



Avebury World Heritage Site Steering Committee

Meeting on Tuesday 30th April 2019

2.00 – 4 PM

Wyndham Hall, Amesbury

NOTES

1. Present:

Sarah Nichols	Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council
Colin Shell (CS)	ASAHRG
Sarah Simmonds (SS)	WHSCU
Helen Weedon (HW) (Notes)	WHSCU
Melanie Barge	Historic England
Stephanie Payne	Natural England
Gill Swanton	ASAHRG/Avebury Environs
Henry Oliver (HO) (Chair)	North Wessex Downs AONB
Kate Fielden	Avebury Society
Robin Butler	Avebury Farmers
Rachel Foster	Wiltshire Council

Guests:

Gavin Purchase	Highways England
Doug Stewart	Consultant, Lemon Drizzle
Ray Bryant	Wiltshire Council, Spatial Planning
Louise Tilsed	Wiltshire Council, Spatial Planning
Michael Crook	Wiltshire Council, Rights of Way & Countryside
Ian Turner	Wiltshire Council, Highways

Apologies:

Nick Snashall	National Trust
Patrick Cashman	RSPB
Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger	Wiltshire Council, County Archaeologist
David Dawson	Wiltshire Museum
Janet Tomlin	National Trust
David Andrews	VisitWiltshire

2. Agree minutes of last meeting & matters arising

- 2.1. Minutes – agreed
- 2.2. Matters arising – none

3. World Heritage Site Trust update

Presentation given by Doug Stewart, consultant working on Taking the Past into the Future WHS Trust Transition Project. The Committees will continue to be consulted on the form/structure for any new model and changes to governance arrangements if proposed.

Action

SS circulate presentation

All encouraged to contact Doug direct with thoughts, ideas and feedback.

doug@lemondrizzleconsultants.com

4. Wiltshire Core Strategy Review

Presentation given by Ray Bryant, Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning

Wiltshire Council has begun a review of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2006-26) Core Policies including 'saved' policies (in this case from the Kennet Local Plan). Included in this process is an opportunity to review, update and revise, where appropriate, specific policies and references to the WHS.

Currently there are a number of references to the WHS specifically:

Core Policy 6 Stonehenge

Core Policy 59 Stonehenge, Avebury & associated sites World Heritage Site

'Saved' Policies on the Avebury WHS (TR6-TR9)

The review offers an opportunity to consider whether these policies should be amalgamated into one policy or remain geographically separate?

SS will be working with the planning team to consider policies that relate to the WHS and would welcome views from partners. Comments should be focussed on how the relevant policies protect the WHS and any improvements that could be made. SS will work with planners to consider the comments. Any proposals will be circulated prior to the next the Committee.

Action

All to feedback comments to SS by 31st May

The Committee were assured that this work at present was only in relation to the WHS specific policies and that key stakeholders such as Parish and Town Councils would be given opportunities to engage in the wider review process in the normal ways in the future.

The policies were circulated with the meeting papers and in a follow up email.

They can be viewed within the context of the Wiltshire Core Strategy

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshirecorestrategy.htm>

And they are also included as Appendix H to the World Heritage Site Management Plan: http://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/assets/05-BIBLIO_APPENDICES_MAPS_FACTS.pdf

5. A303 DCO update

Gavin Purchase presented the timetable of the DCO process, identifying key dates and opportunities for further engagement.

The presentation was circulated immediately following the meeting.

Please note the timetable is being updated regularly for the most up to date information on the scheme visit the website <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/a303-stonehenge-home/>

For further information on the DCO Timetable and Process visit <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-west/a303-stonehenge/?ipcsection=exam>

6. Ridgeway National Trail – Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Michael Crook provided an update on the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order Wiltshire Council has issued on the Ridgeway National Trail north of AVEB5 junction in the WHS prohibiting access to all motorised vehicles from 1 May 2019 – 30 September 2019.

The TTRO enables a number of test repairs sites to be developed. The repair work has been developed using expert advice from across the WHS Partnership with agreed methodology and specifications. Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist has advised on specific locations for the test areas and gates which have been installed north of AVEB5 and at the junction with Green Street as well as an additional set outside the northern boundary of the WHS.

From Oct 2019 – April 2020 the seasonal TRO will be in place until May 2020.

At this point it Wiltshire Council's intention