especially the funding arrangements do need to be addressed as soon as possible. To accompany the new agreements, conservation statements and schedules of works for the key monuments (Avebury Henge, West Kennet Avenue, Windmill Hill, The Sanctuary, West Kennet Long Barrow) will be drawn up. These statements will provide an opportunity to monitor the condition of the monuments and set out clear management actions and programmes of work necessary for their preservation.

Issue 15 The collapse of a shaft at the top of Silbury Hill in May 2000 and its subsequent repair by English Heritage has raised a number of issues relating to the maintenance and management of structural monuments.

5.3.9 There was surprise when an 18th-century mineshaft re-opened at the top of Silbury Hill in May 2000, although subsequent research into old air photographs and maps suggests that this has happened on a number of occasions since the shaft was first excavated in 1776. The crown hole at the top of the Hill is now backfilled with chalk and polystyrene, and the shaft backfilled with collapsed deposits.

5.3.10 Although a seismic survey and other work has revealed that the Hill is basically stable, it is now known that part of the lateral Atkinson tunnel excavated in 1968-9 and part of the Merewether tunnel excavated in 1849 are open and pose some threat to archaeological deposits within the Hill. English Heritage is currently assessing a range of possible long-term options for the repair of the Hill to try and safeguard these archaeological deposits. The safety and management needs of Silbury Hill and other sites (for example those with megaliths) must be fully understood to ensure that both health and safety requirements are met, and that vulnerable archaeological deposits are preserved.

5.4 VISUAL CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIP OF KEY MONUMENTS

Issue 16 The visual sensitivity of the setting of the monuments within the WHS extends to a broad area. Careful and particular consideration should be given to the visual impact of new developments and features affecting the WHS and its setting. Opportunities to remove or screen currently intrusive features should also be of prime concern for future management.



East Kennet Long Barrow. Photo: English Heritage.

5.4.1 The Avebury Henge and the surrounding monuments are set at the southern extremities of a chalk plateau, strongly contained visually to the east by the Ridgeway, with more distant horizons of rising ground to the south. The slopes of the surrounding downland provide a strong and simple backdrop for the archaeological features of the area. Long views are generally only afforded from key elevated vantage points, such as the Ridgeway, the Wansdyke and Cherhill Down. Within the WHS, the two major vantage points are Windmill Hill and Waden Hill, which provide panoramic views across the site and beyond. Distant views from Windmill Hill in particular provide a visual overview of most of the key archaeological features of the WHS,

while Waden Hill provides a vantage point to view the cluster of features in the proximity of Avebury village. Waden Hill is also especially important visually as a barrier which subdivides the area into small enclosed visual compartments and also as an immediate backdrop to a number of the features. In some places, the areas of high visual sensitivity extend outside the present WHS boundary. In particular, this includes East Kennet Long Barrow, Cherhill Down, the scarp at Monkton Down and parts of Winterbourne Monkton.

5.4.2 Analysis of the visibility also indicates a separate area of distinctive visual character at Overton and Fyfield Down. This represents a visually enclosed and separate unit, which is not generally seen from other key sites but has a distinctive landscape and archaeological character. Despite its enclosed nature there are, however, some visual links back to the main complex, notably Silbury Hill, the Overton Hill barrows and The Sanctuary.

5.4.3 Overall, the visual sensitivity of the setting of the Avebury monuments extends to a broad area (Figure 7). Three simple levels of sensitivity are apparent. Areas of high visual sensitivity exist within the central part of the WHS surrounded by a less critical area, which is still important as the wider setting of the monuments. A further area of sensitivity exists where higher ground outside the WHS gives distant views over the complex.

5.5 THE WHS BOUNDARY

Issue 17 The current WHS boundary has a number of inconsistencies. The results of a recent boundary review recommend a number of minor changes.

5.5.1 This section contains recommendations for a revision of the WHS boundary and the identification of a buffer zone. The text is a revised summary of a twenty-page report originally compiled by Peter Fowler and Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger over the winter 2001-2002, based in part on an examination in the field of the existing and proposed boundaries. In summary, this report recommends an expansion of the existing WHS boundary of around 10% (Figure 6) and the establishment of a buffer zone. The exact extent of the buffer zone is yet to be defined. The proposed boundary changes can only be put forward to UNESCO for approval by the DCMS as State Party. It is hoped that this could be achieved within the life-cycle of this Management Plan (Objective I).

The need for a review of the WHS boundary

5.5.2 It has been recognised for some time that the original boundaries of the Avebury WHS are unsatisfactory. The four major points in demanding a modern revision are:

- new discoveries and research since 1987 have considerably changed the perception and understanding of the Avebury area, a development underpinned with a number of substantial publications (see section 1.5.9). As a result we now have greater knowledge of the physical manifestations of the site's "outstanding universal values" and it is appropriate to try and extend the boundary to include these areas

- standards in the conduct of World Heritage matters, notably nominations, boundaries, buffer zones, management and monitoring, and in the expectations of visitors to WH Sites, have risen markedly over the last decade
- land-management was not a major consideration in the initial definition and significant lengths of the present boundary, as well as areas both included and excluded by it, make little or no sense in proprietorial terms
- the Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan (1998) itself commits to a boundary review by the end of its first five years (objective H).

Principles applied in assessing the boundary

5.5.3 The WHS boundary should as far as possible:

- A remain true to the spirit of the original inscription of the Site on the WH List, with its emphasis on the later prehistoric, megalithic and sarsen stone elements in the landscape
- B not be changed unless it is perceived that the extent of the Site's "outstanding universal values" is not protected adequately within the existing boundary
- C reflect current knowledge and understanding of Avebury and its surrounding landscape as a WHS in the 21st-century as defined in the WH nomination in 1986
- D include physically-related archaeological features and the whole of a group of archaeological features such as burial mounds, including in particular all SMs
- E have regard for the setting of individual monuments and groups of monuments and for their overall context in archaeological and landscape terms
- F avoid changes which include inhabited villages, notably those along the Kennet Valley.

5.5.4 Recommendations for boundary changes

- the existing boundary should be retained for most of its length
- the additional areas to be included in the boundary should for the most part relate to sites or areas of land subject to statutory designations which are only partly included in the existing boundary
- changes should be made in four areas as set out below, starting with the east:

East

Objective

- 5.5.5 To include within the WHS as much as possible of the extent of surviving earthworks on Fyfield Down, the whole of the Fyfield Down National Nature Reserve (NNR), the new large Scheduled Area (SM33951).
- 5.5.6 Fyfield Down, inexplicably excluded from the WHS when it was initially defined, is an integral part of the great spread of Tertiary sandstone ('sarsens') and late prehistoric-medieval landscapes which already exist in the WHS on Overton Down. Both are integral with the ploughed-out remains of the same landscapes, now mapped, between the Ridgeway and Avebury itself. With a large recent publication by Peter Fowler (2000) to underpin its significance, Fyfield and Overton Downs have recently been designated a single Scheduled Monument, largely corresponding with the area of the NNR declared in the 1950s. This area will add around 163 hectares to the WHS.



Reconstruction drawing of the West Kennet Palisade Enclosures

South

Objective

- 5.5.7 To include the whole of the West Kennet Palisade Enclosures complex and East Kennet Long Barrow and associated features within the boundary. On the south edge of West Kennett, where the current boundary loops north following the line of the River Kennet, the boundary should drop further south by about one kilometre to the line of bridleway 5.

5.5.8 In addition, the East Kennet Long Barrow should be included in the WHS. This important well-preserved Neolithic burial chamber is an obvious pairing to the West Kennet Long Barrow and may well be better preserved. The inclusion of one of these barrows without the other is an obvious omission from the original boundary. Even today, the visual links between the two monuments are clear. A rectangular area adjacent to the that described above should be added into the boundary. It should run south of East Kennett Farm, defined on the east by the line of the road and Ridgeway. Its southern definition follows the existing field boundaries, excluding the modern farm buildings, with its western extent defined by the line of bridleway 4. These two additional areas will fully incorporate the West Kennet Palisade Enclosures, East Kennet Long Barrow and associated features, thereby adding around 108 hectares to the WHS.

South-West

Objective

5.5.9 To divert the line of the south-western boundary slightly to fully include two scheduled barrow complexes currently bisected by the line of the boundary south of Beckhampton. From its most southerly point the current boundary runs in a northwest direction following a parish boundary for around 3 km to the junction of the A361 and the Roman Road. The new line should be diverted south to include the whole of the scheduled barrow group SM21755, 500 m south of Beckhampton Penning, adding about a hectare to the WHS boundary. Similarly, at the Hemp Knoll barrow group (500 m east of Beckhampton buildings) the boundary should be diverted south to incorporate barrows SM21758 and SM 21759, adding around a third of a hectare to the WHS.

West

Objective

5.5.10 To include the entire Fox Covert barrow group (SM21752) currently bisected by the boundary and north of the A4 to divert the boundary from running across a field to a trackway instead. The current boundary between the A361 and A4 follows the artificial line of the edge of a map, cutting north south across Knoll Down and the complex of prehistoric and later features. About half way between the two roads, the boundary should be extended on the west side by around a quarter of a hectare to fully incorporate the linear Fox Covert barrow group. On the north side of the A4 the boundary arbitrarily cuts across the corner of a field marking the edge of a map. Instead the boundary at this point should be diverted by about 400 metres to the west, following the line of byway 18, adding around 10 hectares to the WHS.

Issue 18 A buffer zone needs to be defined effectively protecting the WHS, its monuments and their landscape settings from visual intrusion and other adverse impacts.

5.5.11 It is now normal practice, encouraged by UNESCO, for WH sites coming forward for nomination to include buffer zones to cushion them from visually intrusive developments. ICOMOS UK has published guidelines for the definition of boundaries and buffer zones (2000). PPG 15 advises that Management Plans should protect the WH site and its setting from damaging development. In the UK buffer zones exist for Orkney, Greenwich and Hadrian's Wall. Of the more recent sites, New Lanark, Derwent Valley, Saltaire, and Kew all have buffer zones. Such zones are also being considered retrospectively in a number of cases and the definition of a proposed buffer zone set out in a site management plan is viewed as the most appropriate context for it to be considered and agreed on by the World Heritage Committee.

The need for a buffer zone for Avebury WHS

5.5.12 Detailed consideration was given to the concept of a buffer zone for Avebury during the development of the AMP98. While the intention or spirit of a buffer zone has been incorporated into the Plan, it was considered at the time that a zone defined as a line on a map would afford less protection against potential developments at a distance from the site than would a general Local Plan policy to protect the WHS and its setting. However, since this time a review of the boundary has taken place and the existence of a buffer zone for Avebury is considered to be essential now in light of the advice from ICOMOS and UNESCO and on the grounds of best practice in WHS management.

5.5.13 The Avebury WHS is located wholly within the North Wessex Down AONB (Figure 5), thereby afforded protection from potentially detrimental developments by the planning system as with any other statutory designations. However, the AONB and other existing designations are not specific enough for the particular management needs of the WHS. A more specific zone of visual protection for the WHS is necessary, tailored to its needs and will not diminish the existing statutory protection.

5.5.14 As discussed above in section 5.4 and illustrated in figure 7, the visual sensitivity of the Avebury WHS extends very widely. The integrity of the archaeological landscape is not fully recognised in the existing boundary, especially its visual features and influence. For practical reasons the minor proposals for expanding the boundary mainly involve relatively small areas specifically protected by national statutory designations, giving justification for their inclusion. The wider areas proposed for inclusion in the buffer zone are unlikely to be acceptable as part of the WHS boundary itself, but are important to the landscape setting and visual context of the WHS. It is acknowledged that views into, across and out from the Avebury WHS are critical. In addition, there is a need to provide added protection to the setting of some monuments such as Windmill Hill. The protection of these areas from potentially adverse developments which may affect the character setting, enjoyment and experience of the landscape is essential. The justification for defining a buffer zone for Avebury is two-fold:

- to protect the landscape setting of the WHS
- to provide firmer resistance to inappropriate developments than currently provided within the AONB.

5.5.15 It is recognised that a buffer zone, being primarily a management tool, must involve close partnership with local authorities and must be workable through the local planning framework. The justification for and definition of the buffer zone should be the subject of analysis at the earliest opportunity. The details should then be published as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to Policy HH3 in the Local Plan or succeeding document. This policy seeks to protect (but does not define) the setting of the WHS from potentially harmful development proposals. Policy HH3 will also consider the visual impact of any development beyond the buffer zone on the setting of the WHS.

5.5.16 In defining a buffer zone for the Avebury WHS it is important to remember that although the key archaeological monuments are the focus of the WHS designation, the key components of landscape, topography and geology, underpin the original decision to build them where they are. Topography and geology are also important to the character of the modern landscape and the survival and potential of the archaeological resource. Much of the interest and importance of the WHS lies in the inter-relationships between the monuments, the landscape and its topography. The physical nature of the Avebury landscape, with its open downlands and wide views make it vulnerable to the impact of developments in a broad zone. It is essential that the integrity of the wider landscape is defined, sustained, protected and managed.

5.5.17 Principles to be used in defining buffer zone for the Avebury WHS:

1. Acknowledge that views into, across and out from the Avebury WHS are critical in defining its location in certain places; and that visual 'gateways' into and from the WHS area are significant both topographically and in aiding presentation and interpretation of the area.
2. The buffer zone should aim to protect the visual setting of the WHS. Its definition will need to be linked to Policy HH3 in the Kennet Local Plan (April 2004) which seeks to protect (but does not define) the visual setting of the WHS.
3. Another key aim of the buffer zone is to offer firmer resistance to development than would otherwise occur in the AONB. Therefore, when the buffer zone is defined, it will be necessary to provide specific justification for why developments of a certain scale/character will be inappropriate.

Conclusion

5.5.18 This section proposes a minor extension to the WHS boundary and the definition of a buffer zone. Setting out these changes in the context of a management plan is the best way of consultation and promoting discussion, especially with the local authorities.

5.5.19 The proposed boundary changes would rectify some serious deficiencies in the original definition of the WHS, take some major new discoveries since 1987 into account and overall bring the WHS into line with modern understanding of the Avebury landscape. As we now have greater knowledge of the physical manifestations of the site's "outstanding universal values", it is appropriate to try and extend the boundary to include these areas.

5.5.20 Quantitatively, the minor boundary changes would include approximately a further 233 hectares in the WHS, representing around 10% of the current area. Around thirty-five additional archaeological sites and monuments would thus come into the new boundary, most of which are scheduled. This includes a prehistoric monumental complex; a multi-period settlement and field system complex; a well-preserved Neolithic long barrow; at least ten scheduled round barrows, plus numerous linear features and enclosures.

6.0 PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Issue 19 The WHS designation does not afford any additional statutory protection against development within its boundaries, nor does it specifically aim to preclude development

6.1.1 The development control system is a key tool in the long-term protection of the WHS values. The local authorities are required to accept the WHS status as a material consideration in deciding planning applications, as is the Secretary of State in determining cases on appeal or following call-in. These principles are enshrined in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment, DoE and DNH, 1994). In addition, specific policies are contained within the Local Plan and the Wiltshire Structure Plan, which attach special consideration to the importance of the WHS in development control decisions. Decision-making is now also aided by the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy (see section 5.2.11).

6.1.2 In the five years since the publication of the AMP98, there has been an average of around fifteen to twenty planning applications per year for development within the WHS. In addition, several pre-application enquiries are also considered by the planning department, which do not necessarily result in applications being lodged. The large majority of planning applications relate to small-scale householder developments such as extensions which, unless they are directly on archaeologically sensitive land, have little impact on the WH values. The few contentious applications (and pre-application enquiries) have on the whole related to the location of telecommunications masts in visually sensitive areas and residential developments in archaeologically sensitive parts of the WHS. The importance placed on WH status is illustrated in the case of an appeal in 2000 against the refusal of permission for a 15-metre-high telecommunications mast to be located around one kilometre outside of the south-west boundary of the WHS. The main issue in the appeal was the impact of the mast on the appearance and archaeological interests of the WHS and surrounding landscape. The Inspector refused the appeal on the grounds that the mast would be visible from the WHS and especially the high land with public access at its heart. The modern intrusion of the mast would clearly cause serious harm to the character and importance of the archaeological monuments in the area.

6.1.3 It is common practice for the WHS Officer to be consulted and comment on planning applications within the WHS which may impact on the WH values and management objectives as set out in the Management Plan. This is a key method by which KDC assesses WHS status as a material consideration in deciding planning applications. The provision of regular training seminars about WH sites to the relevant planning officers and Council Members is also an important element of this.

Issue 20 A number of potentially damaging activities within the WHS are not normally subject to planning control, in particular agricultural developments, utility installations and treasure hunting.

6.1.4 There are currently a number of activities which landowners and agencies can carry out on land within the WHS which do not require planning permission. However, they are potentially damaging to archaeological remains and the landscape setting of the WHS. These activities include:

- new planting not funded by the Forestry Authority
- hedge removal not covered by the Hedgerows Act
- increased ploughing depth
- swimming pools
- utility installations
- treasure hunting
- agricultural buildings and operations under a certain size.

6.1.5 There is particular concern that measures should be taken to mitigate potential damage caused during the installation of essential services (gas, water, electricity, sewage, telecommunications). Telecommunications masts and overhead transmission lines, for example, are visually intrusive forms of development that are not normally subject to planning control. Also, the digging of trenches and holes for underground pipes and cables can affect as yet undiscovered archaeological features. Moreover, there has been a particular problem (at least four cases in the last five years) with trenches being dug in scheduled areas of the WHS without the required prior permission.

6.1.6 There is also cause for concern over treasure hunting activities in the WHS, and the use of metal detectors. Metal detectorists have made a number of important finds in the area in the past. However, these finds, made without the full and reliable recording of their archaeological context, add little to our understanding of the sites and monuments in the area, and can lead to damage or destruction of archaeological features. Although metal detecting as a technique (used as part of an archaeological project with due regard to appropriate standards) can be useful, uncontrolled use within the WHS should be discouraged. The use of metal detectors in the WHS is legal, but subject to aspects of the criminal law in certain areas. For example, under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (AMAA) metal detectors must not be used within SMs without permission from English Heritage. Moreover, artefacts must not be removed from any land without the owner's consent (also subject to civil law where it is trespass to gain access to land without the owner's consent) and all finds of Treasure (as detailed by the 1996 Treasure Act) must be reported to the coroner within 14 days. The National Council of Metal Detecting also has its own "Code of Conduct" to guide the activities of metal detectorists.

However, a very serious weakness of both the law and the “Code of Conduct” is that they still give at present no protection to as yet undiscovered sites or areas which are not SMs. The National Trust does not permit the use of metal detectors on its land unless part of an approved archaeological project. Other landowners within the WHS do allow the use of detectors. Permission is required from Defra for metal detecting to be undertaken on archaeological sites included in a CSS agreement. The recent appointment of a Finds Liaison Officer for Wiltshire (through the Portable Antiquities Scheme) has helped increase the reporting of archaeological finds by metal detectorists and build better lines of communication between detectorists and archaeologists.

- 6.1.7 The majority of land within the WHS outside the settlements is in agricultural use. Agricultural buildings under a certain size and operations are generally granted permitted development rights and do not as a result require planning permission. Agricultural buildings and operations do, therefore, pose a specific threat to archaeological remains. The Local Plan contains a statement of intent to withdraw permitted development rights, where necessary, through the use of an Article 4 Direction under the Town and Country Planning General Development Order, 1988. This can have the effect of bringing agricultural buildings and operations within the general scope of the development control process. In addition, the use of Agricultural Consent Applications enables the local planning authority to exercise its discretion over agricultural development regarding prior approval for consent.

Issue 21 Specific policies are contained within the Local Plan which attach special consideration to the importance of the WHS in development control decisions within its defined boundaries.

- 6.1.8 An extensive range of designations reflect the national importance of the archaeological, landscape, nature conservation and built heritage features within the WHS. These features are irreplaceable assets and can be considered to comprise the critical environmental capital of the WHS. The Local Plan supports and reinforces these national designations with further notations and detailed planning control policies which seek to control unacceptable change within the WHS and surrounding area.

- 6.1.9 Various chapters and a range of specific policies of the Kennet Local Plan (adopted in April 2004) support objectives set out in the AMP98. The key policies are set out in Chapter 6 (Conservation of the Historic Heritage) sections 6.12-6.21. Policies HH3 and HH4 are the most important here. Policy HH3 stating that:

Proposals which would harm the historic landscape, archaeological features or visual setting of that part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site within the district will not be permitted.

6.1.10 Other key policies are contained in the chapters dealing with Tourism in the Countryside (TR6-9 and 15), Accessibility and Transport (AT 6 and 9) and Housing & Community (HC23).

6.1.11 At the time of publishing this plan (June 2005) the Government's planning green paper and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill have recently been passed. This means that local plans in their previous form will evolve into "local development frameworks". These frameworks are likely to contain less detailed information and move away from setting specific policies. Under the new system Area Action Plans (AAP) can be developed for and would replace the provisions of the existing Local Plan policies. Given the sensitive nature of the Avebury WHS and potential number of spatial issues that may arise, an AAP may be the best mechanism in the future.

Issue 22 The link between the Local Plan (new local development framework) and WHS Management Plan should be strengthened by its official adoption by the planning authority.

6.1.12 Although the AMP98 has clearly been used as a guidance document in the revision of the Local Plan, it was never officially adopted or endorsed by KDC. It is intended that the revised Plan will be endorsed and supported by the Council, through the Community Development Committee.

6.1.13 In order to strengthen its links to specific policies in the Local Plan, there will be benefits in producing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) based on the land use planning elements of the Management Plan. Under the new planning system SPDs are replacing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs). Because the new system involves far greater public involvement (through the Statement of Community Involvement), SPDs will be given more weight than SPGs when considering planning applications.

6.2 CONSERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC FEATURE

Issue 23 The protection of the landscape and archaeological features and their settings are given precedence over development within the WHS.

- 6.2.1 The WHS designation reflects the internationally acknowledged value of the Avebury landscape as one of the most important Neolithic complexes in Western Europe. PPG15 highlights the outstanding international importance of a WHS as a key material consideration in the planning process and the need for rigorous Local Plan policies. Local Plan policies seek to ensure that all development proposals of a relevant size within the WHS are subject to archaeological evaluation. Applications for planning permission will be assessed against a presumption in the Local Plan in favour of the physical preservation in situ of nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not.
- 6.2.2 Wiltshire County Archaeological Service (CAS) provides advice to the planning authority on applications which could interfere with known or potential archaeological remains. The CAS in partnership with the local planning authorities has recently developed a series of Archaeological Zone maps. They will help planners and developers identify the location and relative value of archaeological features. These zones are included in the Local Plan and replace the Areas of Archaeological Potential and Areas of Higher Archaeological Potential included previously. There are ten of these zones within the Avebury WHS.
- 6.2.3 In the advice given to planners by the CAS there is a strong emphasis on protection of sites and monuments in situ together with their settings: specific provision is made for development proposals to be modified or refused in order to achieve this objective. Further provision is also made for agreements to secure archaeological excavation and recording prior to development. An archaeological watching brief may also be required. Such arrangements relate to those cases where remains are considered to be of limited archaeological value and preservation in situ is considered to be unnecessary.
- 6.2.4 In light of the archaeological importance of the Avebury WHS and the high potential for the discovery of new sites, the CAS require a more stringent approach to the mitigation of potential impacts of developments in the WHS.

Issue 24 Conservation Area Statements for Avebury and West Kennett highlight the interrelationship of the historic built environment with the prehistoric monuments.

6.2.5 The hamlets of Beckhampton and West Kennett, together with the villages of Avebury and Avebury Trusloe comprise established settlements within the WHS. Specific development control policies are contained within the Local Plan which restrict inappropriate development in villages and seek to direct new development to the least environmentally sensitive areas within each village. Future development is strictly controlled within Limits of Development and Conservation Area designations. Local Plan policies seek to restrict development which would significantly change the character of the area.



Avebury Manor and Gardens

6.2.6 Further development control is exercised in respect of listed buildings for which the emphasis is placed on maintaining their architectural or historic interest and setting. There are 84 listed buildings within the WHS, mostly within the Conservation Areas. All owners of LBs within the WHS must seek authorisation for any proposed alterations via an application for listed building consent (LBC) made to the local planning authority.

6.2.7 The Conservation Area Statements published by KDC in 2003 for Avebury and West Kennett highlight the important interrelationship between the development of these historic villages and the extensive prehistoric monuments. The Statements also outline priorities and opportunities for enhancement of the built environment in these two villages.

7.0 TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND PARKING MANAGEMENT

7.1 THE HIGHWAY NETWORK AND USAGE

Issue 25 For many years there has been concern about the impact of traffic, vehicle speeds and roads on Avebury and its historic environment.

7.1.1 Figure 2 illustrates the different highway links within the WHS and their importance and function. The A4361 runs north/south-west through the WHS and Avebury village. It is a single carriageway link subject in part to a 30 mph speed limit. It is not street lit and has discontinuous footways/verges on either side of the road. The road is classified as a County Distributor Road. The A4361 links to a roundabout junction with the A4/A361 at Beckhampton to the south-west, providing a strategic connection between the A4/A361 to the south-west and Swindon to the north.

7.1.2 The A4 runs east/west some 1.5 km to the south of Avebury village through the WHS and provides vehicular access to the Silbury Hill car park and West Kennet Long Barrow/The Sanctuary laybys. It is a single carriageway, is subject to the national speed limit, is not street lit and discontinuous footways/verges exist on either side of the road. The road is classified as a County Distributor Road. The A4 forms a priority junction with West Kennet Avenue to the south-east of Avebury, which has substandard visibility. It also forms a roundabout junction with the A4361/A361 to the south-west. The link provides a strategic connection between Marlborough in the east and Calne and Chippenham in the west.

7.1.3 The B4003, West Kennet Avenue runs south-east/north-west to the south-east of Avebury village and connects the A4 with the A4361. It is a single carriageway link, is subject to the national speed limit, is not street lit, and has no footways. In some places the road is very narrow and two cars can barely pass.

7.1.4 Because of the concern about the impact of the roads described above on Avebury, there had been a long-standing proposal by the Local Highway Authority (LHA) for a bypass for Avebury. This was dropped from the 1981 Wiltshire Structure Plan and from the Avebury Local Plan in 1992 (see AMP98 section 7 for details). There has been no further discussion of this option in the last five years.

The effect of traffic on the historic environment

- 7.1.5 As in many rural villages the necessity to provide for both resident access to the village and through traffic has resulted in a car-dominated landscape. This has occurred in Avebury despite its special nature and archaeological monuments, resulting in a reduction in the qualities of this unique landscape.
- 7.1.6. In particular, there is concern over the erosion caused by vehicles (especially wide vehicles) along the narrow parts of the B4003, Avenue Road. Part of the route of the West Kennet Avenue SM runs along the road. There is concern about the erosion of the verges, which may be affecting archaeological deposits, as well as the development of unofficial parking areas within the Avenue monument. This problem has been partially addressed by means of double yellow lines prohibiting parking along parts of this road. Options for the application of width and weight limits and the re-routing of bus routes have been discussed and need further exploration.
- 7.1.7 Another area of concern and the subject of discussion at the TVM Group is the erosion caused to the grass triangle or “green” at the top of the High Street. Over the years the corners and verges of the green have eroded back by vehicles parking or running over them. Consequently, the roots of the trees in this location are being damaged.

Traffic volume

Issue 26 *There has been a modest growth in the volume of traffic, both commuter and leisure related, which is predicted to continue in line with national trends.*

- 7.1.8 The County Council has two sites within, or just outside the WHS area where traffic flows are regularly monitored: A4361 at Winterbourne Monkton and the A4 at West Kennett. The following 24 hour average daily traffic flows were obtained:

Table 2. Traffic Counts 1998-2003

Year	A4361	A4
1998	6505	8488
1999	6597	8461
2000	6600	8329
2001	6695	8770
2002	6900	8806
2003	6641	8740

These figures indicate a modest increase in traffic on these two roads in the last six years.

7.1.9 Alterations to the Wiltshire Structure Plan concentrate future development in the county to the Swindon PUA (Principal Urban Area). This represents a significant strategic change and could impact on the WHS especially in terms of local visitors and traffic generation on the A4361.

Issue 27 *There is a distinctive commuter movement of vehicles through Avebury, especially along the A4361.*

7.1.10 Directional analysis of traffic flows carried out in on the A4361 in 1997 showed that approximately 70% of traffic was commuting northbound in the AM peak and south-bound in the PM peak. A similar analysis on traffic flows on the A4 through the WHS indicated 60% of the flow was commuter traffic.

Traffic speed

Issue 28 *The instigation of a 30 mph zone on the A4361 through Avebury has had mixed success.*

7.1.11 In 1997 a 30 mph zone was established on A4361 through the village, running from just north of the manor drive to the bridge around 200 m to the south of the Henge. A speed limit of 30 mph was also instigated along Green Street. This lower speed limit has been viewed as having mixed success at either end of the zone. The County Council has recently installed additional carriageway markings on the A4361 in an attempt to increase compliance with the 30mph limit by drivers approaching from Beckhampton. There is pressure from the local community in particular to extend the zone further south beyond the Folly Hill junction at Trusloe. Similarly, local residents along Swindon Road would like to see a 40 mph limit instigated on the approach to Avebury on the A4361. A petition of signatures was collected in support of this in 2004. Further monitoring of vehicular speed in relation to the lower speed limit is necessary.

Traffic patterns

7.1.12 The most recent visitor survey data, collected by Steven Calver (1998) for the National Trust between 1996-8 indicates that 88% of visitors arrive in Avebury by car. These figures are similar to the results of the ASH survey in 1997 where 84% had travelled to the WHS by car. The predominant use of the private car by visitors to Avebury is linked to availability and attitudes to car travel and the convenience factor. The increase in the use and ownership of cars during the past thirty years has been one of the key factors in the expansion of leisure activities in the UK.

7.1.13 A reduction in car use is unlikely without a modification in behaviour. Calver's research indicates that crowded parking and traffic congestion would lead many car users to change their destination of visit rather than their mode of transport. It is likely that increasing the car parking capacity of the site will attract more cars and congestion rather than diminish it. Further research is needed to investigate this relationship between congestion and demand in Avebury.

Pedestrians and cyclists

Issue29. Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists are considered inadequate for the number of visitors and local residents having regard to the alignment of critical road links and the speed of passing vehicles.

7.1.14 Discontinuous footways are provided alongside certain roads within the WHS, although no pedestrian crossing facilities are provided along the A4 for pedestrians wishing to access the bridleway on the southern side of the A4361. Moreover, no pedestrian crossing facilities are provided on the A4, forcing users of the West Kennet Long Barrow layby visiting Silbury Hill, and vice versa, to cross this busy road unprotected. However, any provision of new footpaths and crossings for pedestrians must consider the potential impact of increased access to the sites and monuments and the visual impact of street furniture and markings.

7.1.15 The WHS is reasonably well served by the public rights of way network with most of the major sites and monuments accessible on foot by public footpath or permissive route. There are also several bridleways and byways open additionally to cyclists and horse riders. Several farms in the WHS are in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme but only a few have created new access routes (permissive paths) as part of the scheme. The Ridgeway National Trail and White Horse Trail pass through part of the WHS with the Wansdyke path running only a mile to the south. All rights of way are signposted from public roads but waymarking thereafter is not consistent and often absent. Some rights of way are in poor condition, including some advertised in walking publications. There are several commercial guidebooks featuring walks around Avebury, Walking the Wiltshire Downs by Kennet District Council, and the National Trust's Walking Around Avebury (6 walks with an additional 2 planned for Cherhill and Pickledean). Most Tourist Information Centres in Kennet and Wiltshire have a summary list of walking and cycling guides available to visitors and to be sent out in response to phone or postal enquiries. A guide to access to the Henge area for visitors with mobility impairments has been produced by the NT. Both the county and the district tourism departments include Avebury in their promotional literature as a walking destination. Several holiday companies also feature the area for walking tours. The County Council have recently published a "framework for managing the rights of way network in Wiltshire 2004-9". This document focuses resources toward the most well-used and

promoted routes and locally important paths. The Avebury WHS is a prime location for this approach, where most of the existing rights of way fall within the highest priority grouping. The County Council recommend that any improvements and other actions required to the network in the WHS should be included in the forthcoming Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

7.1.16 Wiltshire as a county is well served with cycleways and off road routes. The current list includes: the Wiltshire Cycleway and associated circular routes (though none through Avebury). Sustrans National Route 4 east-west goes through Avebury and the future north-south NR45 will also go through the village, linking with Stonehenge. As with walking, there are holiday companies who offer cycling in Wiltshire and include Avebury in their itineraries. There are cycle hire outlets in Calne, Devizes and Swindon. The National Trust installed cycle racks near the Barn during summer 2001. Under the Rural Bus Challenge, WCC were going to install cycle racks on the 49 TransWilts Express which runs from Swindon to Trowbridge through Avebury. The following issues need to be considered when developing ways of encouraging cyclists in Avebury:

- visitors should not be encouraged to come to Avebury by car and then cycle, for two reasons: lack of car parking at peak periods and busy main roads
- how to encourage people to cycle to Avebury from neighbouring towns instead of driving and to find routes on quiet roads
- how to help cyclists to appreciate the whole of the WHS and not just aim for the village.

7.2 CAR PARKING FACILITIES AND USAGE

Issue 30 A number of changes made to parking provision in Avebury do not appear to have a major knock-on effect on congestion and on-street parking.

7.2.1 Since the AMP98 was published, a number of changes have been made to the provision of car parking spaces in and around the Avebury WHS:

- in 2003 the Central Car Park was closed to tourist parking, with the exception of disabled badge holders. The use of the car park is now limited to residents' permit holders only. This system is administered by the National Trust
- at Easter 2003 the National Trust introduced a charging structure of £1 for the Southern Car Park. This is operated by a machine-ticket system
- in 2003 WCC (highway authority) introduced a prohibition of waiting restriction (double yellow lines), on both sides of the A4361 along parts of Green Street, High Street, into Trusloe and up Avenue Road. This was undertaken primarily to help relieve parking congestion in and around the village over the Solstice period.

7.2.2 As can be seen from the analysis presented below, there does not appear to be a major knock-on effect of the reduction of parking spaces on the levels of surplus demand.

Issue 31 In total there are approximately 330 off-road parking spaces provided in the WHS.

7.2.3 Off-street car parking for visitors is provided in the Southern Car Park, at Silbury Hill on the A4 and the Ridgeway (opposite The Sanctuary). Laybys provide on-street car parking at West Kennet Long Barrow and The Sanctuary. The location of these off-street car parking areas are shown on Figure 2. The Southern Car Park is located on the A4361. It is intended to be the main car park serving Avebury monuments. Approximately 290 spaces are provided. The Silbury Hill car park has approximately 40 marked spaces. The West Kennet Long Barrow layby has space for approximately seven parked cars, although a further layby located some 150-200m to the west provides a similar level of additional parking. The Sanctuary layby has space for approximately seven cars, although an unofficial parking area is located opposite the layby.

Issue 32 Recent research has indicated that 50-60 additional spaces are required to fully meet demand in the Southern Car Park at peak periods. However, as set out in the Local Plan and agreed within AMP98, there should be no significant increase in the number of parking spaces provided in Avebury.

7.2.4 As part of a study into the feasibility of constructing a new car park on the north side of Avebury, Parkman monitored the use of the Central and Southern Car Park on bank holiday Monday at the start of May 2003. The results were directly compared with the similar study undertaken at the same time of year by TPK in 1997 (AMP98 section 7). The results of the 2003 survey of the Central Car Park and surrounding area showed it was operating within capacity compared to the 1997 survey, no evidence of suppressed demand as before, despite the new parking restrictions. Analysis of the 2003 results for the Southern Car Park indicated a further 50-60 spaces over and above the dynamic capacity of 260 spaces. This suggests that demand has fallen since 1997 when a minimum shortfall of 100 spaces was indicated. However, demand for parking could potentially be affected by a wide range of other factors including the weather conditions, trends in overseas visitation, or competition from other attractions. There is a need to continue to monitor the effect of the recent changes on the demand for parking in the Southern Car Park.

7.2.5 It is worth noting that the Parkman analysis indicated the average duration of stay in Southern Car Park has not significantly changed since the 1997 survey, remaining at about 1 hour 50 minutes.

Issue 33 A feasibility study has highlighted the constraints of the construction of a car park on the northern side of Avebury.

7.2.6 In 2003 Parkman were commissioned to investigate feasibility of constructing a car park on a site to the north of Avebury. The site is located on the east side of the A4361, between Rutlands Farm and Bonds Garage. A number of constraints and limitations to the site were identified:

- the difficulty of getting pedestrians safely across A4361
- the problems of establishing a good quality pedestrian crossing without major engineering works and road widening
- the need to extend footways on west side
- engineering problems with disposal of surface water
- other environmental and archaeological constraints.

7.2.7 However, the main constraint is high projected costs for the range of layout options. The minimum cost of £240,000 was calculated for a seasonal part-time overflow to just over a million pounds for a full-time car park with toilets and bus interchange. No obvious sources of funding have been identified for the construction of a car park.

7.3 ROAD SAFETY

Issue 34 Road safety is a major cause for concern to both visitors and residents, although this is not always supported by the recorded injury collision rates.

7.3.1 A study carried out by Wiltshire County Council in 1998 of personal injury collisions indicated that the A4 in general (its whole length through the County) has a below typical national accident rate. A small amount of further analysis has been done for short stretch of the A4361 between manor drive and Rutlands Farm (part of Parkman study) 1998-2003. This indicated that three serious and one slight personal injury collision had occurred along this stretch of road. One casualty was a pedestrian crossing the road from west to east at the Avebury Manor drive entrance. Accident remedial measures in the form of enhanced signing and white lining have recently been introduced on the A4 between Beckhampton and Marlborough, funded by the County Council.

7.3.2 Although there have only been a few pedestrian collisions (in fact only one in the last three years), it should be noted that the analysis does not take account of near misses or the fear and intimidation suffered by pedestrians. These factors are difficult to quantify. Research has shown that for every reported personal injury collision there are likely to have been about seven non-injury collisions that were not reported. The very nature of the roads and associated footpaths through the village does bring moving traffic and pedestrians into closer proximity than is desirable.

Issue 35 There is a need to improve the provision of safe road crossings for pedestrians in and around Avebury.

7.3.3 The above information serves to illustrate that there is an urgent need to provide safe pedestrian road crossings, especially within the Henge monument. In 1999 the National Trust did submit a planning application (subsequently withdrawn) for a crossing in the northern part of the Henge monument. As this particular scheme was considered to be unacceptable in terms of the archaeological disturbance and visual intrusion, it was not developed further. The results of a risk assessment undertaken by the National Trust in 2003 has led to the closure of the access gate to the north-east bank of the Henge (opposite the manor drive) to discourage visitors crossing the road at this location where visibility is limited. Discussions have also been held within the TVM Group about the need for a pedestrian crossing of the A4 at West Kennett, especially in relation to the desire for hostel accommodation in this vicinity.

Issue 36 There is concern about the safety of children going to and from Avebury Primary School.

7.3.4 Avebury Primary School is located in Avebury High Street just outside of the Henge monument. In 2003 and 2004 the School highlighted problems relating to the safety of children walking in and out of the school grounds and the potential for conflict with cars and the school bus which currently reverses down the High Street. Possible solutions have been discussed with the Parish Council and the TVM Group.

7.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISION

Issue 37 Despite recent improvements, public transport provision is relatively limited on Sundays and bank holidays, and does not enable key monuments in the WHS, other than the Henge, to be visited.

7.4.1 Considering its location and the rural nature of this part of Wiltshire, Avebury is relatively well served by buses, although few operate on Sundays/bank holidays. This restricts the number of visitors who are able to visit the WHS by bus on leisure days.

Table 3: Bus Services to Avebury

Service	Route	Weekdays	Sundays
49	Trowbridge-Devizes-Avebury-Swindon	hourly	2 hourly
5/6	Salisbury-Marlborough-Avebury-Swindon	hourly	4 journeys
48A	Marlbro'-Kennet Villages-Avebury Return	2 hourly	
X43	Calne-Avebury-Marlborough	4 journeys	
Wigglybus	Calne-Avebury	flexible	

Services 48A and X43 turn around in the centre of the village by using unsatisfactory reversing manoeuvres around the Red Lion pub. These buses also link to the 49 and 5/6 services.

- 7.4.2 Bus stops are located on the A4361, within Avebury village itself and to the south-west of the Trusloe turn, and to the west of the Wagon and Horses public house (eastbound only) by Beckhampton roundabout. As part of TransWilts Express service improvements, new bus shelters were provided at all bus stops along the A4361 through Avebury in 2002-3. However, there is still no bus shelter in the middle of Avebury where it is considered to be badly needed.
- 7.4.3 As yet, no bus stops are provided at the various monuments within the WHS except within Avebury village. Thus, no bus service operates between the various monuments within the WHS and the timetables of the bus services do not allow visitors to change services efficiently to visit these attractions.
- 7.4.4 In 2001 Parkman prepared a report for WCC on the TransWilts Express service through Avebury. The report in part considered the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a new public transport interchange at various locations in and around Avebury. As there are four bus routes which interconnect in Avebury, any new bus interchange would need to accommodate up to four buses at any one time.
- 7.4.5 It is difficult to find an alternative, despite the obvious problems with the existing interchange outside the Red Lion public house. At this point only one location would meet most of the required criteria. The site, near Rutlands Farm was evaluated by Parkman in 2003 as part of the northern car park feasibility study. It was concluded that this site could accommodate an interchange if the land and funding were available. However, there would be an adverse visual impact particularly on residents of Rutlands Farm and the mobile home park, as well as a number of other constraints on the site.
- 7.4.6 Great Western Railways have a booklet of onwards bus links from their main line stations which include the Swindon to Avebury route. The nearest major railway stations are both actually and perceptually quite distant – both Swindon and Chippenham are around 12 miles away. Currently 88% of visitors arrive at Avebury by car and 66% travel between monuments by car. The 1998 report by Bournemouth University recognises ‘any displacement of the car as the pre-eminent means of transport for leisure and business use through the introduction of an integrated transport policy is a long term proposition’. It also recognises the following issues for the WHS:
- the difficulty of encouraging people out of their cars is both a national and societal problem
 - even the most successful green transport schemes only tend to influence around 5% of actual and potential visitors

- the distance of Avebury from adjacent towns makes local walking and cycling schemes impossible
- the diverse visitor profile means that no one solution will suffice
- the location of bus stops as starting points for visits into the wider WHS could be improved.

7.4.7 In order to publicise the public transport and other non-car routes to Avebury, a leaflet was produced and distributed widely in 2002. Entitled “Go Green To Avebury” the leaflet set out the more environmentally friendly ways of getting to the WHS other than by car, with information on the walking and cycle routes, bus, and train times. The leaflet also publicised the discount offer by the National Trust in Avebury for visitors who arrived at the site by bus.

8.0 PUBLIC ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

8.1 PUBLIC ACCESS

8.1.1 For hundreds of years visitors have been drawn to Avebury by a fascination with the origin and significance of the prehistoric landscape. Today, recognition as a World Heritage Site brings international obligations for effective management. The aim of the National Trust, which owns and manages the main monuments in partnership with English Heritage, is to provide public access in ways consistent with preservation that will ensure future generations can enjoy the same benefits.

Issue 38 The management of public access requires a sustainable balance between public enjoyment and understanding of Avebury and protecting vulnerable parts from damaging levels of visitor pressure.

8.1.2 The Avebury WHS is characterised by extensive areas where natural, cultural and historic assets are primary determinants of the quality of the visitor experience. These are designated as of international, national or local importance, and the visual amenity, ecological interest and archaeological integrity of these locations are typically vulnerable to the effects of visitor pressure. While tourism does stimulate substantial economic activity within the Avebury WHS, there is considerable potential for conflict between the interests of visitor groups and the quality of life of the resident community. In particular, there is the potential for conflict through traffic and car parking congestion.

- 8.1.3 From the above it can be seen that three key issues require careful consideration in developing a balanced strategy for managing appropriate levels of visitors within the Avebury WHS, namely: the quality of the historic environment, the quality of the visitor experience and the quality of life of the local community. As examined in more detail below, balancing these issues is fundamental to the achievement of effective sustainable tourism and is one of the primary objectives of this Management Plan.



Visiting group at West Kennet Long Barrow

8.2 VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Visitor Capacity

Issue 39 *Accurately estimating the annual numbers of visitors to Avebury is crucial for determining the capacity of the WHS and managing it accordingly.*

- 8.2.1 The free and open access to the monuments at Avebury, and the relatively unchannelled nature of visitor movement, is one of the attractive features of the WHS. This makes it difficult to gain an accurate estimate of the number of visitors who come to Avebury each year.
- 8.2.2 The most recent comprehensive survey of visitor numbers is contained within the study undertaken by Stephen Calver of Bournemouth University for the NT between 1996 and 1998. This study utilised data collected by the NT from automatic people counters situated in the Southern Car Park and in the entry point to the farmyard complex. The raw data was calibrated using a range of factors such as weather conditions and group size, and then used to estimate the number of annual visitors. This figure is approximately 350,000. More recently the NT has collected raw data from the automatic people counters located in the same places. These figures are uncalibrated. The data for 1999-2000, indicates an annual figure of 342,000 and for May 2004-5, 276,600.

8.2.3 The AMP98 contained detailed information on the characteristics and nature of their visits, gathered from a visitor survey conducted by ASH Consulting Group in 1997. The information has not been repeated again here. The key issues from this work which are also echoed in the survey and report by Calver (1998) are important considerations for site management:

- visitor numbers in Avebury are very much determined by the time of year and weather conditions. Visitor numbers do peak in the summer, especially during school holidays, weekends and bank holidays (between forty and fifty days a year)
- the majority of visitors stay for just under two hours in Avebury
- there is quite a high ratio of repeat visitors (17%)
- Avebury attracts a consistently high percentage of overseas visitors throughout the year.

8.2.4 There have been two major changes in the provision of facilities for visitors in Avebury since 1998: the opening of the Barn Gallery exhibition (funded by the National Trust and managed as part of Alexander Keiller Museum) in May 2001; and the relocation of the TIC from the Barn to the Chapel in Green Street in 2003. Visitor figures are not yet available to indicate if these changes have had an impact on annual visitor numbers. However, data collected from the entrance fees for the museum and gallery together do show that an extra 10-15,000 people a year are visiting one or both buildings since the opening of the exhibition in 2001. This represents an increase of around 20%. Current figures do not indicate how much of this represents an increase in total visitors to the site. The number of annual visits to the TIC in its new location remains about the same as before at around 27,000.

8.2.5 For many years there has been an agreement amongst agencies involved with the management of the WHS that visitor numbers in Avebury are at capacity levels and should not be actively increased. Hence, an informal policy of non-promotion of Avebury as a specific visitor destination without any commercial advertising has been in place. Over the last few months there has been much debate about the possibility of formalising this policy in the context of the WHS Management Plan. It is clear that unless funds are increased to manage the erosion and visitor routes, any more visitors increased by active promotion will only cause the monuments more harm. The NT, however, is not keen to formalise the policy in case visitor numbers continue to fall and they need to promote the site to keep up income levels. Although it is unlikely to be acceptable to promote the Henge monument without a large increase in resources for maintenance, it may be desirable at times for the Trust to promote parts of the WHS, such as the outlying monuments, to divert visitors from other parts. This issue is closely linked to sustainability, funding available for site management, the need for accurate and up to date visitor figures and the renewal of the LMAs between English Heritage and the National Trust. As visitor numbers do seem to have stabilised below 350,000, and the availability of funding for the next few years is still uncertain, the current situation should be continued for the present.

However, a close eye should be kept on visitor figures. If they increase or the funding available for Avebury is decreased, the situation should be reviewed and the formalisation of the non-promotion policy considered. This issue should also be considered in detail as part of the renewal of the LMAs.

Issue 40 Despite earlier predictions of an increase, visitor numbers seem to have stabilised at below 350,000. If numbers do start to increase again, management within the Avebury WHS must provide a positive response to this trend.

8.2.6 It is interesting that Calver's 1998 report also predicted that visitor numbers were likely to increase (in line with national trends) by 2 to 3%, with figures for Avebury exceeding 400,000 a year by 2002. The AMP98 also predicted that visitor numbers were likely to increase. However, annual figures appear to have stabilised and dropped rather than increased. Clearly we need more data for more recent years to confirm the trends, and the regular collection of this data is essential for good management. Positive visitor management is required in case visitor numbers do increase in the future.

Issue 41 The implementation of the Stonehenge Project, proposing a new visitor centre and road tunnel, could have an impact on visitor numbers in the Avebury part of the WHS.

8.2.7 At the time of writing the outcome of the 2004 Public Inquiry into the proposals for the A303 Stonehenge improvement scheme is awaited. A Public Inquiry may also be held to consider the plans for the development of a new visitor centre facility at Countess East, just outside of the Stonehenge part of the WHS. If these two proposals go ahead, the way in which Stonehenge is accessed by its current 800,000 annual visitors will change dramatically. As the two sites are similar attractions, this may have an impact on the pattern of visiting to Avebury. For example, more coach tours could come to Avebury rather than Stonehenge. The situation needs to be carefully monitored to mitigate adverse impacts on Avebury.

Security and access to the guardianship monuments

Issue 42 Recent years have seen a rapid and continuing growth in the use of Avebury for spiritual worship.

8.2.8 At Summer Solstice, although numbers are nothing like those visiting Stonehenge, the site is now visited by far more people than was the case even five years ago. Whilst a significant number do witness the dawn on June 21st and take part in the various pagan rituals, many more come to Avebury to enjoy a party atmosphere over what is often a long weekend or extended midweek break.

8.2.9 During the three years to 2004 there was a marked increase in the numbers of visitors coming to Avebury at other pagan festivals – Winter Solstice, Autumn and Vernal Equinox, Imbolc (February), Beltane (May), Lammastide (August), Samhain (November) and also at full moon throughout the year. The increase in numbers has prompted one local druid to state that numbers attending his ritual at Spring Equinox 2004 were greater than those attending the ceremony at Summer Solstice ten years previously. There is no sign of this trend abating. The increase in numbers may well be influenced by the opening of Stonehenge by English Heritage for a limited period over Solstice, as has been the practice since 2000. The sustainability of accommodating large numbers at Solstice needs to be examined in detail.

Issue 43 During the Solstice period, the conservation of the monuments and the freedom of all visitors to enjoy them, as well as safety and security issues, are of paramount importance.

8.2.10 Most visitors over the Solstice period respect the site and indeed some assist the NT with litter clearance and general site management. However the lighting of fires, apart from obvious dangers to people, livestock and property nearby, can damage buried archaeology. The placing of candles and nightlights, particularly in West Kennet Long Barrow, causes significant damage from smoke and molten wax. Noisy drumming at night and disorderly behaviour by a minority causes stress and inconvenience to local people who feel threatened by what they see as invasions of large numbers of people many of whom have a different lifestyle to their own. The NT do communication with local pagans and druids groups during the Solstice planning stage and throughout the year. A volunteering group called the “Avebury Guardians” has been formed which helps to warden and monitor the site over the Solstice and other busy periods.

8.2.11 No direct restriction is placed on access to the Henge which is open to the public 24 hours every day. However, overnight parking and camping by visitors is not permitted on Trust land under National Trust bye-laws. A balance has to be struck between access to Avebury, the legitimate concerns of local residents and the protection of the monuments and the underlying archaeology.

8.3 THE PHYSICAL IMPACTS ON THE SITE

Public rights of way

8.3.1 The WHS is relatively well-served with footpaths and other public rights of way. These are largely better suited to long-distance routes (for example, the Ridgeway National Trail which terminates at Overton Hill), but they do not always provide an obvious visitor-circulation pattern around the WHS. The National Trust has published six of the “Walking Around Avebury” leaflets containing information about short walks around the site, including Windmill Hill and West Kennet Long Barrow. In addition, the National Trust has created areas of open space access and permissive paths to improve pedestrian links between the monuments. Permissive paths have also been created (under CSS) elsewhere in the WHS, proving circular walks in the wider landscape. In 2002 a dozen new wooden footpath signs were erected in the WHS, with walking distances to key monuments marked on. However, there is still scope for more new signposts and a further review of rights of way within the WHS and exploring the potential for new routes to be established.

Issue 44 *Damage is evident on rights of way within the WHS which are used by a combination of pedestrian and motorised vehicles, and where these routes pass through areas of chalk grassland vegetation.*

8.3.2 In 1997 a survey was carried out of the condition of the rights of way network and its susceptibility to visitor and vehicular pressure (a component of the ASH study). The survey was undertaken as a rapid assessment of the current situation as a baseline for future monitoring and the assessment of trends. Out of the 81 sample areas of rights of way (transects) inspected, 14 were classified as rutted, and 15 had strong evidence of conspicuous surface deterioration. The remainder were in reasonable condition. The rights of way within the WHS which were in the poorest condition included: sections of the Ridgeway and Green Street, sections of rights of way leading to Windmill Hill and Silbury Hill.

8.3.3 A broad conclusion from this work is that in situations where rights of way support multiple uses (walking, horse riding, cycling, agricultural vehicles and off-road vehicles) and in situations where paths follow routes through chalk grassland vegetation, the route is more susceptible to erosion. These are typical problems for countryside management in most areas of Britain. As a corollary to this, in situations where rights of way follow routes through improved agricultural grassland and where use is restricted to pedestrians only, paths are typically in better condition. This is principally as the vegetation fabric of the path is more resistant and has a higher carrying capacity than paths vegetated with slow growing chalk grassland vegetation.

8.3.4 There has been a particular problem in recent years with the damage caused to the Ridgeway by off-road vehicles. Measures are being considered to restrict vehicular access and these are outlined in the recently published draft management strategy for the Ridgeway for 2005-10 (National Trails Office 2005).

Visitor pressure within the Henge monument

Issue 45 Within the Avebury Henge monument, significant effects of visitor pressure are evident and unacceptable.

8.3.5 The 1999 monument condition survey confirmed the extent of damage by visitor erosion to earthwork monuments in the WHS. As expected, the main monuments affected were the key visitor attractions with open access (except Silbury).

8.3.6 Visitor pressure at the Henge monument is typically evidenced by the erosion of vegetation on the Henge bank, and consists mainly of a network of desire lines and sheet erosion. The condition survey assessed the Henge in November 1999 and recorded visitor damage in all four quadrants of the monument on the earthworks as well as around some of the standing stones.

8.3.7 Visitor pressure within the Avebury Henge presents the following principal visitor management issues:

- in situations such as along the crest of Henge banks, the formation of desire lines by visitors has become an important element of circulation within the Henge by visitors
- in other situations, desire lines have developed which are of more secondary importance to visitor circulation
- in situations where primary access to the Henge either concentrates visitor pressure or encourages ascent of steepest Henge bank slopes, the development of sheet erosion typically occurs.

8.3.8 There has been a long history of erosion control and repair work carried out on the Henge monument. For at least thirty years routine repair work has been carried out on eroded paths and areas of wear. The NT recognises the fact that visitor numbers have long surpassed the optimum levels for the best care of the monuments and since 1994 the Trust has undertaken regular erosion repairs. However, there has still been some deterioration since 1994. More resources, archaeological input and more intensive erosion management (and understanding of capacity) is needed. The Trust is committed to undertaking a range of agreed capital works and regular maintenance measures, including those below, which are detailed in the schedule of works likely to accompany the new LMA documents.

1. the banks in each quadrant of the Henge should be closed to visitors in rotation for six winter months. This will allow grass recovery and an opportunity for more intensive scar repair/reseeding on a four-year cycle
2. repair erosion scars, using fresh turf
3. protecting the surface from erosion while turf regenerates
4. directing a significant number of visitors to an alternative route
5. consolidating existing paths to contain erosion within present limits
6. creating alternative routes in better positions or gradients, restoring the original pathways with turf.



Windmill Hill. Photo: English Heritage

Other Guardianship monuments

Issue 46 Conservation plans and environmental carrying capacity assessments should be carried out for all the major monuments, incorporating the archaeological interests as a basis for sustainable visitor management.

8.3.9 The detailed recommendations made in the 1999 monument condition survey for dealing with visitor erosion in the Henge, West Kennet Long Barrow and Silbury Hill should be actioned as part of the development of conservation statements for these guardianship sites. In addition, a firm handle on visitor numbers is required in order to assess carrying capacity, especially at the heavily visited remote monuments such as the West Kennet Long Barrow. These two aspects should be included in the conservation statements under preparation for the monuments included in the Local Management Agreements.

8.4 VISITOR CIRCULATION AND DISPERSAL

Issue 47 Consideration should be given to the dispersal of visitor pressure and the location of alternative or additional visitor orientation and interpretation facilities and car parking areas at a distance from the village/henge area.

8.4.1 The core issue for improved management and interpretation at Avebury is visitor circulation and dispersal around the WHS. Currently there is a relative lack of visitor dispersal, resulting in an intensification of use in a small number of locations on peak days and the reliance on one main centralised car park. The general consequences of the lack of visitor dispersal within the Avebury WHS are:

- intensification of use and damage to the monuments
- reduction in visitor appreciation and enjoyment
- reduction in conservation awareness and commitment
- reduction in quality of life of residential and business community.



8.4.2 The Tourist Information Centre in Avebury, managed by Kennet District Council and networked to the English Tourist Board since 1990, plays an important role in disseminating information to visitors and in generally assisting in the dispersal of visitors to other places of interest in the area. The Centre, since 2003 located in the United Reformed Chapel in Green Street, should be retained as an important facility within the WHS.

Visitor facilities

8.4.3 There is currently a dearth of relatively cheap and informal accommodation in the vicinity of Avebury, particularly camp sites. Given the relatively large proportion of educational visits made to the area, there may be scope for improving the provision of informal facilities. This may have the additional benefit of reducing the amount of “unofficial” camping which occurs in the area.

Car parking

8.4.4 Section 7.2 has already outlined that parking is a key issue for visitor management in the Avebury WHS. Currently the main Avebury car park is close to the village and the south-west quadrant of the Henge. Visitors arrive at Avebury High Street, adjacent to the entry point for visitor facilities around the Barn. The parking issue has several implications for visitor management of particular relevance to the circulation of visitors:

- the present main car park serves the predominant interest in visiting the main Henge monument and associated attractions such as the stone circles, Avebury Manor and the Alexander Keiller Museum. However, the main car park intensifies this interest, with its resultant pressures on the village and the pressures on the Henge as a whole and on specific routes and spots within it. The consequence of this is that the considerable interest provided by features within the wider WHS are under-utilised by visitors. There is also the potential damage to the Anglo-Saxon remains underlying the existing car park to consider

- a general consequence of reliance upon a single, centralised main car park to accommodate the majority of car parking within the WHS is that the bulk of visitor activity is focussed upon Avebury village and the Avebury Henge monument. This has resulted in the development of a network of desire-lines which typically channels visitors along specific routes within the Henge.

8.5 INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

8.5.1 Avebury fulfils an important role in formal and informal education. Currently there is no single staff member whose job is solely involved in education needs in Avebury. In the meantime, the setting up of a small education working group of experienced individuals to embrace all aspects of the educational potential of Avebury, would be extremely valuable.

Issue 48. The existence of the museum collections at the heart of the WHS is a key feature to be maintained in any future management, interpretation and education strategies.

Formal Education

- 8.5.2 The Alexander Keiller Museum is used, free of charge, by approximately 6,000 individuals each year visiting in formal educational groups. The majority of groups visiting the museum are studying the archaeology of Avebury, although the more recent history of the site, geography and tourism are also studied. The following two aspects which are particularly a feature of these sites offer scope for formal teaching.

Time depth

- 8.5.3 Archaeological sites often offer an extended time depth for study but the Avebury monuments offer a particularly extended and complete chronology, from traces of early people in the Mesolithic period to the Anglo-Saxon and later periods. Even within the Neolithic period Avebury is unusual in offering the chance to study sites of different dates within the period, allowing consideration of change through time. The emphasis on chronology within the National Curriculum in England is particularly important for the site, and this is emphasised in the Alexander Keiller Museum.



Excavated artefacts in the Alexander Keiller Museum

Range and Complexity

- 8.5.4 The monuments at Avebury are complex, both in terms of how they were developed individually and how they were linked in terms of construction and use. Contemporary with them is a large body of evidence relating to settlement, use of the landscape and past environments, all of which are used in the consideration of past societies in a formal educational context.

Informal Education

Avebury is particularly of value in its attraction to a wide range of visitors, giving to many their first experience of British prehistory. The scope for providing visitors with information to satisfy a developing interest in Avebury, or in prehistory or archaeology in general is enormous.

The close association of sites with the archaeological material derived from them in an on-site museum is very unusual within the UK, especially associated with a prehistoric site. The attraction of Avebury as a site, particularly for families, allows scope for developing interests in archaeology and prehistory, focusing on the authentic objects from the past, in the context of a museum.

- 8.5.6 Both the National Trust and English Heritage are strongly committed to the development of further educational opportunities and for the better educational use of the historic environment in general. The potential for educational use of the Avebury monuments should be further developed in order to reinforce the conservation message. The value of educational resources embodied in a site such as Avebury should be considered comprehensively in conjunction with similar sites like Stonehenge and the rest of prehistoric Wessex, together with the museums at Salisbury and Devizes. There is scope for widening the role of education in Avebury and to focus on World Heritage as a particular theme. A WHS education project was piloted in the Stonehenge part of the WHS, working with pupils from a local school. In the Spring Term of 2005 the project has been extended to the Avebury part of the WHS working with around 100 pupils from three local primary schools. It is hoped that the education project can be continued and extended to include both primary and secondary schools across the country.

Interpretation

- 8.5.7 In the context of the Avebury WHS, interpretation is the process of communicating to people the significance of the site so that they enjoy it more, understand it more, and develop a positive attitude to its conservation. The tools of interpretation include mechanisms which serve to educate and inform visitors about the area. This includes elements such as publications, guided walks, information panels and signage.
- 8.5.8 An assessment of interpretation provision in Avebury was conducted in 1997 as part of the visitor management assessment (ASH Visitor Management Report 1997). It concluded that there is much potential to strengthen the contribution made by interpretation to the enjoyment of visitors and the development of sustainable visitor management. It recommended the writing of an interpretation plan for the whole of the Avebury WHS. In particular, the interpretation plan must provide a framework for stronger integration between the various organisations and interests involved with promotion and management of the WHS.

Issue 49 Interpretation has a great deal of potential at Avebury. In particular, there is a need to implement recommendations made in the Interpretation Plan of 2001.

8.5.9 In 2001 a consultant was commissioned to develop a strategic Interpretation Plan for the WHS (Hosker 2001). Its function was to provide an overview of issues and the current position and illustrate good practice with examples from other sites. The document included proposals for interpretation along with the co-ordination of walking, cycling, public transport and information provision. In this way interpretation is set in a wider context of visitor behaviour and management. Recommendations were made for projects which could be implemented in the short, medium and long term. Some of the short-term projects have been implemented between 2001 and 2003.



The Barn Gallery Exhibition opened in 2001

Current position

Issue 50 There is more scope for the better presentation of the outlying monuments and improvements to the interpretation of the WHS as a whole, and the landscape in particular.

8.5.10 The exhibition in the Barn (opened in 2001), the existing museum, leaflets and introductory panels cover the village and Henge area quite well (though currently there are no on-site panels actually in the Henge area). There are also limited events, guided walks and schools activities. In addition, there is some existing interpretation of the outlying monuments and new panels have been produced for the Long Barrow, Silbury Hill, and The Sanctuary. A new panel funded by Defra on the path up to West Kennet Long Barrow interprets the landscape around this monument which has been put into a CSS agreement. The Trust has produced a 'Welcome to Avebury' leaflet and new guidebook. Thus the history of village and Henge area, plus other wider themes are covered by the Trust. Visitor research conducted by Bournemouth University 1996 – 1998 and the Trust's own audit of 2000 provide good pointers to the information and interpretive

needs of existing visitors. However, there is more scope for the better presentation of the outlying monuments and improvements to the interpretation of the WHS as a whole, and the landscape in particular.

8.5.11 ***Current Difficulties***

- some visitors may miss out on what is available at present: people who don't go to the museum; repeat visitors; casual visitors to the Henge and outlying monuments; some walkers and cyclists
- to avoid increasing visitor numbers any new interpretative material or events need to be either adding value for existing visitors or be outside of the main visitor patterns
- the difficulty of communicating certain messages to visitors – nature conservation, landscape history etc. are not the main reasons people visit Avebury. 70% of visitors currently come to see the stone circle
- how to find out about and influence messages coming from other sources such as the media, organisers of holidays and tours, writers of guidebooks and tourism officers
- there is scope for improving the provision of interpretation for visitors to outlying monuments such as The Sanctuary and West Kennet Long Barrow.

8.5.12 The Ridgeway National Trail has a code of respect for users which appears on some publications and on the back of the main orientation panels at major sites. This was agreed by the main agencies involved plus user groups and landowners. Similarly, Hadrian's Wall 'Every Footstep Counts' took eighteen months to develop and achieve ownership from all the agencies involved. This is a ten point code of respect like a country code for a WHS. There is one main leaflet and the artwork is also used on a bookmark and set of coasters for use in local pubs and restaurants. Accommodation providers and other organisations use a summary version of the code on their websites and in publicity. A similar code of respect for Avebury would help to raise awareness of the need for sustainable use and management of the site.

8.6 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AT AVEBURY

Issue 51 The development of a Limits of Acceptable Change model (LAC) as an integrated monitoring tool is vital to the successful management of the WHS.

8.6.1 The key to the successful management of public access in the WHS is the establishment of an integrated monitoring programme, capable of identifying where visitor pressure is potentially damaging to the monuments and landscape and the extent to which management action has

been successful in tackling the problems. It is recommended that the technique used to monitor environmental impacts is based on agreed minimum environmental standards for each monument or part of the WHS, a definition of carrying capacity and vulnerability. This approach is known as Limits of Acceptable Change. An LAC model is considered a potentially valuable framework for monitoring the sustainability of tourism activity with the Avebury WHS. The LAC process has developed since the 1970s from formative work undertaken in the United States to quantify recreational carrying capacity in the National Parks, and is currently being used to aid the implementation of the Hadrian's Wall WHS Management Plan. A more detailed description of how this could be developed for Avebury was set out in the AMP98 section 18.3

Issue 52 Sustainability at Avebury can only be achieved through the partnership of all individuals and organisations involved, and their interaction in all decision-making. In the long-term, there is a need to change patterns of consumption and behaviour towards the environment.

8.6.2 Concern about the sustainability of tourism has arisen from increasing awareness of depletion and degradation of natural and cultural resources at global and local levels, and the implications this has for maintaining the quality of the historic environment. Concern about the sustainability of tourism at heritage sites is reflected in a number of publications produced from the 1990s onwards.

8.6.3 A widely held definition of sustainability is the one presented at the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development and in a report of that Commission titled 'Our Common Future'. This states that sustainability can be defined as:

"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

In addition, and of particular relevance to visitor and traffic management within the Avebury WHS, is the EU 5th Action Programme on the Environment, "Towards Sustainability". This extends the definition of sustainability to include the need for modifying society's attitudes towards the environment, and changing patterns of consumption and behaviour towards the environment. This identifies the fact that sustainability is only achievable through participation by all individuals and organisations concerned, and implies the need for partnership, interaction and involvement in decision-making to achieve sustainability.

Towards an assessment of carrying capacity

Issue 53 An improved understanding of the vulnerability and capacity of the WHS to tolerate visitor pressure is fundamental to achievement of sustainable tourism.

8.6.4 No detailed assessment of carrying capacity has been undertaken yet at Avebury although it should be a priority for the future. However, the vulnerability of different parts of the WHS to the effects of visitor pressure and the likely need for positive management intervention was examined in 1997 (ASH Visitor Management Study). This work was described in AMP98 in table 2 and figure 5. It concluded that in order to understand carrying capacity of the WHS three elements need to be assessed for their vulnerability to the effects of visitor pressure:

- quality of the local environment (including the archaeological sites)
- quality of life of the local community
- quality of visitor experience.

The sustainability of tourism within the Avebury WHS

Issue 54 There is a requirement for a more sustainable way of managing visitors to secure the primary objective of management: the long-term preservation of the monuments. Some aspects of tourism are unsustainable in the long-term, especially if visitor numbers increase in years to come.

8.6.5 The Department of Employment Task Force 1991 report identified a number of circumstances which, taken together, are likely to indicate non-sustainable use of heritage tourism sites. These are as follows:

- overcrowding where the quality of the visitor's experience may be reduced

It is likely that in many locations within the WHS current visitor levels are not sustainable on peak days. Results from the 1997 visitor surveys have indicated that for certain locations overcrowding is likely to be an issue, especially within Avebury village and the Henge monument.

- traffic congestion caused by visitors' cars

The traffic assessments undertaken (Section 7.2) have demonstrated the extent to which existing car parking provision reaches saturation during peak periods, thereby causing congestion. This is an issue of particular concern within Avebury village and the Henge monument.

This is an issue which will require careful treatment in future management and development of the Avebury WHS, as current forecasts identify a continuing increase in the numbers of car-borne visitors to heritage tourism sites.

- wear and tear, with a few popular sites typically suffering from erosion.

Under certain conditions, visitor pressure results in significant degradation of the fabric of locations within the Avebury WHS. The results of the 1999 monument condition survey confirm resource degradation resulting from excess visitor pressure as a key management issue.

- inappropriate development

There has been little development in response to tourism activity within the Avebury WHS. The development which has taken place has tended to be of a small scale and associated with existing developed areas. However, if the provision of visitor infrastructure is considered as a form of development in within the Avebury WHS, there is considerable room for improvement. This is especially so in terms of developing a more strategic approach to the provision of parking and site interpretation. Current parking is not considered to be satisfactory in terms of siting and capacity.

- conflicts with the local community

As perceived by the local community, tourism has an adverse effect on its members for a substantial period of the year, especially in terms of overcrowding, traffic congestion, competition for parking and road safety. Future tourism management must seek to eliminate conflict between visitors and the local community, particularly during seasonal peak periods.

8.6.6 Priority concerns for the development of more sustainable tourism at Avebury are considered below. They comprise four principal elements of planning for sustainable tourism in rural areas. Achieving a balance between these four elements is desirable in order to achieve the primary aim of sustainability in the Avebury WHS: the long-term preservation of the prehistoric monuments.

1. Reducing the general impact of tourism on the historic environment through visitors being encouraged to use non-polluting and energy-saving means of enjoying the WHS such as cycling, walking and use of public transport.

2. Maintaining the quality of the local environment of the WHS through accepting limits to the numbers of visitors that some areas can handle, and taking steps to reduce visitor pressure through effective visitor management, together with raising awareness of conservation issues pertinent to sustainable use of the World Heritage Site amongst visitors and local people.

3. Improving the quality of life for the local community by involving local people in decisions about the management of tourism and reconciling conflicts between the interests of the resident community within the World Heritage Site and those of the visiting community.

4. Improving the enjoyment of visitors through the provision of the highest quality visitor facilities and interpretation, increasing the levels of understanding of the character, quality and conservation needs of the area.

9.0 ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

9.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH IN THE WHS

Issue 55 The state of our knowledge of the Avebury cultural landscape is incomplete. There is much potential for the discovery of new sites and for enhancing our understanding of the known.



Discovery of buried stone, Beckhampton Avenue 2003



Excavations in the Cove in 2003

9.1.1 Although the important archaeological features in the area have been recognised and studied, the cultural landscape of the Avebury WHS is not particularly well understood or documented. The extant earthworks are easily recognised and can be planned for and managed. However, a wide range of archaeological features and sites exists in the area, the evidence for which is less tangible and more elusive. There is a strong possibility of the discovery or rediscovery of as yet unknown archaeological sites and monuments. There is much potential for the discovery of new sites especially from the air. This is partially because of the flattening of many sites by ploughing over the years and the continued use of the landscape predominantly for arable agriculture.

The success of the use of aerial survey in this landscape is demonstrated by the results from English Heritage's (formerly RCHME) Avebury Mapping Project (1999). A thorough examination and transcription of all aerial photographic coverage of the WHS area as part of their National Mapping Programme resulted in the discovery of a number of previously unknown sites and landscape features, including ploughed-out barrows, enclosures and parts of field systems. Many new sites were recorded and several known sites extended in area. In total the new discoveries represent an increase in the number of records (NMR) of 25% in the WHS, indicating an average increase of 1.7 new sites per square kilometre.

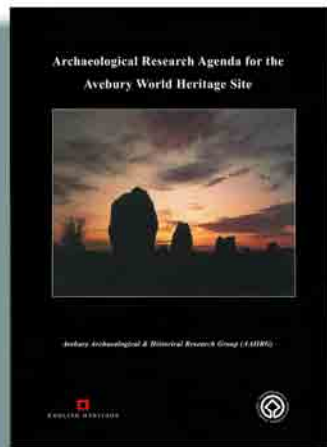
- 9.1.2 Since 1998 the prospection for and investigation of new sites in the Avebury WHS has been extremely successful, demonstrating the importance of research in the area. The WCC SMR now indicates there are 383 archaeological sites (excluding findspots and scatters) in the WHS. This represents an increase of around 20% since 1998. In particular, the sites discovered and investigated as part of the Negotiating Avebury Project (Gillings, Pollard, Wheatley 2003) has transformed the understanding of the prehistoric landscape with the re-discovery of the Beckhampton Avenue and other related features in Longstones Field, Beckhampton. The confirmation of the existence of Falkner's Circle and investigations of the line of West Kennet Avenue have also been valuable.

Issue 56 Management of the cultural landscape requires a knowledge-based understanding that reflects past and existing research agenda, and informs future ones. In the Avebury WHS there is a close relationship between archaeological research and the management of the landscape.

- 9.1.3 These issues demonstrate the strong necessity for continued academic input and a research framework for the future management of the WHS. Research is essential to informed understanding, management and interpretation. It is difficult to distinguish between academic and management led research, as all research can have management potential and implications. Because of the elusive nature of many buried archaeological features, leading to surprise discoveries, it is often difficult to know the management implications until the research has been completed. The extent to which further research is required to help with specific management issues or problems needs to be examined further over the next few years. The continued updating of the Research Agenda is an essential task which should assist in addressing these issues.

9.2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AGENDA

Issue 57 Archaeological investigations into the resource will be more sustainable if guided by a Research Agenda designed to improve understanding and allow improved management.



9.2.1 The Research Agenda, published by AAHRG in May 2001 draws together contributions from around twenty specialists (all members of AAHRG) to provide a framework for future research within the WHS. It has been produced in response to the English Heritage initiative for the development of regional and period research frameworks in England. UNESCO and ICOMOS also suggest and encourage the development of research programmes for WH sites (Feilden and Jokilehto 1998 section 4.2.5). However, this document for Avebury represents the first formal agenda for a World Heritage site. A framework document for the Stonehenge part of the WHS has been drafted and will be published in 2005.

9.2.2 AMP98 took into account the first draft Research Agenda (AAHRG 1997) and heavily emphasised the need for ongoing archaeological research, the further development of the research agenda, and for sustainability of research methods. The Plan also highlights the high potential for further research and the close link between research and cultural heritage management in the Avebury WHS.

9.2.3 The Research Agenda is primarily concerned with academic and scientific research issues rather than management issues, and in this respect the Research Agenda and Management Plan are two separate documents. However, the two are designed to be closely intertwined and together they comprise a “universal framework” as described in Frameworks for Our Past (Olivier 1996, 5).

The sustainability of research

9.2.4 It is essential for the long-term preservation of the WHS that all uses of the site are sustainable. Therefore, like any other land use, research has to be undertaken on a sustainable basis. In the context of research, sustainability can be defined as meeting today’s need for improved knowledge and understanding of the WHS without jeopardising the ability of future generations to do the same.

9.2.5 Advances in knowledge rely on measures taken now to preserve enough physical and documentary evidence to allow future investigations and discoveries to improve understanding which can be passed on. The objective of all research should be to aim at preserving the maximum rather than the minimum sample required to sustain future research. The Research Agenda addresses the issue of sustainability (section 1) and encourages the use of non-destructive prospection techniques prior to excavation and “experimental” techniques. The Research Agenda should help ensure that a balanced and sustainable level of research is achieved by providing guidelines for research, mechanisms for consultations, and the co-ordination of resources.

Aims and objectives

9.2.6 The general aim of the Research Agenda is to:

actively encourage sustainable levels of research into all periods and all relevant aspects of the WHS and its near environs, in order to improve archaeological understanding, to better inform other academics, and to allow informed archaeological resource management to take place.

Detailed objectives to meet these needs include:

- recognise the importance of appropriate research in the WHS
- identify gaps in our understanding and promote the appropriate research topics and methodologies to fill the gaps
- support research into all periods and all relevant aspects of the WHS and its environs, ensuring the conduct and methods of research are sustainable and compatible with the identification and protection of WHS values
- ensure research is conducted in accordance with the objectives of the Management Plan
- promote a policy of preserving maximum rather than minimum remains (although some excavation may be desirable), encouraging the use of non-invasive techniques
- publish and disseminate existing information and ongoing research results to the land managers, the public and the archaeological community
- encourage the use of the most appropriate techniques for the successful investigation of the priority research areas.

9.2.7 The Agenda is principally aimed at people intending to conduct research, individuals and agencies concerned with conservation and management in the area, and all with a desire to understand more about Avebury’s past. However, it is considered that the Research Agenda will only be effective if widely disseminated to the academic community via conventional publication and electronic access. The whole of the text is presented on the internet on the Kennet District Council and English Heritage web sites.

Methodology

9.2.8 The Avebury Research Agenda is presented in line with the definition and structure recommended in Frameworks For Our Past (Olivier 1996). The Research Agenda comprises: a resource assessment (part 2: a description of the archaeological resource and statement of the current state of knowledge); a list of gaps in that knowledge and the potential of the resource to answer questions (part 3); and a statement setting out priorities (part 4) and methods (part 5). Because of the complexity of the palimpsest of archaeological features in the WHS, and the difficulties of dealing with the transitional periods, a holistic and diachronic approach is used. Thus, themes have been identified as priority research areas, whose investigation will improve understanding of most chronological periods.

9.2.9 A number of AAHRG members with specific expertise took certain of these periods to compose resource assessments and identify gaps in our knowledge. Data from the Wiltshire SMR was made available for each period. This part of the document was arranged by period from the Lower Palaeolithic to the end of the Medieval period (c. AD 1500) together with an assessment of the palaeo-environmental data for the area.

9.2.10 The authors highlighted lacunae and research objectives in relation to a number of themes chosen by AAHRG:

- settlement and land use
- environment
- chronology
- ceremony, ritual and religion
- engineering, craft and technology
- people (diet and health)
- social organisation, economy and subsistence
- transport and communication.

9.2.11 The concept of archaeological significance is a dynamic one, which will change with the times and with advances in archaeological method and theory. The Research Agenda will continue to evolve and be updated on a regular basis. It is recognised that aspects of the Agenda are incomplete and that there is scope for it making it more comprehensive. For example, it was intended to include sections on the post-medieval period and on absolute dating methods. Other sections which may be considered for inclusion in the future include topics such as sacred landscapes, cosmology, and the impact of 20th-century interventions in the WHS. It is intended

that the AAHRG group will continue to exist to pursue the implementation and further development of this document. There is a need for continued academic input into the future management of the WHS: the continuation of AAHRG is an essential tool in ensuring the co-ordination and sustainability of research at Avebury.

9.3 PRIORITIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

9.3.1 Part 3 of the Research Agenda sets out a number of research priorities for each period. A number of important research needs have emerged as common to all periods, such as: the potential value of re-examination of existing collections; the need for more radiocarbon dates; the need for more detailed environmental sequences; the need to recover well-dated ceramic sequences; the need to better understand transitional periods. For the Neolithic and Bronze Age in particular key research work needs help refine our understanding of the sequences and phases of key monuments, and to locate contemporary settlements. For later periods, work needs to focus on understanding settlement morphology and the relationship between fields, settlements and the older ceremonial monuments.

9.3.2 The Research Agenda recognises that fieldwalking (surface collection) has and continues to make a valuable contribution to our understanding of past activities areas. Since the publication of the Research Agenda in 2001, several meetings of AAHRG have focused on the need to have a standardised methodology for future fieldwalking projects which will enable results to be compared across the Avebury WHS and other related prehistoric landscapes such as Stonehenge. Between 2001 and 2003 a policy document on fieldwalking methodology in the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS was drafted and consulted on. It is intended that the final document (September 2003) will be written into future management plans, research frameworks and fieldwork guidance.

9.4 THE GIS DATABASE

Issue 58 The provision of a comprehensive database of all cultural and environmental information in the WHS is essential as a basis for the conduct of research and for management purposes.

9.4.1 In 1996 English Heritage set out to develop a GIS which can be interrogated to aid the management, research, and planning, and development control in the Avebury landscape. In order to fully understand the landscape context of the WHS, GIS development has been focused well beyond the current boundary of the WHS. A wide study area, incorporating 13 by 12 kms (from co-ordinates SU 402000, 163000 to 415000, 175000), was chosen for the project.

This was necessary to enable the cultural and natural resources captured by the WHS designation to be set within the wider historical and physical development of the landscape. Subsequent WHS-specific analyses and proposals can therefore be seen to be based upon a sound understanding of relevant forces for change and management issues within the wider landscape.

Issue 59 To be used successfully, the GIS database will need to be constantly developed, maintained and updated.

9.4.2 Since 1998 the GIS for Avebury has been further developed by English Heritage and the WHS Officer with additional data such as SM constraint areas and other designations for conservation. Existing data relating to archaeology, land use and landownership has been updated. The database has been a valuable tool, especially in the assessment of archaeological areas to target for reversion to grassland via agri-environmental grant schemes. It has also been useful for the purposes of assessing the potential impact of new developments in the area. In one case a viewshed analysis (Figure 7) produced from the GIS was used to help win an appeal against the location of a visually intrusive telecommunications mast.

9.4.3 As reviewed in the earlier sections of this Plan, the Avebury WHS is complex and diverse, serving many different needs and subject to a variety of pressures and threats. The management of the WHS, therefore, needs to be supported by a range of information from many different sources and needs to be easily accessible to the managers, agencies and the public. The GIS will assist in these areas and its great advantage is that it gives access to a wide range of data sets held by a range of agencies. It will allow the data sets to be integrated and shared, thus promoting collaboration, and a more holistic management approach to the WHS. GIS databases are widely used now in similar applications by local authorities, research agencies, the National Parks, and others involved in countryside and landscape management.

Main benefits of GIS for Avebury

9.4.4 The main benefits of having a GIS for Avebury are in the areas of: data management; planning and development control; landscape management and monitoring; research; increasing public enjoyment and understanding. The advantage of GIS is that it can improve our ability to:

- visualise the composition and condition of the landscape features
- combine, integrate and compare different data sets
- understand better the archaeological and environmental resource
- model changes in the environment
- monitor the effects of management actions.

Future use and development of the Avebury GIS

9.4.5 The main areas of potential for the implementation of the WHS Management Plan are:

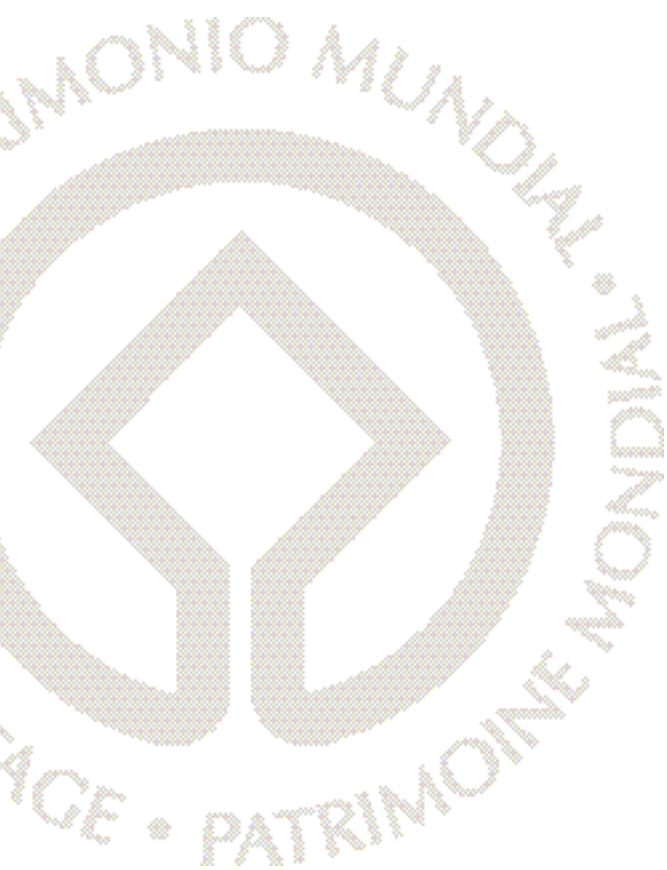
1. Computer-based visibility analysis. Intervisibility studies and viewshed analyses of the key sites and monuments in the WHS can contribute to development control issues, and assist in the mitigation of potential damage to the setting of the WHS. These studies could also contribute to a better understanding of the concept of “setting” for a monument or complex of monuments. Moreover, these studies can be of great help in the definition of a buffer zone the WHS (Section 5.5).
2. GIS could assist in the planning of archaeological field surveys, looking at the distribution of sites according to land cover, altitude etc.
3. GIS could contribute to the development of sustainable visitor and traffic management, through monitoring change, and the generation of visitor and traffic flow models.
4. GIS has much potential to facilitate the development of a Limits of Acceptable Change model.
5. GIS could assist in the monitoring of landscape change and mapping and the effects of management actions. GIS is a powerful tool for assessing potential impacts on the landscape and the development of strategies for mitigation.
6. GIS could assist in the formulation and implementation of archaeological research strategies.
7. GIS can provide a mechanism for the analysis, generation and testing of archaeological hypotheses, for example: by modelling the relationships between distinct surface scatters across a landscape.
8. The GIS could be made available on site to visitors and students/researchers as an aid to interpretation and education.





West Kennet Avenue

Elevated view looking north towards Avebury



PART THREE: MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY

Following on from the description and evaluation of the WHS, this part of the Management Plan sets out the objectives for the effective management of the WHS. In total twenty-six objectives (A-Z) have been identified and are highlighted in the text, sometimes supported by additional text. The first section (10.0) outlines the overall long-term objectives for the effective management of the site for the next thirty years. It sets the context for the more detailed medium and short-term objectives and strategy outlined in sections 11.0 to 15.0. The implementation of the strategies for the next six years are detailed in the Action Plan outlined in Part Four.

10.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE A

Maintain recognition of the Avebury WHS as a very special place for which special treatment should be given by government departments, agencies and landowners, in order to safeguard the WHS and its prehistoric and historic environmental assets for the benefit of succeeding generations.

Avebury has achieved international recognition for the importance of its prehistoric sites and their remarkable survival into today's landscape. The primary management objective is to conserve the prehistoric monuments and their distinctive landscape. This will sometimes require taking measures appropriate for the international status of the WHS. It will also depend on the development of commitment to the site's long-term future and the maintenance of a partnership approach among all involved with its management. It will be necessary to maintain an effective framework and monitoring system for the protection and management of the WHS, including regular reviews of the effectiveness of the Management Plan.

OBJECTIVE B

To manage the Avebury part of the WHS in accordance with the obligations set out in the World Heritage Convention.

The obligations of the UK Government are described in detail in the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. The primary management objectives for Avebury which derive from the general obligations of the WH Convention are: to protect, conserve and present the World Heritage values of the site; and transmit to future generations its cultural heritage of outstanding universal value.

OBJECTIVE C

Ensure the sustainability of all uses of the WHS.

All individuals and agencies involved must make sure that meeting our current needs for improved understanding (research), management, enjoyment, facilities, development, agriculture and transport, does not jeopardise the ability of future generations to do the same. In many ways this will entail the need to modify society's attitude towards the environment by changing patterns of consumption and behaviour. In particular, environmentally friendly transport policies are needed to reduce the impact of traffic and parking on the WHS.

11.0 THE MONUMENTS AND THEIR LANDSCAPE SETTING

OBJECTIVE D

Continue to assess and monitor the condition and vulnerability of all monuments in order to inform management decisions.

Issues 1, 2, 3, 7, 14, 15

STRATEGY

- D.1 Undertake repeat condition surveys of all sites and monuments on a regular basis. Repeat surveys should be based on the methodology already established in the initial 1999 baseline survey, but also utilise and incorporate newer technology such as airborne lidar, GPS, and digital photography. This should include an assessment of the effects of ploughing on upstanding earthworks and flattened sites, and a detailed survey of palaeoenvironmental deposit survival.
- D.2 The LMAs and especially the funding elements need to be resolved as soon as possible. This is a priority for the key monuments in guardianship and conservation statements should be put in place in relation to the new LMAs.
- D.3 There is an immediate need for a thorough survey of badger setts in the WHS and their impact on archaeological monuments. Such a survey would need to be undertaken regularly once the baseline data has been collected. A prioritised list of monuments where badger exclusions and mitigation measures are needed should be produced, along with proposed method statements. The key archaeological monuments within the WHS (including the proposed new WHS areas) such as the six guardianship monuments and the East Kennet Long Barrow should be protected from badger damage as a matter of urgency.

- D.4 As a matter of priority, a long-term solution to repair the structural problems identified at Silbury Hill should be implemented by English Heritage. English Heritage has agreed to develop a proposal, with partners, to remove the existing backfill and consolidate the lateral tunnels. This will involve refilling the collapsed shaft at the top of the hill and infilling depressions on the slopes as a means of ensuring the long-term integrity of the monument and the archaeological remains within. The aim is to complete this work after 2008, subject to funding.

OBJECTIVE E

Provide the most appropriate land use for all the major monuments and halt the degradation of all the sites and monuments currently under arable crops.

Issues 2, 8, 9

It is widely understood that almost all archaeological deposits are vulnerable to the effects of erosion when under arable cultivation. Section 5 illustrated that appropriate management of land use around some ancient monuments is still constrained by arable cropping within the WHS. Despite the expansion of grassland areas in the last five years (mainly through CSS) there are still vulnerable archaeological remains which should be protected under permanent pasture. In effect, all major management objectives are subordinate to preserving the archaeological features in the WHS within an appropriate setting. It is recognised that the pace and extent of the continued expansion of grassland within the WHS will depend on discussions and negotiations with the local farmers and landowners and their willingness to enter into voluntary grant schemes.

STRATEGY

- E.1 There should be an expansion of grassland within the WHS, with appropriate levels of grassland management. Principally, this will be to protect all vulnerable archaeological remains (both scheduled and unscheduled) from further damage caused by the plough. Initially, this should be done selectively using the results of the monument condition survey, taking SMs and their immediate landscape settings, and the other most vulnerable monuments, out of the plough.

The primary targets for conversion to pasture are the monuments in areas of high archaeological interest and former downland, including Waden Hill, Windmill Hill, and the Ridgeway Scarp slopes. Elsewhere conversion would best be concentrated on linking fragmented areas and in creating buffer areas.

The priorities to be addressed, considering the impact of cultivation on the archaeology are:

- high priority should be given to taking SMs and other monuments which are visible earthworks, or on sloping ground, out of cultivation
- priority for conversion to grassland to be given to landscape units with dense archaeology and sensitive landform features
- a detailed programme of monitoring plough erosion should be put into place for monuments which cannot be taken out of cultivation.

- E.2 The new option to revert arable land to semi-natural, species-rich grassland under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme should be encouraged as it offers the opportunity to create a more appropriate ancient landscape setting for the archaeological features of the WHS.

OBJECTIVE F

Optimise the use of agri-environmental schemes and other management agreements in order to enhance the protection of the monuments and their landscape setting.

Issues 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13

STRATEGY

- F.1 Undertake a comprehensive review of all the SMs and areas within the WHS. This should focus initially on the several recently discovered sites and those which are only partially protected by scheduling.
- F.2 The number of management agreements between English Heritage and landowners for the conservation of SMs within the WHS should be increased, especially for sites where the standard Environmental Stewardship grants from Defra are not appropriate. The potential benefits of management agreements should be reviewed by English Heritage, along with a consideration of higher payments for SMs within the WHS.
- F.3 Consideration should be given to the implementation of other forms of positive management of SMs within the WHS. In particular, measures should be considered which will take SMs out of the plough; these could include discussing with the Government the possibility of reviewing Class Consent Orders (Class I). The use of voluntary “In Perpetuity” management agreements (involving grant-aid) should be considered, where possible.

- F.4 Consideration should be given to seeking funding solutions away from the current range of agri-environmental schemes and the setting up of a fund dedicated to World Heritage Sites. In the case of Avebury, a fund should be sought specifically for the implementation of the management plan and a permanent WHS Officer post (see section 16.0).
- F.5 Efforts should be made to ensure the continued success of the uptake of agri-environmental grants as witnessed in the CSS special project. Discussion should commence to ensure that provisions of the CSS special project are continued with the new ES scheme.
- F.6 The archaeological and historical importance of the WHS within the North Wessex Downs AONB has been identified in the recently published AONB Management Plan. Although the WHS is only a small part of the AONB, the WHS could be a focus for AONB action and pilot projects. The potential benefits of stronger links between the management of the WHS and AONB should be explored with the AONB team.

OBJECTIVE G

Enhance and conserve the landscape character of the WHS with respect to tree cover, hedgerows and other planted features.

STRATEGY

- G.1 An overall strategy for trees and hedgerows should be agreed for the WHS. This could take the form either of published guidelines, or at a more practical level, tree planting and management plans could be agreed for each individual holding. Guidelines should follow archaeological advice and the format and content of the Forestry Authority's Lowland Landscape Design Guidelines, adapted as appropriate to suit the detailed landscape character outlined in the WHS landscape assessment and the Kennet Landscape Conservation Strategy.
- G.2 Policy for new planting and the Woodland Grant Scheme needs to be reviewed with the Forestry Authority.
- G.3 The planting on barrows is a very distinctive feature of the area, but pre-emptive action against tree-throw is essential. Felling will be required before trees become unstable and cause damage to the monuments: all the trees would have to be felled at once for practical and aesthetic reasons. The tree clumps on barrows, locally known as "hedgehogs" are mainly on land owned by the NT.

- the NT should actively pursue the policy of managing trees and groups of trees to reduce the risk of windthrow and excessive damage by roots
- when the trees do need to be taken down (which may be quite soon) they should be replaced elsewhere on archaeologically sterile land in order to maintain the landscape character
- as part of the commitment to sustainability within the WHS, all trees removed for the protection of archaeological features should be replaced, albeit in other areas.

G.4 A clear policy for the management of tree cover in the Henge monument should be developed over the next five years. The policy should seek to prolong the life of historic groups of trees and protect the monument by increasing the inherent stability of individual trees.

OBJECTIVE H

Enhance and protect the visual sensitivity of the key monuments and their settings.

Issue 16

The visual sensitivity of different parts of the WHS is described in Section 5.4. This information should be used to guide protective policies and priorities in the management of the WHS. The visual sensitivity of the setting of the Avebury complex extends to a broad area outside of the existing boundary; the following strategies are closely linked with those set out under Objective I.

STRATEGY

- H.1 Any new feature in the landscape could potentially intrude significantly on the setting of the WHS and its monuments, and therefore very careful consideration of visual impacts needs to be given via the planning system. Whenever possible, the priorities for landscape enhancement in the Avebury area outlined in the KDC landscape conservation strategy should be supported.
- H.2 It is particularly desirable where possible to remove currently intrusive features (such as powerlines, fences, unsightly buildings) or, where this is not feasible to redesign or screen them.
- H.3 To improve the visual character of the key monuments, the following issues should be considered:

Avebury Henge and village

- consider the long-term relocation of Avebury club house to a less sensitive location (appropriate financial arrangements will have to be made with the local community)
- retain the critical beech screen planting on boundary of Rawlins Mobile Home Park
- remove the visual intrusion at the northern entrance to the Henge associated with Bonds Garage
- thought needs to be given to the provision of further interpretation in the Henge. If consideration is to be given to the further restoration of any standing stones, thereby continuing the work of Keiller, there needs to be an agreed policy on restoration and reconstruction, relating to the English Heritage restoration policy (English Heritage 2001). This should be specifically written for the Avebury (and Stonehenge) WHS and should include reference to the need to address the issue of authenticity (in relation to world heritage values). This policy needs to be in place as soon as possible because it is crucial to our characterisation of the Henge and has implications for many other monuments such as The Sanctuary, Falkner's Circle and West Kennet Avenue (see below).

West Kennet Avenue

The setting of the Avenue approaching Avebury is very sensitive. Various options present themselves for how to sustain and enhance the visual integrity of the Avenue and decisions should be agreed as soon as possible:

- reduce traffic on the road (B4003) and possibly (if compatible with stock management) remove visually intrusive fencing. Repair and mitigate verge erosion within the SM and close to sarsen stones standing near the road verge
- implement measures to help prevent parking on the grass verge at the top of Avenue Road, opposite the Avebury club house
- in terms of interpretation and trying to reunite the two parts of the Avenue as split by the modern A4, there are a range of long-term options: leaving the course of the Avenue simply as a different band of vegetation (as now partially established by the National Trust) extended to include the whole of its length from the Henge to The Sanctuary; marking any detectable stone positions with non-intrusive surface markers (following a thorough geophysical survey along its whole length); or erecting sarsens, or other markers, in original stone holes after excavation. If the latter option is to be given serious consideration, there needs to be an agreed policy on the restoration and reconstruction of stones at Avebury, as detailed for the Henge above. Moreover, it could only be implemented in parts of the monument where there is good evidence of its form rather than speculative, and where the prior excavation of the features is led by a genuine research need rather than purely to aid presentation.

Beckhampton Avenue

Consideration needs to be given to the protection of the setting of the recently-re-discovered Beckhampton Avenue. From the probable terminal of this monument within Longstones Field adjacent to the Adam and Eve standing stones, there is a commanding view up to Windmill Hill. In addition, thought needs to be given to how this largely buried monument, located mainly on privately-own land, could be interpreted and presented to the public.

Windmill Hill

The key visual management issue is the protection of the wide and spacious setting of the Windmill Hill complex. The protection of the open setting and the retention of key views to the Avebury complex are particularly important issues.

West Kennet Long Barrow

The immediate setting and visual impact of this monument has recently been enhanced. Other visual management issues are the protection of key views to The Sanctuary, and the intervisual links between this site and Silbury Hill. There is also an issue at this monument of the unsightly 1950s conservation measures such as the redundant filled-in roof lights set in concrete. Consideration needs to be given to replacing this with less-intrusive material.



*West Kennet Long Barrow in March 2004.
Ditches protected under a grassland setting.
Photo: English Heritage*

Silbury Hill

The immediate setting of Silbury Hill is extremely sensitive to any intrusion. Attempts should be made to lessen visual intrusion caused by roads, traffic and fencing and could be linked to a more general scheme along the whole stretch of the A4 running through the WHS. Access to Silbury is problematic because of the erosion caused on the steep slopes. The resulting fencing designed to keep people off the slopes is not entirely effective and detracts from the close views of the mound from its base. A major issue is how to strike a balance between controlling access and minimising the intrusion of the unsightly fencing.

The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary and adjacent archaeological features collectively have the potential to become a significant gateway complex, but are severed by the A4 and several visually intrusive features which detract from the character of the setting. The visual and physical interpretation of this monument needs to be taken further. The concrete marker posts have been in place since the 1950s and are now deteriorating and many are loose and could be lost. Excavations by Mike Pitts in 1999 indicated that many are now not in the correct place to mark the precise location of original post and stones holes.

Overton Hill

There are many detracting features, and the A4 also dissects the grouping of visible archaeological features that have the potential to become a significant visual gateway to the complex. Steps should be taken to strengthen links between these monuments, provide improved interpretation facilities to reflect the importance of the features at this entrance zone to the WHS, and to reduce the impact of the various visually intrusive elements (including the need to put overhead power lines underground).

Waden Hill

At present the hill's potential as a key vantage point for the complex is under-used. As a setting and backdrop for many of the monuments, the slopes of the hill are sensitive to any visual intrusion. Management of the slopes should aim to retain or reinstate areas of permanent grassland and avoid intrusive structures.

OBJECTIVE I

Ensure that through its chosen boundaries the extent of the WHS gives the best possible protection to its monuments and their landscape setting.

Issues 17, 18

Section 5.5 highlighted some of the inadequacies of the current boundary of the WHS and made recommendations for changes. It also outlined the need for a buffer zone for Avebury.



Reconstruction illustration of barrows on Overton Hill.

STRATEGY

- 1.1 The recommendations made in Section 5.5 of this Plan for minor changes to the WHS boundary should be agreed and implemented as soon as possible. This will involve gaining commitment to these changes from landowners and all key agencies, and ultimately from the World Heritage Committee. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will be responsible for forwarding the proposed changes to UNESCO for approval. The DCMS may wish to forward any proposed changes for the Avebury part of the site together with possible changes to the Stonehenge boundary at the same time.
- 1.2 Section 5.5 also strongly states the need for a buffer zone to protect the WHS and its monuments and landscape setting from potential visual intrusion. The exact location and extent of this buffer zone should be defined by analysis and detailed studies and agreed as soon as possible by all relevant parties. In collaboration with the planning authority, the details should be published as a Supplementary Planning Document to Policy HH3 in the Local Plan or succeeding document.
- 1.3 Section 3.2 has outlined the significance of the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS in terms of its World Heritage values. At the time of inscription no formal Statement of Significance was agreed for the site by the World Heritage Committee as is now the requirement for sites being nominated. There is a need to for a formal proposal, agreed by key stakeholders, to be submitted by the Government to the Committee for a revised Statement of Significance for the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS.

OBJECTIVE J

Incorporate landscape design and management measures which reflect the linkages between nature and history in the environment and which will benefit and enhance existing and latent nature conservation interests within the WHS.

Issues 10, 11, 12

STRATEGY

- J.1 The achievement of Objective D, the continued expansion of species-rich, semi-natural grassland areas within the WHS, will be of great benefit to nature conservation interests. Lowland semi-natural chalk grassland is now very scarce and its expansion within the WHS will contribute to the objectives for habitats and species within the area which are included in the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Expansion of grassland should be accompanied by the establishment of appropriate grazing or cutting regimes which greatly enhance its value for flora and invertebrates.
- J.2 Environmental surveys should be carried out to establish more precisely where the nature conservation interests lie within the WHS so that management resources can be effectively deployed. This should lead to an assessment of how objectives for nature conservation and archaeological landscape conservation can be integrated. In particular, a baseline survey of the lichen colonies on the standing stones in Avebury and associated monuments would be useful. In addition, information about the important lichen flora and the chalk grassland should be included in WHS interpretative material.
- J.3 As far as possible, the Avebury WHS Steering Committee should support measures for agricultural environmental measures in the WHS which complement the protection of archaeological features and help forward the objectives of the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan and the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, such as the Downland Heritage Project.
- J.4 The Committee should also support the work of conservation agencies and groups seeking to improve and monitor the flows of the River Kennet. This includes promoting sympathetic management of the chalk streams, such as the Winterbourne and Kennet and their associated water meadows.

12.0 PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

OBJECTIVE K

Maintain and enhance the rich built heritage features in the WHS, recognising their relationship to the monuments and landscape.

Issue 24

STRATEGY

- K.1 The Conservation Area Statements for Avebury and West Kennett Conservation Areas, published by KDC in 2003, outline priorities and opportunities for enhancement of the built heritage. Wherever possible support should be given and possibilities for implementing enhancement measures should be investigated.
- K.2 The complex of listed and unlisted barns at West Kennett Farm has been safeguarded by emergency repairs but remains unused and at risk from decay. A plan to convert some of the buildings into a youth hostel has been withdrawn because of a lack of funding. Further work is needed to identify a new use that is complementary to the character of the buildings and their sensitive archaeological and landscape setting.

OBJECTIVE L

Enhance the protection of the monuments and historic landscape setting of the WHS afforded by the local plan and policy framework.

Issues 19-23

STRATEGY

- L.1 Ensure that, in line with advice contained in PPG15, the World Heritage status of Avebury is taken as a key material consideration in the determining of planning applications and the development of appropriate local development frameworks and supplementary planning document. The following measures can contribute to this:
 - continued advice given by the WHS Officer on planning applications in relation to policies in the WHS Management Plan
 - the continued provision of training seminars to relevant planning officers and councillors.

- L.2 Ensure that the recent changes to the local development framework do not reduce any of the protection currently afforded to the WHS via the detailed Local Plan policies. In addition, monitor the impact of the implementation of the heritage protection review on the protection afforded to the WHS.
- L.3 Strengthen the links between the WHS Management Plan and the Local Plan and new local planning framework.
- the Management Plan should be officially adopted by the Kennet Community Development Committee
 - the local authorities are requested to consider adopting the buffer zone and other relevant land use planning elements of the Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in addition to considering the development of an Area Action Plan for the WHS.

OBJECTIVE M

Enhance the protection of the WHS from the activities which do not currently require planning permission, but are potentially damaging to upstanding and buried archaeological features.

Issue 20

STRATEGY

- M.1 There is a need to assess the impact of permitted development rights (PDRs) within the WHS and explore the possible use of an Article 4 Direction to withdraw rights under the General Permitted Development Order 1995.

Intrusive overhead telecommunication and transmission lines are not normally subject to planning control, but application of an Article 4 Direction may help guide the location and design of them. This Direction should apply to the whole WHS and a further protection zone around it. The significance and sensitivity of the WHS and its location within an AONB is likely to provide appropriate justification for such a Direction to be made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport & the Regions, if recommended by the local authority. Indeed, an Article 4 Direction has been applied to much of the area within the Stonehenge WHS since 1962.

- M.2 Voluntary agreements should be sought with owners and occupiers to consult with the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service when they wish to carry out works within the WHS not requiring planning permission but nevertheless potentially damaging to archaeology.

This would include:

- new planting not funded by the Forestry Authority
- hedge removal not covered by the Hedgerows Act
- increased ploughing depth
- swimming pools
- treasure hunting
- utility installations
- new farm roads
- farm buildings not meeting the criteria for needing planning permission
- new farm facilities (e.g. silage clamps, lagoons, etc. not requiring permission).

M.3 Section 6.1 has highlighted the need to develop lines of communication with all utility companies involved with services in and around the WHS. This need is primarily to try and prevent further cases of excavations in the area carried out without consideration to the potential underlying archaeological deposits, especially within the SMs. There is a need to share information (possibly in the form of a seminar) and develop a pro-active approach to the repairing and replacement of services in order to minimise the amount of ground disturbance required within the WHS in future years.

Guidelines, comprising a voluntary code of practice for the installation of utility services (water, electricity, sewage, telecommunications, gas) within the Avebury WHS have been developed, and are attached to the AMP98 Plan as Appendix O. They have been compiled for the benefit of contractors, landowners, and utility companies. Further efforts should be made to circulate these guidelines to the relevant staff within utility companies.

M.4 The use of metal detectors within the WHS should be discouraged, except in conjunction with controlled archaeological projects conducted with due regard to appropriate standards. To this end, landowners are asked to seek advice from the County Archaeology Service prior to giving permission for detectorists to operate on their land.



The Sanctuary at Overton Hill. Photo: English Heritage

13.0 TRAFFIC AND PARKING MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This section aims to set out some strategic and wide-ranging measures which will complement and build on recent improvements outlined in Section 7.0. All traffic measures proposed should seek to achieve a holistic approach to the WHS bringing environmental and positive benefits to both visitors and local residents. Further detailed studies will be necessary to establish engineering proposals, accurate costings, a phasing programme for the various measures and the identification of suitable funding mechanisms. The problems relating to the roads and traffic within the WHS have been outlined in Section 7.0. Any new measures introduced to tackle these problems should be sensitive to their historic environment and be in accordance with the strategy and policies of the highway authority. Careful design and choice of materials should be used to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. In addition to being a place of historic interest, Avebury is a living village community and the needs of residents and local businesses must also be considered prior to introducing measures to address the existing deficiencies. All of these matters are fundamental. This Management Plan puts forward strategies and concepts. Further detailed design will be necessary to determine layouts and choice of materials.

Sometimes it will be necessary to adopt bold initiatives within the Avebury WHS. The strategies are set out in relation to five objectives which aim to make improvements to the highway network, car parking, public transport, facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and road safety.

OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE N

Develop radical highway improvement measures which will be implemented as long-term solutions to the problem of reducing the volume and speed of traffic through the WHS.

Issues 25-28

STRATEGY

- N.1 Downgrading the A4361 is the primary option. The volume of traffic has increased over the last few years and it is likely that this trend will continue, especially in light of Swindon's status as a Principal Urban Area (PUA). The prospect of the construction of a bypass for Avebury is very unlikely to be a workable option. An alternative long-term measure would be to downgrade the A4361 from its current A road status. This measure would include a ban on HGV use and weight/width restriction (with exceptions to allow for local deliveries and for deliveries and for

deliveries and collections from local farms). The County Council now has a Freight Strategy for Wiltshire which does not identify the A4361 as a HGV route. Accordingly, this road has been downgraded to a road not considered to be appropriate for use for through lorries. In order to be effective this would require an area-wide revision of direction signing. This would have an impact on other roads in the area and it may be necessary to provide area-wide improvements to accommodate reassigned traffic. It should be noted, however, that although the downgrading of the A4361 may reduce the number of vehicles passing through Avebury village, the majority of 'rat-running' vehicles are likely to continue to use the link as many of the commuter movements are already fully familiar with the road network. It would therefore still be necessary to implement deterrent measures and complementary traffic calming measures within the village to calm the speeds of residual vehicles. Downgrading the road would make any traffic calming measures more effective than at present. Downgrading the A4361 from its present role as a strategic link for goods and commuters should therefore be subjected to full and detailed investigation within the next five years.

OBJECTIVE O

Implement speed control and other measures in the short-medium term which will provide comprehensive treatment of all important road links within the WHS, in order to improve safety and the quality of the historic environment.

Issues 25-28

STRATEGY

- O.1 The effect of the 30 mph zone along the A4361 should be monitored over a two-year period. Consideration should be given (in line with WCC highway policy) to extending the zone on the Trusloe side as well as on the Swindon Road area.
- O.2 Introduce a speed limit on the A4 of 50 mph within boundaries of WHS (or coinciding with the location of the WHS entrance road signs). Speeds to be controlled and safety enhanced by provision of appropriate design solutions. A detailed study of how this could be done will be required.

The main aim of a lower speed limit is to improve ease of access to the main monuments located off the A4, such as Silbury Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow and The Sanctuary. The proposed 50 mph zone will help to raise driver awareness of the special nature of the area. It is recognised, however, that the accident record does not justify a 50 mph limit in respect to normal highway criteria. Thus, a special case will have to be made for lowering the speed limit to the LHA and GOSW. The County Council will consider the A4361 and A4 against the

anticipated new guidelines from the Department of Transport on the setting of speed limits on rural single carriageway roads.

- O.3 Implement measures to protect the “green” at the top of Avebury High Street from further erosion by vehicles. This should be considered as part of a holistic scheme for Avebury to protect the road verges and prevent the gradual widening of the hard surfacing.
- O.4 Implement measures to reduce traffic volume and speed along West Kennet Avenue (B4003).

It is recognised that the full closure of the road to traffic (except emergency and farm access) would be the best option to enhance the protection of the monuments and their setting. As this approach is likely to be unpopular with members of the local community, a compromise solution should be identified by implementing measures which would lead to improvements without resulting in the full closure of the road. The following measures should be considered, in order to make the road a less-desirable route for commuters and HGV traffic and reduce traffic speeds:

- a 30 mph speed limit
- a weight restriction and/or width ban. This would also have to apply to buses and coaches
- re-routing of the bus routes via Beckhampton roundabout
- making the road one-way (south only), except for emergency and farm vehicles
- down-grading the road and narrowing the carriage way
- the insertion of cattle grids at either end of the road.

OBJECTIVE P

Implement a strategic policy to reduce parking congestion in the henge/village area on peak days, dispersing the pressure away from the centre of the site.

Issues 30-33

Traffic congestion at Avebury on peak days is caused by: a) a shortfall of spaces and b) the existence of the Southern Car Park as the only main signed parking area for the henge/village area. It has been agreed that meeting increasing demand for parking by the creation of more and more spaces is neither desirable nor sustainable in the long term. This is reflected in the Kennet Local Plan which requires that there is no significant increase in parking provision in the WHS (Policy TR9). There is scope for creating additional car parking at a distance from the henge/village area. This would have the benefit of fulfilling visitor dispersal objectives. This should be accompanied by a gradual reduction in the number of spaces available in the Southern Car Park by perhaps up to a third of its current capacity. The extent of this reduction

and the specific number of spaces created away from the henge/village area should be subject to full and detailed investigation, including a full assessment of the implications for on-street parking. This policy needs to be taken forward in conjunction with an integrated conservation and access strategy agreed by all key stakeholders.

STRATEGY

- P.1 In the short term:
- Continue to monitor the effect of the parking charges in the Southern Car Park introduced by the National Trust in 2003.
- P.2 Investigate possible sources of funding flagged up in the Northern Car Park Feasibility Study (Parkman 2003), methods of overcoming the constraints of the site and possible alternative locations.
- P.3 In the medium term:
- Create smaller car parks (perhaps two or three) some of which should be located at a distance from the henge/village area. One of these new smaller parking areas should be located off the A4361 to the north side of the Henge to accommodate vehicles arriving from the direction of Swindon. Initially new parking areas should be provided as temporary (grassed) overspill areas. This should be accompanied by a gradual decrease in the capacity of the Southern Car Park by up to a third. The extent of this reduction in spaces and the number of new outlying parking spaces created should be further investigated, and will depend on whether the current policy of “constraining” parking within the WHS is considered to be appropriate and effective. Additionally, there should be further research into visitor numbers and the use of car parks to enable an informed view to be taken on whether the identified shortfall in spaces should be actively remedied.

The location of new parking areas will need to undergo detailed investigation to mitigate any potential impact on the environment having regard to the visual sensitivity of the monuments and landscape. The outlying car parks will have to be adequately signed and access routes by foot leading to the monuments clearly defined and established. WCC need to be involved in the commitment to the creation of adequate footpaths to and from the car parking areas. In particular consideration should be given to the location of new parking areas to the north of the village, either east or west of the A4361, and in the southernmost part of the WHS in the vicinity of West Kennett. Full and detailed investigation is needed. Instigate a programme of monitoring the effect of these parking changes over two or three seasons. If they have proved effective in regards to dispersal and reduction in congestion, consideration should be given to turning the new temporary parking areas into permanent ones.

- P.4 In the long term, if pressure continues to increase, consideration should be given to a strategy of removing some or all tourist parking areas from the Henge/village area. Main car parks for Avebury could possibly be placed in nearby towns such as Devizes or Marlborough. The viability of a “park and ride” system for bussing visitors to the site should be investigated as a long-term option.

OBJECTIVE Q

Reduce the reliance on the private car by visitors to Avebury WHS, by encouraging the uses of more sustainable methods of transport to get to the site and to move around within it.

Issue 26, 29, 37

STRATEGY

- Q.1 Continue to widely circulate information on how to access the WHS by public transport, including via the WHS web site.
- Q.2 Provide additional bus stops at key monuments within the WHS, for example at Silbury Hill, and The Sanctuary/Overton Hill.
- Q.3 If the number of visitors to the WHS does increase over the next five years, a strategy for integrated sustainable transport should be developed, and a feasibility study for a shuttle bus service or park and ride service from outlying car parks undertaken.
- Q.4 Encourage visitors to walk between the different monuments in the WHS (in conjunction with V.7). This will be aided by the provision of adequate and appropriate pedestrian crossing routes across busy sections of road, especially the A4 and A4361.
- Q.5 A review of the condition and signposting of rights of way within the WHS should be undertaken as well as the consideration of establishing new routes.
- Q.6 Assess the walking routes which may need improving to form circular routes, such as at Waden Hill and West Kennet Long Barrow. This will require improved waymarking and/or negotiation of new rights of access.
- Q.7 Develop easy access routes suitable for older people, people with mobility problems and casual visitors who only want short walks from the village. An associated leaflet should be available on site and advance publicity sought through relevant networks.

- Q.8 Encourage visitors to arrive at the site and travel around it by bicycle, by the provision of cycle racks and lockers within the car park areas.
- Q.9 Actively help and encourage the agencies involved with the development of dedicated cycle routes which go via Avebury. In particular, Sustrans has developed Route 4 of the National Cycle Network in Wiltshire through Avebury, providing the WHS with a safe and attractive link between the nearby towns of Calne and Marlborough. Sustrans is also developing a north-south “ World Heritage Cycle Route” linking Salisbury, Old Sarum, Stonehenge, Avebury and the Ridgeway (proposed Route 45).
- Q.10 Ensure the regular collection of up to date data on traffic flows and car park usage in and around the WHS.

OBJECTIVE R

Implement measure to improve the safety of pedestrians within the WHS

Issues 34-36

STRATEGY

- R.1 A comprehensive review of the need for safe pedestrian crossing points within the WHS should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. In particular, it should focus on crossing requirements within the Henge monument and at the junction of the Avenue Road (B4003) and the A4 at West Kennett. A number of factors will need to be taken into consideration in any commitment to the construction of formal pedestrian crossings, including:
- road alignments and visibility factors
 - visitor circulation patterns
 - provision of requirements for mobility impaired and disabled visitors
 - impact on archaeological features and landscape setting, and other environmental constraints
 - farming activities and local business needs.
- R.2 Commission an audit of access points, visitor flows and traffic conflicts in and around the Henge monument. This study should propose changes to access points and circulation routes which will assist in managing visitor pressure, dealing with erosion and ensuring that changes make the monument Disability Discrimination Act compliant as far as practical.
- R.3 Continue to support measures to reduce potential conflict in the High Street between vehicles and pedestrians.

14.0 PUBLIC ACCESS AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

OBJECTIVE 5

Ensure all aspects of public access and tourism at Avebury are sustainable. This will involve achieving an appropriate balance between: the protection of the historic environment; the quality of life of local community; the quality of the visitor experience

Issues 38-43

STRATEGY

- S.1 Continue the existing partnership approach to the implementation of the Management Plan and the co-ordination of effort through the WHS Steering Committee and its subgroups. The membership of the Committee and all working groups should be assessed and reviewed regularly to ensure that their composition is most effective for the successful implementation of the Plan. This partnership approach should also include forging closer links between Avebury and Stonehenge, the two parts of this WHS (see S.5 below). Given the obvious links between the two parts of the WHS, there will be advantages of looking strategically at the whole site, linking the two in terms of sustainable tourism, interpretation, education and archaeological research.
- S.2 Widen access to information about the Management Plan and supporting data, and to reports made to the Steering Committee and subgroups. This could be done by continuing to update the Avebury WHS web pages (hosted on the Kennet District Council web site www.kennet.gov.uk/aveburywhs and adding information such as the notes from the various working group meetings.
- S.3 Ensure that proactive and positive management mechanisms for the effective implementation and monitoring of the Plan are in place (Sections 16 & 18). This includes the provision of appropriate levels of funding and staffing for the implementation of the Plan.
- S.4 Ensure that over the Solstice period and other pagan festivals the National Trust, as manager of most of the key monuments in state care, continue to employ a sustainable and proactive management approach in response to monument conservation, safety and security concerns. This approach will endeavour to:
 - continue to carefully plan for and monitor the Solstice period and other key pagan festivals, involving discussions with the Police and local community and other landowners to continue a policy of allowing freedom of access to the monuments at the Solstice

for all groups of visitors (bearing in mind the need to comply with the principles of sustainability) in numbers compatible with the protection and conservation of the remains, while anticipating or responding to inappropriate use through a variety of practical measures

- continue communication with the wide range of pagan groups (such as the Sacred Sites Forum) and via the Avebury Guardians in order to discourage inappropriate behaviour and potentially damaging activities, such as the lighting of fires, overnight camping, noisy drumming
 - strive to achieve the delicate balance between a non-confrontational management approach and the risk of unrestricted growth in the use of the site (potentially leading to the development of free festivals).
- S.5 Commission a study seeking to identify what the impact on Avebury might be of the new visitor facilities planned for Stonehenge. This should take the form of a canvass of tour operators, coach companies and current visitors to Stonehenge.
- S.6 If visitor numbers do start to climb again, or if current funding levels for monument maintenance should be decreased, consideration should be given to the formalisation of the non-commercial advertising policy. This issue should also be addressed within the context of the renewal of the LMAs between EH and the NT.
- S.7 Undertake a detailed stakeholder analysis of the WHS in time to feed into the production of the next Management Plan.

OBJECTIVE T

Prevent increasing physical damage caused to monuments and public rights of way by the impact of visitor pressure, and restore the areas significantly affected.

Issues 44-46

STRATEGY

- T.1 To take more effective action to halt erosion caused by visitor pressure on the Henge monument, in conjunction with D.2. This should include an application of more resources, archaeological input and intensive erosion control measures:

- Visitor pressure has long since exceeded optimum levels for the best protection of the Henge monument, and much surface wear is visible. The development of a Limits of Acceptable Change model is a high priority. This should accompany the agreed rolling plan of erosion management, including visitor dispersal and routing (in conjunction with R.2), which should be regularly undertaken by the National Trust (with English Heritage agreement and SMC where necessary). This plan includes closing and resting quadrants of the Henge in rotation over the winter months.
- In conjunction with Strategy D.2, detailed conservation statements should be developed for the Henge and other key monuments. For remote monuments, such as West Kennet Long Barrow, the conservation statement should include details on how more effective actions can be taken to protect the fabric from misuse by visitors.

- T.2 Take remedial action to halt ongoing damage caused by visitor pressure to public rights of way in the WHS. Ensure that the improvement measures needed are taken forward via Wiltshire County Council's forthcoming Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).
- T.3 Undertake regular surveys and analysis of the number of annual visitors to Avebury in order to assess trends and contribute to sustainability policies. The visitor counts should be done for the Henge and village. In addition it should be done for remote monuments subject to visitor pressure such as West Kennet Long Barrow.
- T.4 Undertake a detailed carrying capacity study of all key monuments and areas vulnerable to the effects of visitor pressure.
- T.5 Develop and implement a mechanism for monitoring the effect of management actions, such as the Limits of Acceptable Change model.
- T.6 Encourage a community of volunteers to act as stewards and to create monitoring records. This has been done successfully by the NT at other properties.

OBJECTIVE U

Reduce the negative effects of visitor pressure at Avebury on quality of life of the local community.

Issues 52, 54

STRATEGY

- U.1 Implement the actions outlined in the traffic/parking section (Objectives N-R).

- U.2 Establish a good level of involvement of local community members in decision-making through discussion workshops, and their continued representation on the Steering Committee and subgroups. Improve communication with the local community through circulation of information on the WHS web site and/or newsletter.
- U.3 Implement measures to relieve visitor pressure from the Henge/village area at peak times.

OBJECTIVE V

Encourage visitor appreciation of the wider landscape in order to enhance enjoyment and educational value of the WHS at the same time as dispersing visitor pressure from the henge/village.

Issues 47-50

STRATEGY

- V.1 Increase the quality and effectiveness of orientation points around the WHS. This should focus on locations where key monuments are intervisible e.g. Waden Hill, Overton Hill, and The Sanctuary. New interpretation should also be considered for areas where recent discoveries have been made, such as in Longstones Field, Beckhampton. Here, a concentration of prehistoric monuments (including part of the line of the Beckhampton Avenue) are not visible on the ground nor open to public access. Opportunities to provide interpretation panels near to the site should be sought.
- V.2 A commitment should be made to the production of interpretative material about the wider WHS landscape and an assessment of the potential for improving access to the wider landscape. e.g. via Environmental Stewardship schemes.
- V.3 Develop of a network of interpretative themes based on landscape elements, e.g. the source of the sarsen stones, nature conservation.
- V.4 Implement the remaining recommendations made in the 2001 Interpretation Plan for the WHS.
- V.5 Review and improve the signposting of existing public rights of way.
- V.6 Agree a joint interpretation and signage policy for the WHS including an agreed “strapline” explaining the relationship between the National Trust and English Heritage in Avebury.
- V.7 Implement a programme of guided walks and rides around the WHS.

- V.8 The Tourist Information Centre should be retained within the WHS as an important facility for disseminating information to visitors and in generally assisting in the dispersal of visitors to other places of interest in the area.
- V.9 The potential for the educational use (both formal and informal) of the Avebury WHS should be further developed in order to strengthen and reinforce the conservation message. This would be aided by the appointment of a Learning Officer as has become the practice at some other National Trust properties, and the setting up of an education working group for the WHS. This strategy should also include the continuation and development of the WHS education project piloted in 2004-5 at Stonehenge and Avebury.
- V.10 The continued existence of the museum collections at the heart of the WHS is a key feature to be retained and focused on in future strategies for the enhancement of the values of the WHS in terms of education and interpretation.
- V.11 Develop a “code of respect” for the Avebury WHS.

OBJECTIVE W

Ensure that the development of any further visitor facilities at Avebury are compatible with sustainability objectives.

Issue 47

The development of any further visitor facilities within the WHS would be viewed as complementary to those which already exist within the village. The development of alternative facilities at a distance from the henge/village area would be an important contribution to the dispersal of visitor pressure.

STRATEGY

- W.1 Guidelines should be produced, drawn from sustainability principles to guide the location of any future facilities in the WHS. They must consider the location of any new facilities at a distance from the henge/village area. Any new facilities should aim to provide information about the site without becoming tourist attractions in their own right.
- W.2 A study should be undertaken to assess the need for alternative facilities, the contribution they can make to visitor dispersal, and options for location. In particular, the West Kennett area should be investigated as a possible location for a small-scale parking area and/or other facilities.

- W.3 Consideration should be given to the improved provision of informal accommodation (such as a hostel and/or supervised camp site) within the WHS area. This could be combined with the provision of a field/educational centre.

OBJECTIVE X

Establish integrated monitoring programmes which will promote proactive management by predicting potential damage to the site and will assess the effectiveness of management actions in tackling the problems.

Issues 51-54

Developments since 1998 have now led to a situation whereby three levels of pro-active monitoring will be in place for the WHS.

- X.1 The newly-developed set of monitoring indicators (Section 18.1) will generally help to measure the effectiveness of the WHS Management Plan. Agreement should be gained as soon as possible on the framework for implementing these monitoring measures.
- X.2 UNESCO's six-yearly cycle of periodic reporting (Section 18.2) will provide another level of monitoring the effectiveness of management in the WHS. It will be particularly focused on the measures taken to preserve the WHS values from degradation. The WHS Steering Committee, Officer and relevant organisations such as DCMS, English Heritage and ICOMOS should be fully committed to providing the information required by UNESCO to satisfy the reporting requirements.
- X.3 The development and implementation of a technique to monitor the environmental impacts of visitor pressure at Avebury, based on an agreed set of quality standards for each monument, and assessments of vulnerability and carrying capacity. This approach is known as a "Limits of Acceptable Change" model and will take account of a wide range of factors, physical, visual and ecological. The development of a Limits of Acceptable Change working model is critical to the future of the monuments in the WHS, and should be a high priority.

15.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

OBJECTIVE Y

Encourage and promote academic research to achieve a deeper understanding of the WHS necessary for informed archaeological resource management, interpretation and presentation.

Issues 55-57

STRATEGY

- Y.1 Continue to encourage and promote wide-ranging and sustainable research, ensuring all research is carried out in accordance with the aims of the Avebury Research Agenda.
- Y.2 Encourage research to focus on the key priority areas identified in the Research Agenda.
- Y.3 Ensure that the Avebury Research Agenda is assessed and updated on a regular basis, taking into account new discoveries.
- Y.4 Encourage the use of the most appropriate techniques for the successful implementation of the priority research areas, taking into account the need to address principles of sustainability.
- Y.5 Ensure the continuing academic input into the future management of the WHS via AAHRG and its role in the co-ordination of research interests in the area.

OBJECTIVE Z

To further develop, maintain and update the WHS GIS database, using it to its full potential.

Issues 58, 59

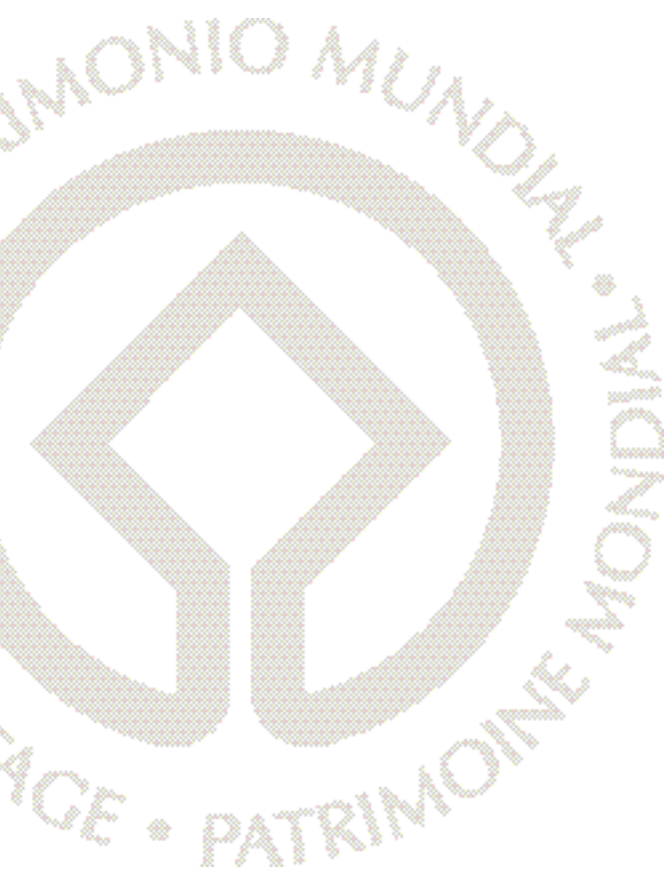
STRATEGY

- Z.1 Ensure that the resources, staff and skills are available for the proper maintenance and development of the GIS database.
- Z.2 Further develop the GIS in the near future to include information of benefit to the interpretation and presentation of the WHS as well as research and management, including:
 - the input of digital map and photographic data relating to the 1999 monument condition survey

- the development of systems to allow the direct transfer of digital data from future condition surveys
- consideration of changes to the GIS study area
- the input of data from all former and future archaeological fieldwork and interventions, including fieldwalking
- the input of data relating to site management and building of closer links with the National Trust property SMR and the GIS data set for the AONB
- consideration of facilitating wider access to the GIS for interpretation and presentation purposes
- develop the GIS to help with the implementation of monitoring indicators
- use the GIS to facilitate the development of a Limits of Acceptable Change model
- continue to develop GIS for the formulation and implementation of archaeological research strategies
- develop the viewshed analysis capability of the GIS to contribute to the definition of a buffer zone.

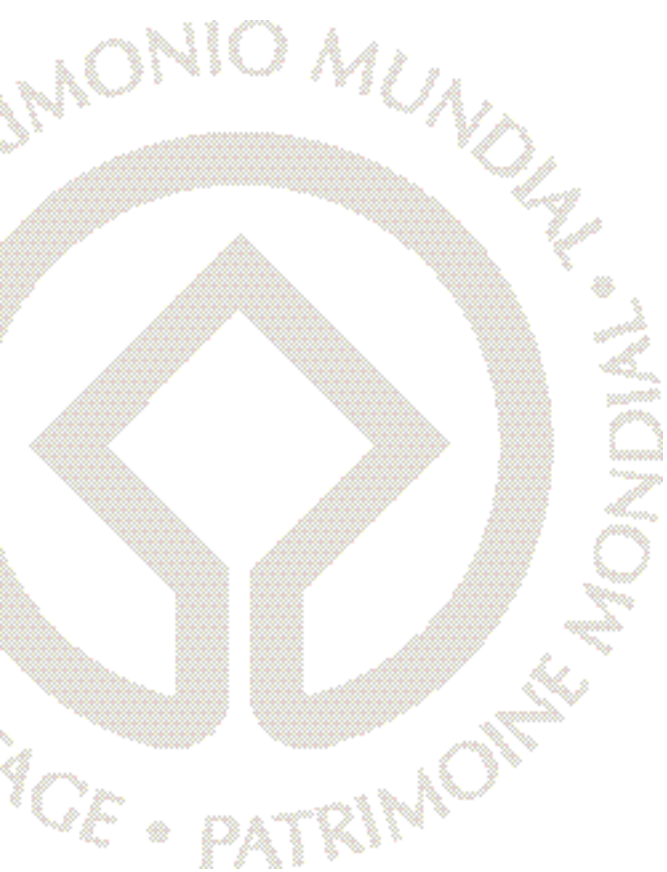


Neolithic axe polishing bench or 'polissoir' on Lockeridge Down





Silbury Hill
Aerial view looking east



PART FOUR: IMPLEMENTING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This part of the Plan describes the recommended mechanisms to aid the achievement of the main objectives. The first section (16.0) explores the continued contribution of the WHS Steering Committee and the provision of a staff position to facilitate the implementation of the Plan. Section 17.0 sets out the action plan for implementation of the management strategies in the short to medium term (six years). This section will need to be updated on a regular basis and will provide the opportunity to monitor progress towards achieving the objectives set out in Part Three. The last section (18.0) sets out the programme for monitoring the effectiveness of the Management Plan in the long term, including UNESCO's periodic reporting process.

16.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

16.1 MECHANISMS IN PLACE

16.1.1 In the preceding section twenty-six objectives have been identified for the benefit of long-term conservation of the Avebury WHS. The Plan seeks to advise and influence the management of the WHS in line with these objectives, but has no statutory power or status. The Plan, although advisory in nature, aims to set the framework for co-ordinated management and the development of partnerships which will ensure that the values which make the site special will not be diminished.

16.1.2 The implementation of the Plan will be achieved by a variety of agencies and individuals who own or currently have management responsibilities in the WHS. Some strategies will require collective action, while others will fall to a single agency or individual (Section 17.0 below). The major share of the responsibility for meeting the objectives will fall to English Heritage, the National Trust, and the other landowners and tenant farmers within the WHS. The willingness of owners and farmers to support the Plan and contribute to the maintenance of the historic landscape features is fundamental to the achievement of the objectives.

16.1.3 Two specific mechanisms are currently in place and have proved successful in the implementation of the 1998 Plan. Firstly, the WHS Steering Committee has overseen the implementation and delivery of the Plan and monitored its success. The Committee, composed primarily of the agencies and groups involved with developing the Management Plan itself, should continue to meet on a regular basis (at least every six months) and guide any future revisions of the Plan. The membership of the Committee and its subgroups should be reviewed regularly to ensure that their composition is most effective in the implementation and delivery of the Plan (see Objective S.1).

16.1.4 Secondly, English Heritage since 1999 have provided the funding for a WHS Officer. The post, initially funded for a two-year period is accommodated and managed by Kennet District Council. The Officer reports to the Committee and negotiates on its behalf over the various action points within the Plan, and provides the necessary local liaison and co-ordination to aid its implementation.

16.2 REVISITING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

16.2.1 Experience from implementing the 1998 Management Plan indicates that the Plan strategies will probably retain their relevance for five to ten years as progress is made, although the overall objectives are likely to be relevant for longer. As progress is made, elements of the Plan become out of date quite quickly. It is recommended that the Plan is reviewed and republished again on a six-year cycle, with the next one due in 2011. A six-year renewal is now in line with the UNESCO Periodic Review cycle (first to be carried out in 2005) as it is logical for the Avebury Plan to be revisited prior to each periodic review. As outlined in the above section, reviewing the plan and revisiting the issues will be the main role of the WHS Officer, the WHS Steering Committee and its subgroups. Within each six-year management plan cycle, annual updates on progress will be given to the Steering Committee and news and developments posted on the WHS web pages. The Management Plan for the Stonehenge part of the WHS was published in 2000 and is due for revision in 2005-6. It is possible that in the future the plans for both parts of the WHS will be integrated into a single document. This will require an examination of the case for and against a unified document.

16.3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

16.3.1 The successful implementation of this Management Plan will have significant financial implications. The first element of this is the funding required to continue the post of the WHS Officer. Since 1999 funding has been provided by English Heritage to Kennet District Council in the form of a grant. The WHS Officer has been employed on a short contract basis during this period. Kennet has also provided some resources in terms of ongoing costs of office accommodation, equipment and in-house training. The minimal amount of funding required to continue the post is around £43,000 per annum. At the time of writing (June 2005) the future source of funding for the continuation of the post is being discussed within English Heritage as is the potential for contributions from other partners. In order to make the 2005 Management Plan a success, a decision needs to be taken as soon as possible to give this post a more certain and permanent future.

16.3.2 The second element of resourcing relates to project funding. Twenty-two of the forty-five actions set out in Section 17 require external funding. Although costings have not yet been calculated, it is likely to be a large amount. During the last five years small grants have been successfully applied for from various agencies to implement individual projects and this approach is likely to continue. However, there is a need to consider a different approach to funding larger scale projects where several agencies are involved. The ability to call upon a stream of funding specifically set up for the implementation of WHS projects would be most beneficial. The National Trust has been leading discussions about the concept of increasing income from visitors in order to raise funds available for conservation, maintenance and the implementation of the Management Plan. This concept needs to be explored further in the near future.

17.0 ACTION PLAN (2005 - 11)

- 17.1 As many as possible of the short to medium-term objectives identified should be implemented by those already holding responsibilities in the WHS, including landowners and agencies in their relevant areas. This section outlines a programme of work for the short to medium-term, arranged in accordance with the objectives and strategies set out in Sections 11-15. It indicates 45 actions which should be achieved in the next six years, during the lifetime of this Plan. Each entry identifies the agency or individual for whom the responsibility for implementing a particular strategy should lie. Some of these actions are ongoing. The tables also indicate if external funding is required for implementation.
- 17.2 Each strategy to be implemented in the next six years has been graded 1-3 in relation to its importance and the feasibility of achieving it or at least getting it underway in the next six years. Those identified as 1 are the most important, and 3 of lesser importance.

17.3 ABBREVIATIONS USED:

AAHRG	Avebury Archaeological & Historical Research Group
APC	Avebury Parish Council
CA	Countryside Agency
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media & Sport
EH	English Heritage
EN	English Nature
FA	Forestry Authority
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments & Sites UK
KDC	Kennet District Council
LHA	Local Highway Authority (WCC)
LO	Landowners
NT	The National Trust
STCOM	WHS Steering Committee
TVM	Avebury Traffic & Visitor Management Group
WCC	Wiltshire County Council
WHO	World Heritage Site Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

TABLE 4: MONUMENTS AND THEIR LANDSCAPE SETTING

Objectives/Strategies	Priority	External Funding needed	Main Agencies
D.1 Repeat monument condition survey of all sites	2	Yes	WHSO, AAHRG, EH, NT
D.2 Renewal of Local Management Agreements (LMAs) for further ten year period. Develop conservation statements for monuments in guardianship to include risk assessments	1	Yes	EH, NT
D.3 Address problems of badger damage to monuments in the WHS	1	Yes	EH, NT, EN, Defra, LO
D.4 Implement long-term solution to repair the structural problems identified at Silbury Hill	1	Yes	EH
E.1-2/F.5 Continue the expansion of semi-natural, species-rich grassland areas in the WHS, via Defra's EL and HL schemes	2	Yes	Defra, WHSO, EH, LO, FWAG, NT
F.1 Review number and extent of Scheduled Monuments in the WHS	2	No	EH, WHSO
F.2 Increase number of management agreements with landowners	3	No	EH, LO, WHSO
F.4 Seek dedicated funding for the implementation of the management plan and WHS Officer post	1	Yes	WHSO, STCOM
G.1 Develop strategy for trees and hedgerows in the WHS	3	Yes	NT, KDC, FA, LO
G.4 Develop policy for management of trees in the henge monument	3	No	NT
H.1 Address visual impact issues and seek opportunities for landscape enhancement and nature conservation measures	3	No	KDC, WHSO
H.3 Develop policy on restoration/reconstruction of megaliths	1	No	EH, NT, WHSO
I.1 Agree and confirm proposed minor extension to WHS boundary	1	No	STCOM, LO, UNESCO, DCMS
I.2 Agree concept and define extent of WHS buffer zone, publish as Supplementary Planning Document	1	Yes	STCOM, WHSO, UNESCO, KDC, DCMS
I.3 Revised Statement of Significance to be agreed by World Heritage Committee	2	No	DCMS, WHSO, STCOM, UNESCO

TABLE 5: PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Objectives/Strategies	Priority	External Funding needed	Main Agencies
L.1 Ensure protection of World Heritage values in the determination of planning applications	Ongoing	No	KDC, WHSO
L.2 Ensure protection of WHS via local planning system is continued	Ongoing	No	KDC, WHSO
L.3 Strengthen links between the Local Plan and WHS Management Plan via adoption of Management Plan, publish land use planning elements as a Supplementary Planning Document	1	Yes	KDC, STCOM, WHSO
M.1 Assess impact of permitted development rights, and benefits of Article 4 Directions	2	No	KDC, WHSO
M.3 Communicate with utility companies and develop proactive approach to replacement of services in the area	2	No	EH, KDC, WHSO

TABLE 6: TRAFFIC & PARKING MANAGEMENT

Objectives/Strategies	Priority	External Funding needed	Main Agencies
O.1 Monitor the effects of the 30 mph speed limit, consider extending zone	2	No	LHA, TVM, APC
O.3 Protect Avebury "green" from further erosion caused by vehicle movements	2	No	LHA, TVM, APC
O.4 Agree and implement measures to reduce traffic volume and speed on West Kennet Road (B4003)	2	Yes	LHA, TVM, APC
P.1 Monitor effect of car parking charges in Southern Car Park	2	No	NT, TVM
P.2 Investigate possible funding sources for northern car park	3	No	WHSO, NT, TVM
P.4 Investigate viability of remote "park and ride" scheme for Avebury	2	Yes	TVM, WCC
Q.5-7 Review condition of all walking route signs and consider establishment of new routes	3	No	WCC, WHSO, TVM, NT, LO
Q.10 Ensure regular collection of up-to-date traffic and parking data	1	Yes	WHSO, WCC
R.1 Establish safe pedestrian crossing points in Henge monument and other key locations in the WHS	1	Yes	TVM, LHA, NT
R.2 Commission audit of access points, visitor and traffic flows	1	Yes	NT, EH, WHSO

TABLE 7: PUBLIC ACCESS & SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Objectives/Strategies	Priority	External Funding needed	Main Agencies
S.1 Maintain the existing partnership approach to management through the working group structure. Enhance strategic links with the Stonehenge part of the WHS	Ongoing	No	STCOM, WHSO
S.2/U.2 Widen access to information about the WHS and improve communication with local community	2	No	WHSO
S.4 At key pressure periods such as the Solstice, a proactive management approach should be implemented to address the main safety and security issues	Ongoing	Yes	NT, EH, APC, LO
S.7 Undertake detailed stakeholder analysis to feed into production of next version of the management plan	3	No	WHSO, STCOM
T.1 Take more effective action to halt erosion on the henge monument, including increasing resources	1	Yes	NT, EH
T.3 Undertake regular visitor counts at all key monuments	1	Yes	NT, EH
V.4 Implement the remaining recommendations set out in the 2001 Interpretation Plan	3	Yes	WHSO, NT
V.9 Develop the educational potential for the WHS, further develop the 2004-5 education project, WHS education working group	2	No	NT, WHSO, EH
V.11 Develop a "code of respect" project for the WHS	2	Yes	WHSO, TVM
W.3 Improved provision of informal accommodation	2	Yes	NT, KDC
X.1 Gain agreement for the implementation of the monitoring indicators	2	No	WHSO, STCOM
X.2 Provide the information required for UNESCO's periodic reporting exercise	1	No	WHSO, STCOM
X.3 Develop and implement Limits of Acceptable Change model to assess and monitor the impact of visitor pressure along with carrying capacity studies	1	Yes	WHSO

TABLE 8: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Objectives/Strategies	Priority	External Funding needed	Main Agencies
Y.3 Assess and update the Avebury WHS Research Agenda	2	Yes	AAHRG, WHSO, EH
Z.2 Further develop and maintain the WHS GIS	1	No	EH, WHSO, NT

18.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

18.1 MONITORING INDICATORS

18.1.1 The purpose of monitoring is to assess how the values of the World Heritage Site are being maintained over time and to measure whether the objectives of the WHS Management Plan are being achieved (Objective X). Measuring progress is essential to be able to adapt and improve the management of the site. Identifying key threats early on is necessary to be able to put remedial measures in place. Regular monitoring is necessary to re-assess priorities in view of new issues and progress made.

18.1.2 Monitoring of all World Heritage Sites is now encouraged/required by the World Heritage Committee every six years. The first UNESCO monitoring report is expected in 2005. Advice from UNESCO suggests that monitoring needs to address the state of conservation of the site and any current or expected threats. Monitoring indicators need to be relevant and firmly linked to the values and objectives identified in the site management plans.

18.1.3 It is intended that the monitoring indicators set out in the table below will be used for UNESCO's six-yearly periodic reviews as well as being integrated into this and future management plans. The monitoring indicators below have been developed in unison for the Avebury and Stonehenge parts of the WHS, the individual indicators only differing slightly between the two sites.

18.1.4 Monitoring can be conducted using a variety of tools. For Stonehenge and Avebury, it is proposed that the following monitoring tools be used:

- identification of a limited number of key monitoring indicators (see Table 8. below)
- integration with GIS (Geographical Information System)
- annual review of the implementation of the WHS Management Plan re-assessing priorities
- review of the WHS Management Plan every six years, in line with UNESCO monitoring report for all the UK World Heritage Sites.

18.1.5 The purpose of this section is to detail the first tool: identifying the key monitoring indicators which will be used in the future. The indicators need to be simple, easy to gather and able to be assessed on a regular basis. A maximum of 17 key indicators is proposed to ensure that monitoring does not become an end in itself.

18.1.6 Amongst the possible monitoring indicators listed below, some are already in place while others may require additional financial and human resources to collect and analyse the data. The table identifies how the data may be collected, by whom and how often. Collaboration from the WHS partners will be essential for the effective monitoring of the site. They will need to agree the areas where they will supply information and/or conduct monitoring. The WHS Officer will collate all the information in a format suitable for the UNESCO monitoring report and ensure that the report is circulated to all partners and interested parties.

18.1.7 Although Avebury and Stonehenge have a lot in common, the two sites do not have exactly the same management priorities and partners. Therefore, flexibility is built into the common framework to allow for the specific needs of the two sites.

TABLE 9: Proposed Key Monitoring Indicators

To Monitor.	Objectives in Management Plan	Key Monitoring Indicators	Data Source	Monitoring Interval
State of Conservation of Archaeological Monuments	D	Condition of monuments	Repeat of condition survey, English Heritage (EH)	5 years
			Results of regular monitoring by National Trust and FMW	Annual
	E	Extent of grassland restoration	Defra, National Trust	Annual
	D	Number and extent of sites effected by erosion	National Trust, Landowners	Annual
	F	Number of positive management measures for monuments	Defra for CSS and English Heritage for management agreements, National Trust	6 years
State of Preservation of Landscape, Nature & Biodiversity	E	Changes in visual appearance, land use and vegetation cover across WHS, incl. extent & quality of chalk grassland	Aerial photos from WCC, data from Defra, National Trust, English Nature. Possibly commission new landscape surveys	6 years
	Y, Z	Number of recorded archaeological sites inc. newly discovered sites	Wilt's CC SMR	6 years
	G, J	Audit of rare species & habitats	English Nature, National Trust Wilt's Biodiversity Records Centre	6 years

Effectiveness of Protective Measures & Designations	L, M	Effectiveness of policy frameworks	Local Authorities	6 years
	L, M	Number and impact of significance planning decisions within the WHS	Planning Authority	Annual
Sustainable Access	T	Number of annual visitors	National Trust	Annual
	S	Number of visitors & management of sites at Solstice	National Trust	Annual
	Q	Use of non-car transport	WCC/ bus companies/NT	2 years
	S, T, P	Number of days car park capacity is exceeded	National Trust	Annual
Interpretation & Educational Resource	V V	Number of educational visits	National Trust	2 years
		Provision of interpretative material	National Trust, English Heritage	2 years
Fieldwork & Research	Y	Amount and significance of archaeological fieldwork in the WHS	English Heritage WCC, Archaeological units	2 years
	Y	Effectiveness of archaeological research agenda/framework	AAHRG, English Heritage	2 years

18.2 UNESCO PERIODIC REPORTING

18.2.1 Periodic Reporting is a participatory exercise, aiming to collect information on World Heritage related issues on a regional, national as well as on the property level. The individual country reports will be collated into a regional synthesis report to be presented to the World Heritage Committee. This information will enhance co-operation and focus funds and activities more efficiently, allowing the individual countries to protect their heritage of outstanding universal value more successfully.

18.2.2 The twenty-ninth General Conference of UNESCO, held in 1997, decided to activate Article 29 of the World Heritage Convention concerning the submission of Periodic Reports on the state of implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Section I) and the State of Conservation of World Heritage properties (Section II). The national authorities are invited to report on Section I, while Section II shall be prepared in the first instance for each property inscribed on the World Heritage list by the person(s) directly in charge of the property's management.

18.2.3 To facilitate the preparation of the periodic reporting exercise a Questionnaire was developed that the national authorities are encouraged to use. It splits the subjects to be addressed up into short questions to be answered in a few sentences or paragraphs.

STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL SITES 2005

18.2.4 All the World Heritage Sites in the UK inscribed prior to 1999 are to be included in this first round of periodic reporting. Indeed, the majority of UK sites, including Avebury and Stonehenge, have completed the Part 2 questionnaire and submitted it to the DCMS in June of 2005. A joint questionnaire has been filled in and submitted for Stonehenge and Avebury. The questionnaire covers the following subject areas:

Justification for inscription (statement of significance)

Boundary and buffer zone

Authenticity and integrity of the site

Management

Protection

Management plans

Financial resources

Staffing levels (human resources)

Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

Visitors

Scientific studies

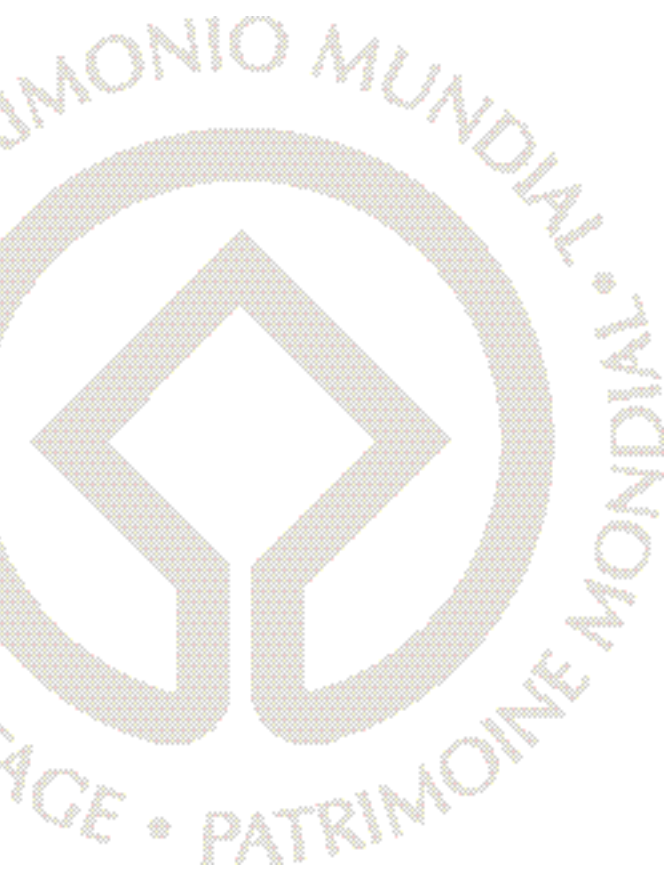
Education, information and awareness building

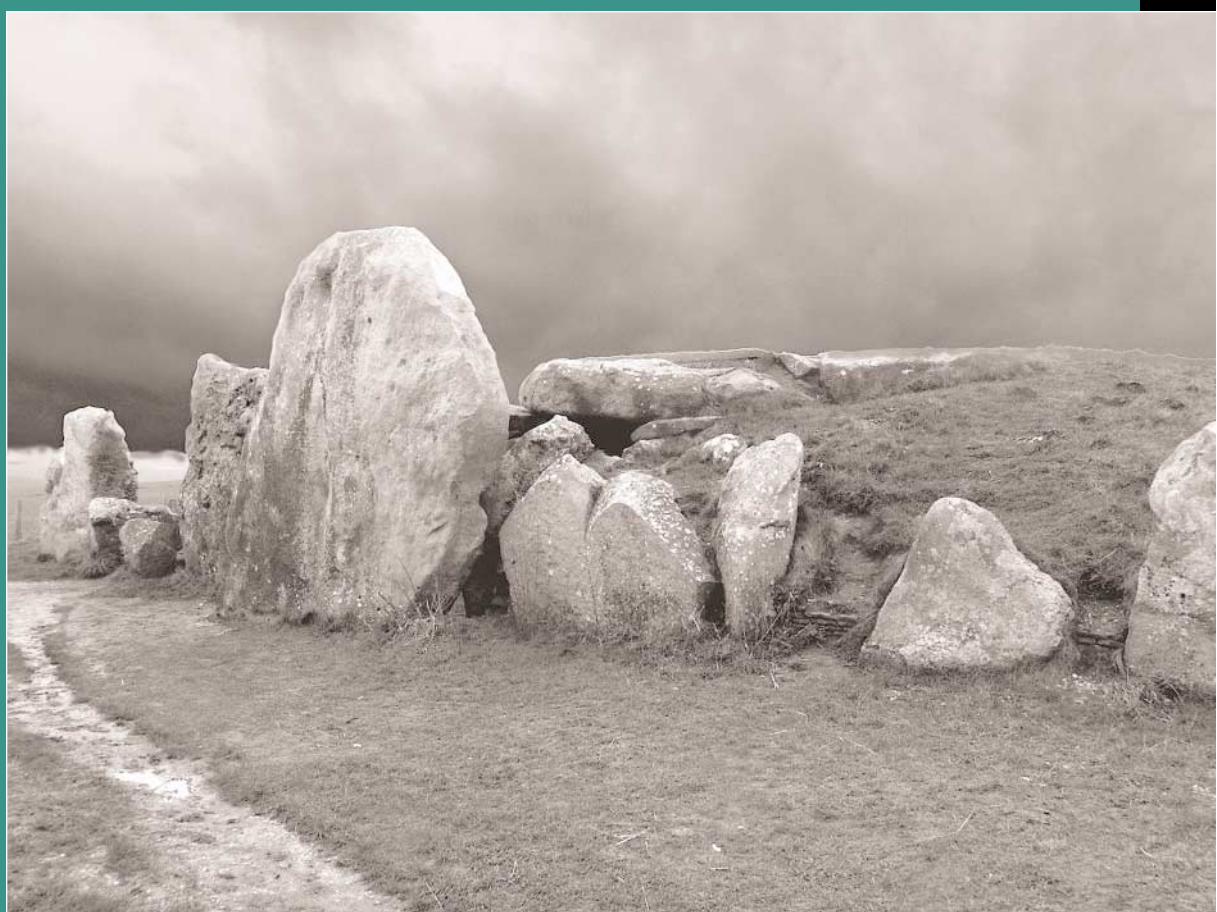
Factors affecting the property (state of conservation)

Monitoring

Potential decisions for the World Heritage Committee

Assessment of the Periodic Reporting exercise





The facade of West Kennet Long Barrow



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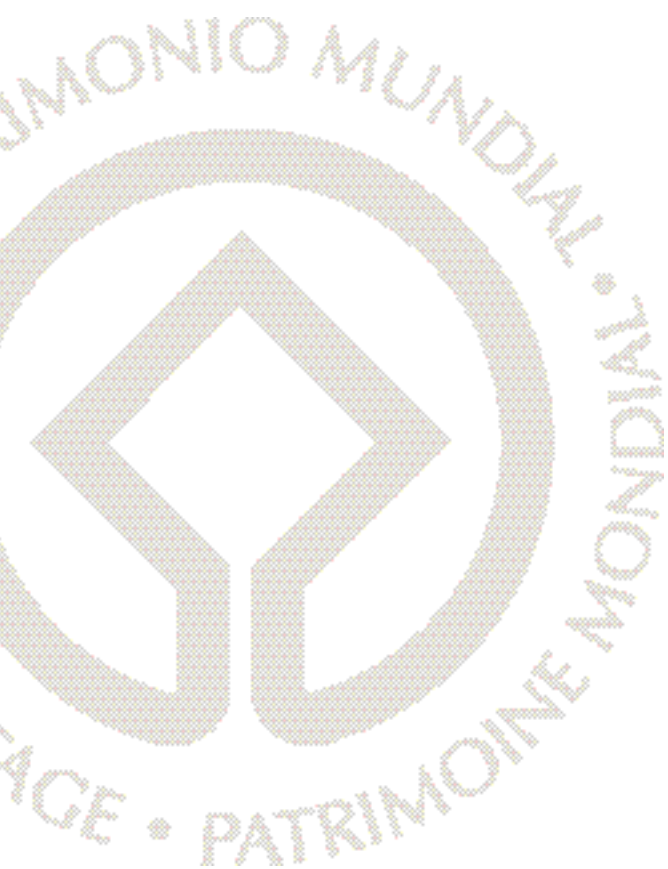
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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AAHRG	Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group
AMP98	Avebury Management Plan 1998
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EH	English Heritage
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EN	English Nature
ESS	Environmental Stewardship Scheme
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
KDC	Kennet District Council
LAC	Limits of Acceptable change
LMAs	Local Management Agreements
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NT	National Trust
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SM	Scheduled Monument
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
TVM	Traffic and Visitor Management Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation
WHS	World Heritage Site





View of Avebury Henge and village looking east

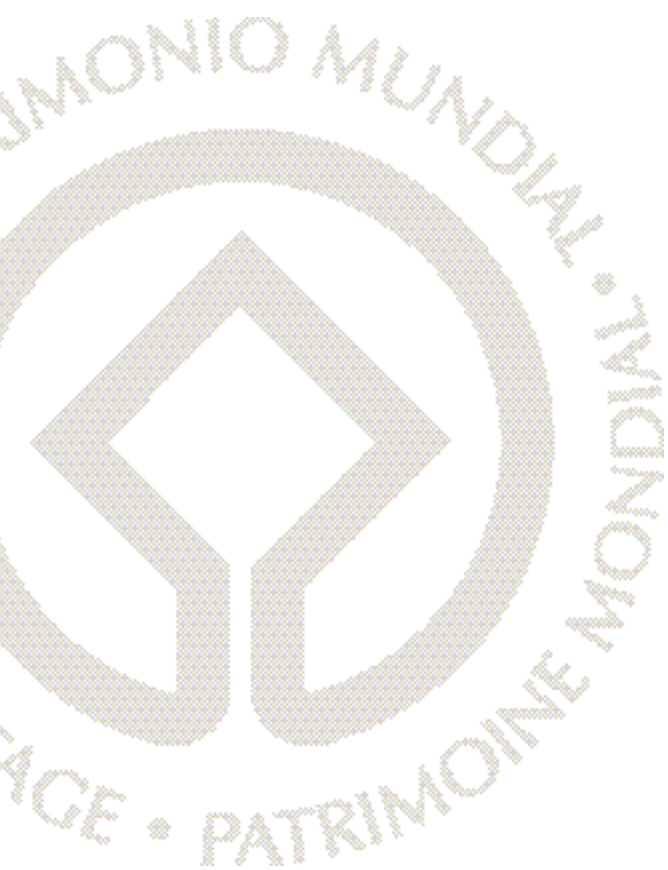


Figure 1: General Location

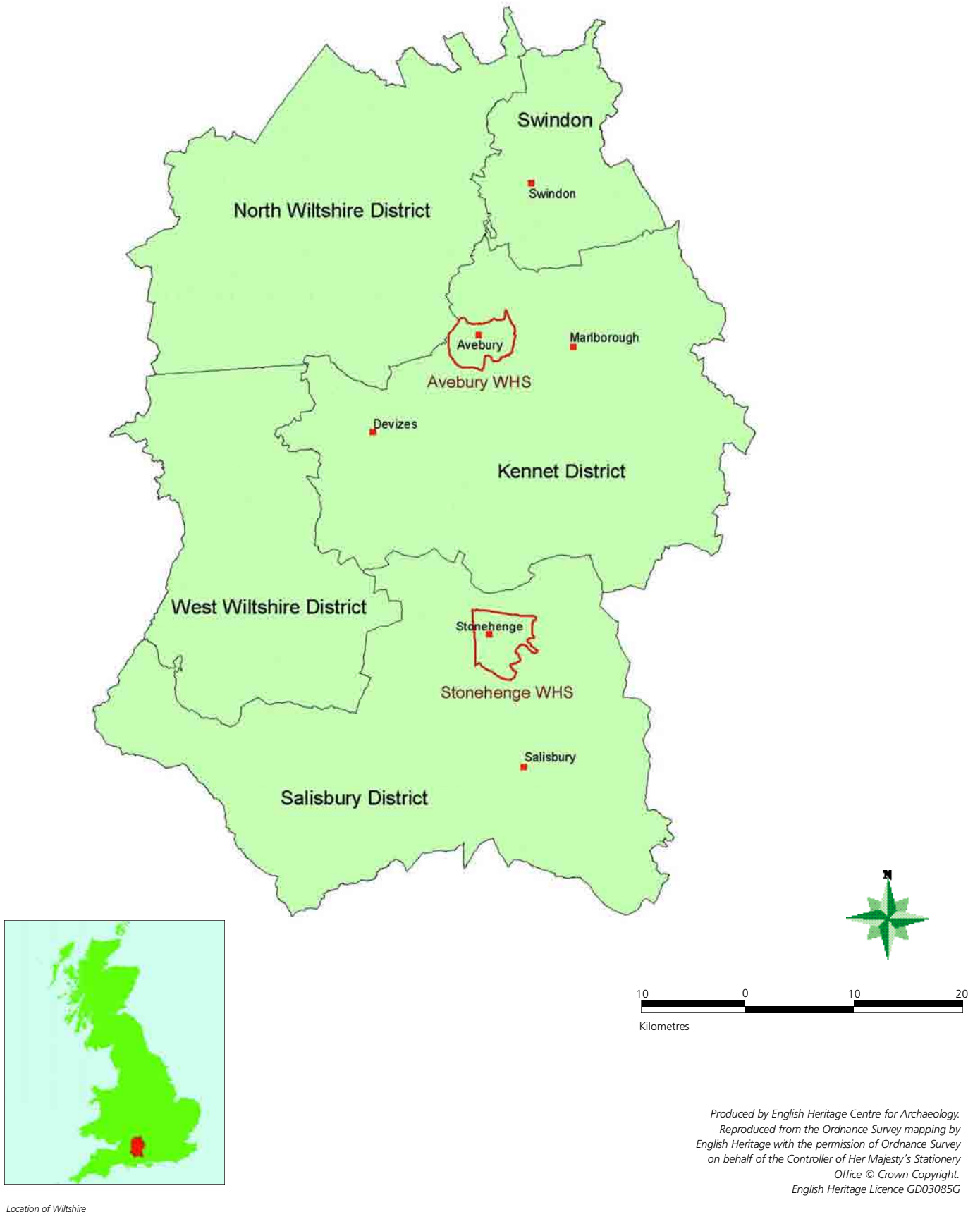
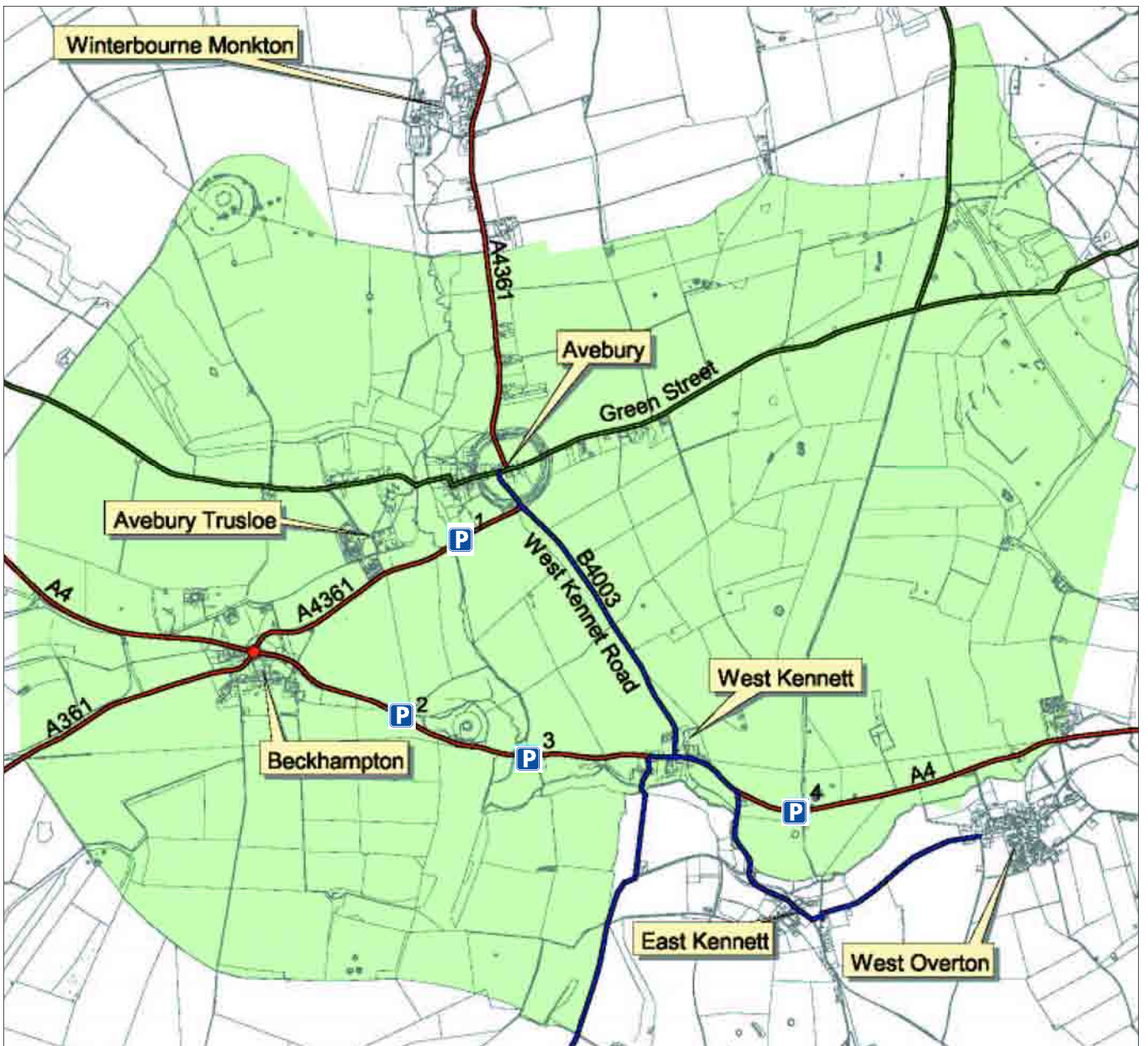



Figure 2: Car Parks and Transport Links



Key


 Proposed National Cycle Network Route 45


 National Cycle Network Route 4

 Arterial Roads

 OS Land line

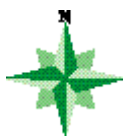
 WHS Area

 1 Southern Car Park

 2 Silbury Car Park

 3 West Kennet Layby

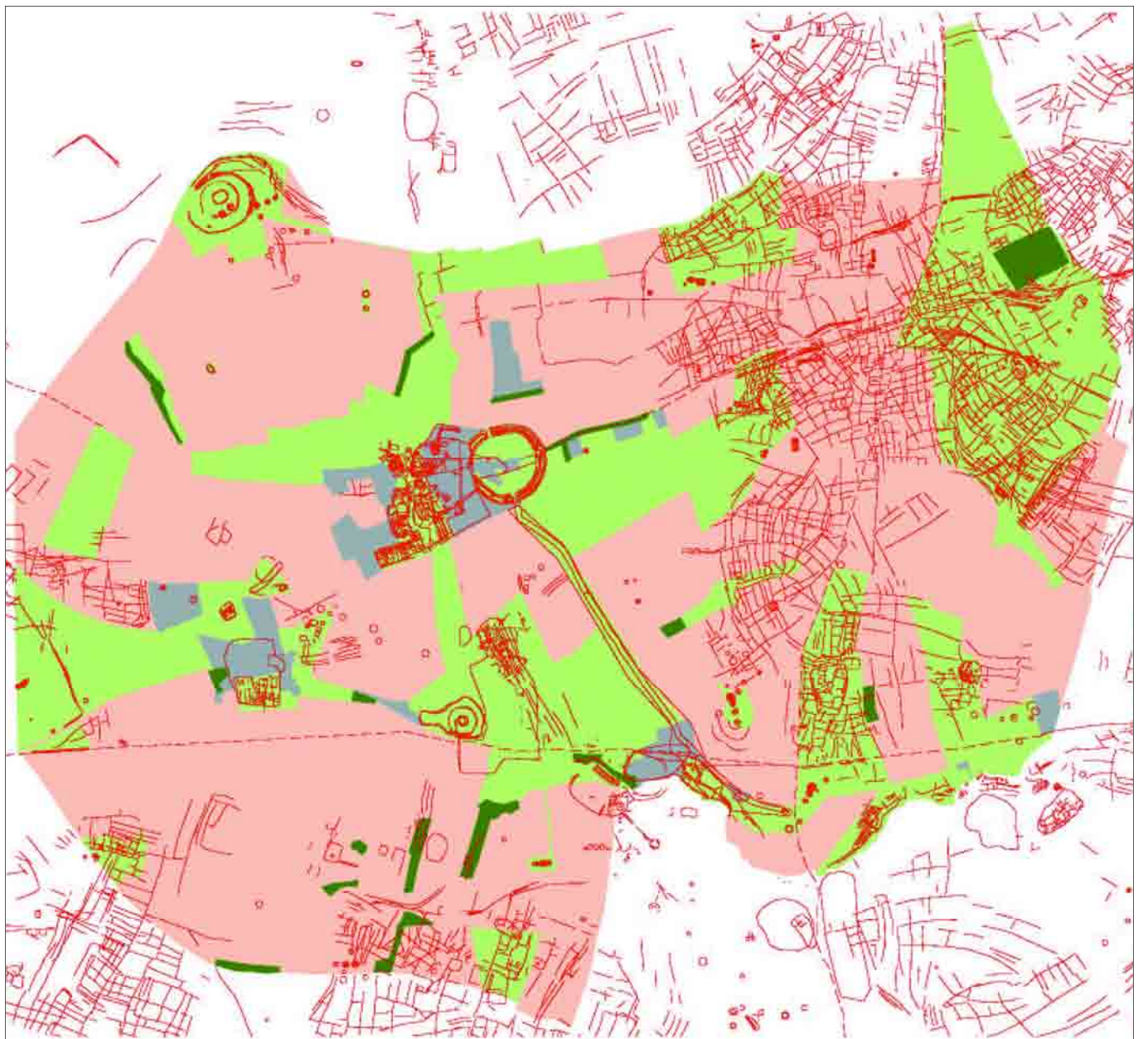
 4 Sanctuary Layby



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Figure 3: Land Use and Archaeology



Key

— Recorded Archaeology

Land Use

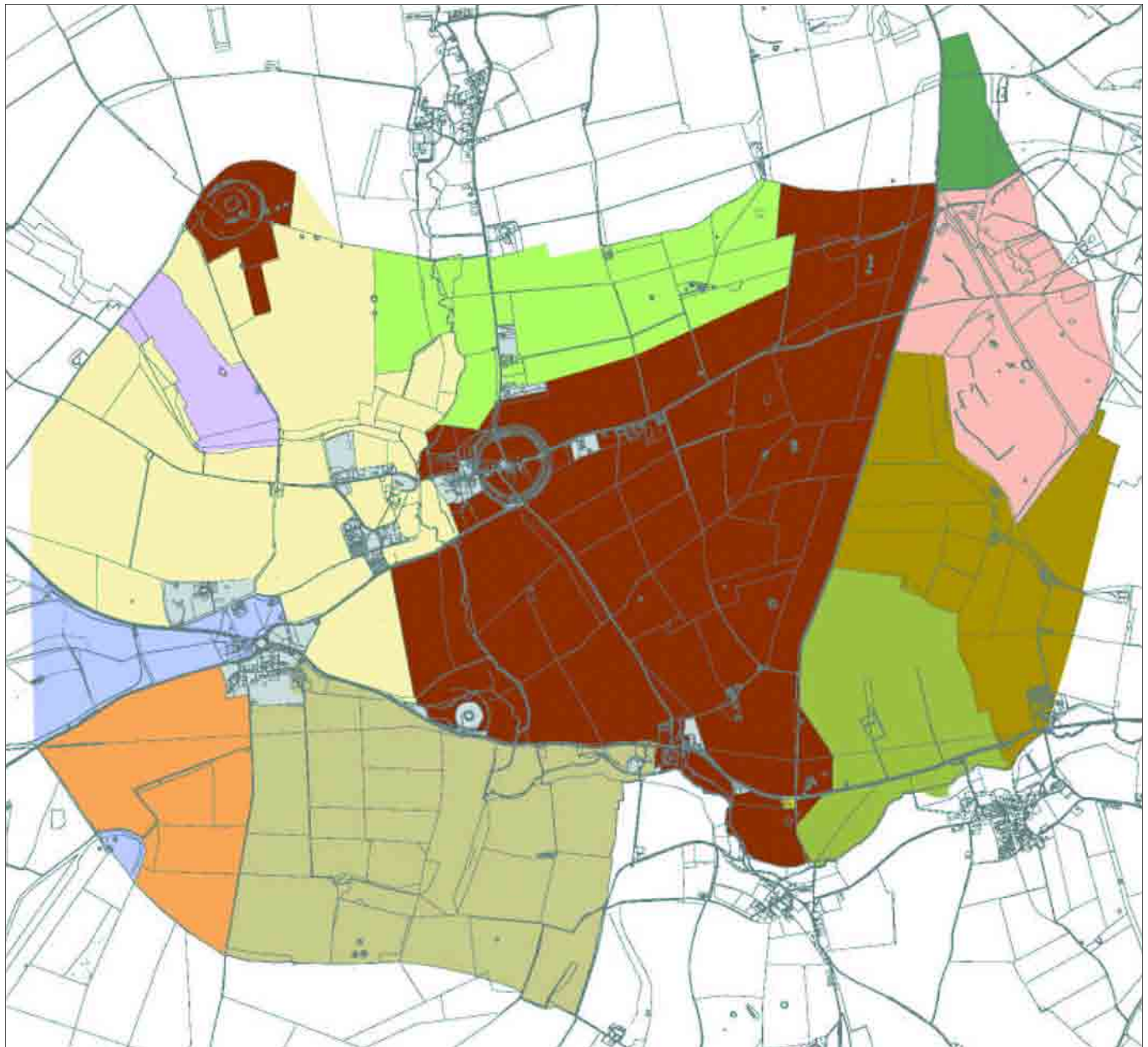
- Arable
- Built-up areas
- Grassland
- Trees



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
Figure 4: Landownership



Key

— OS Landline

Landownership

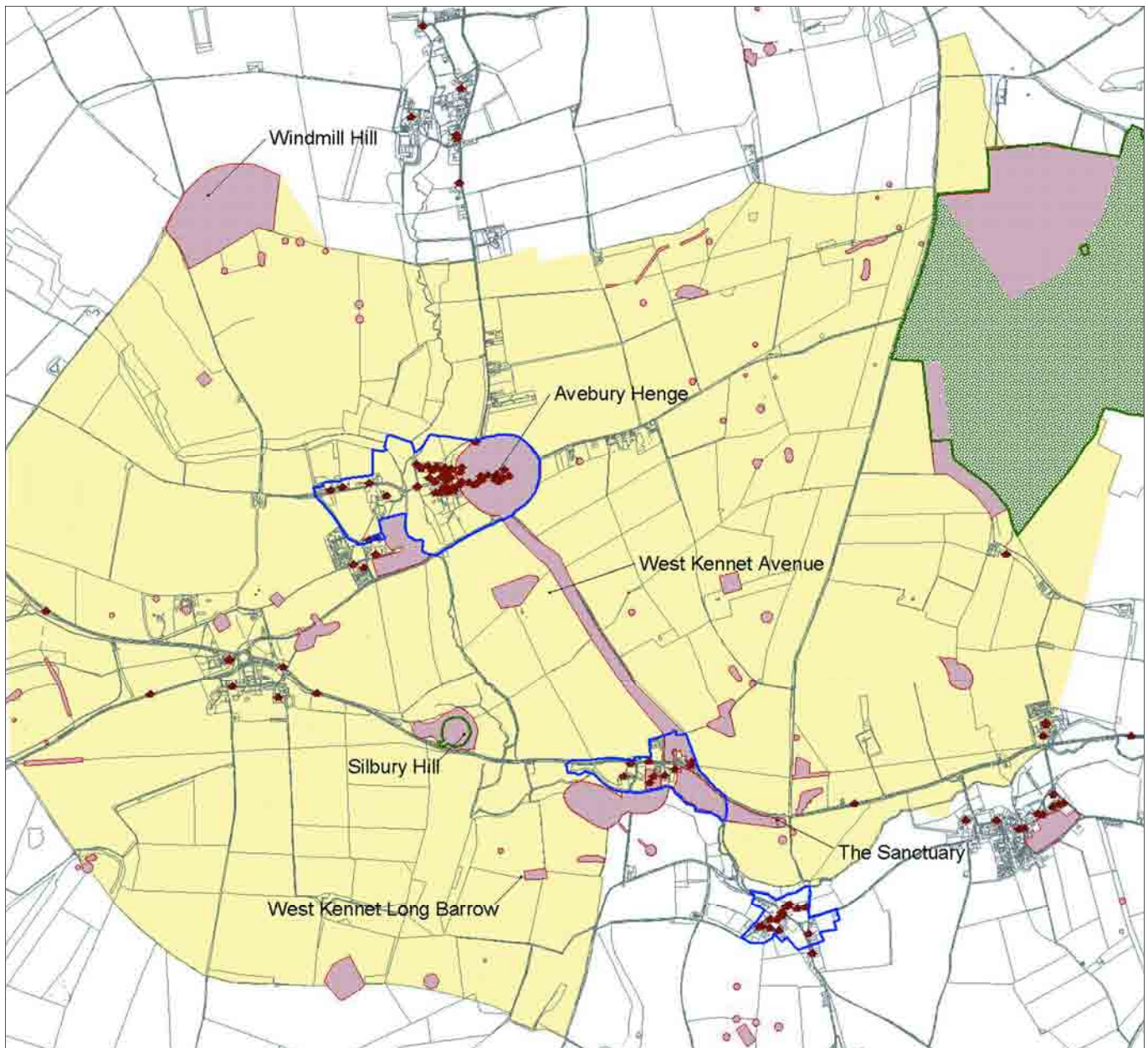
	Beckhampton Stables		Manor Farm West Overton
	State-owned		Manton Farm
	East Farm		National Trust
	Crown Land		North Farm
	Galteemore Farm		Temple Farm
	Hibberd Farming		Manor Farm Trusloe
			Mixed Private



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Figure 5: Designations for Conservation



Key

- Conservation Areas
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- WHS Area
- OS Landline

Sites under Guardianship are labelled



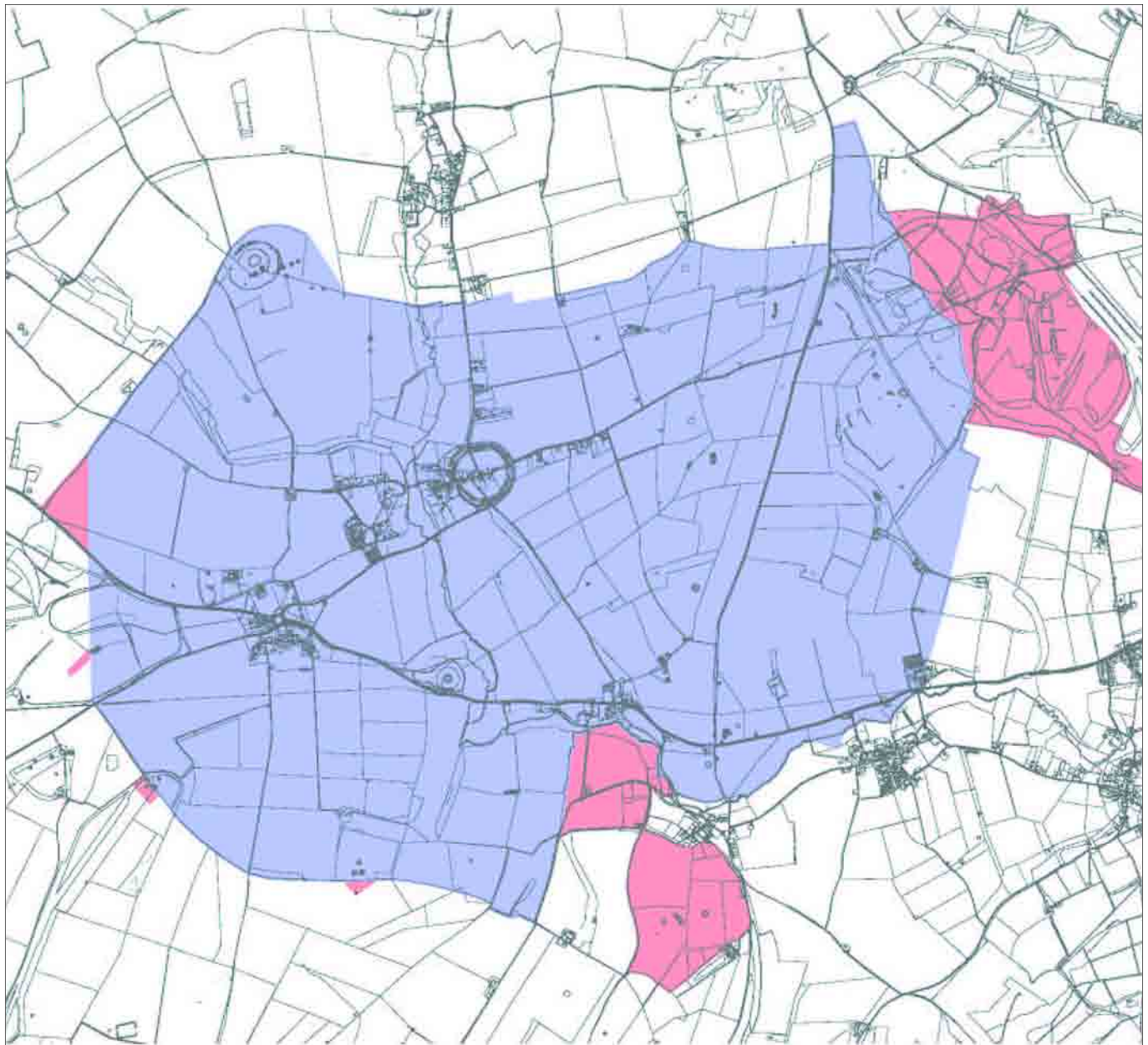
North Wessex Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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Figure 6: Proposed Boundary Changes



Key

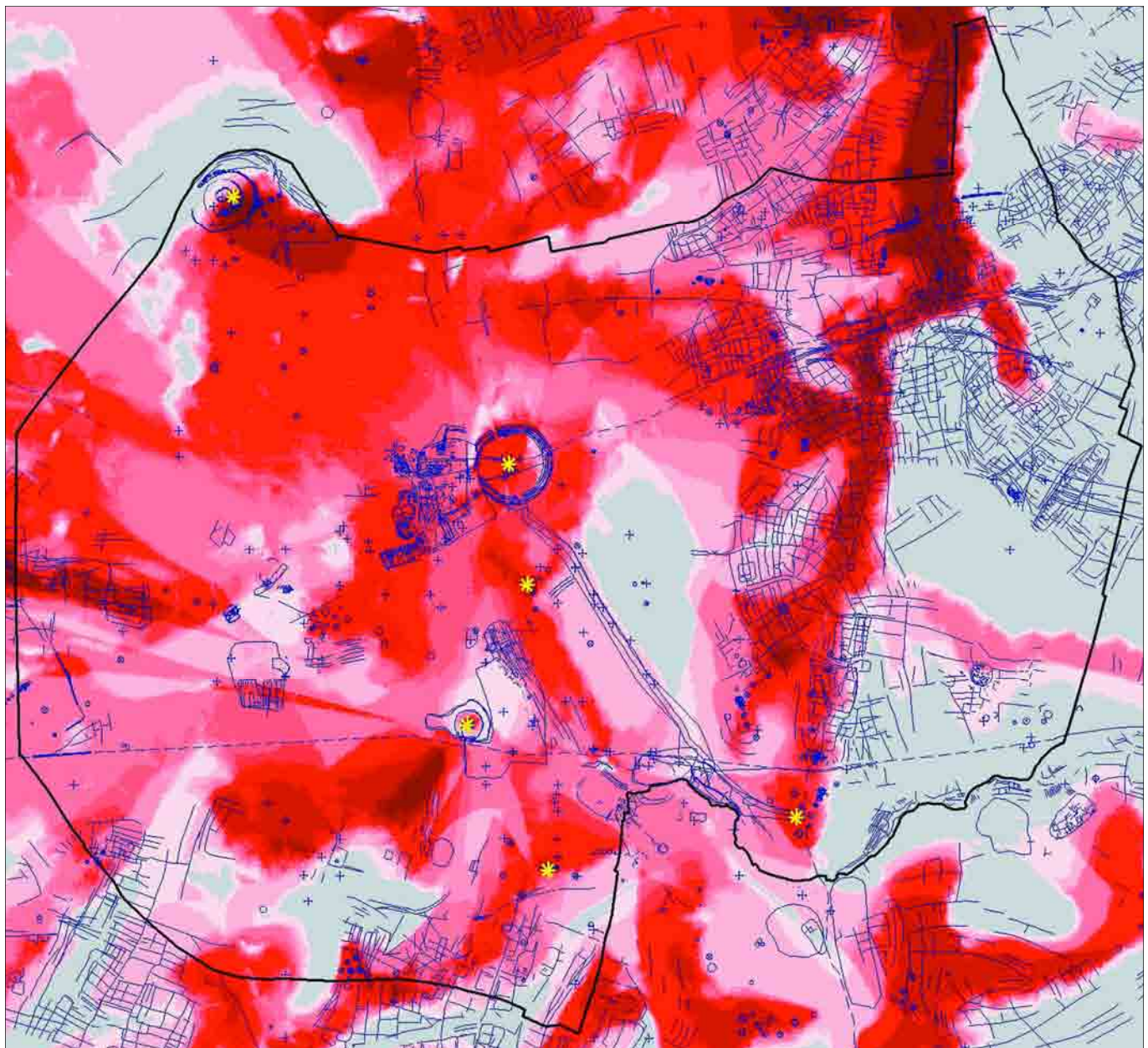
- OS Landline
- Current WHS Boundary
- Proposed WHS Boundary






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Figure 7: Visual Sensitivity

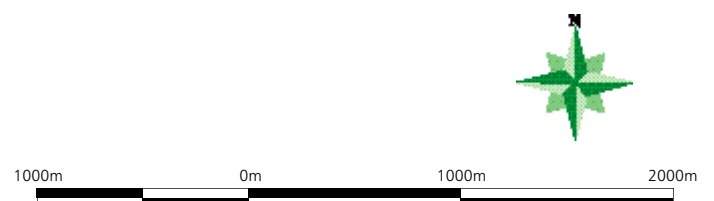


Key

-  Locations used
-  Recorded archaeology
-  WHS Boundary

Viewshed sensitivity scale

	High sensitivity		Medium sensitivity		Low sensitivity
					
					
					
					
					
					
					
					
					
					



The map shows the results of a cumulative fuzzy viewshed. Higher scores indicate an increased chance of seeing or being seen from one or more of the six sites used

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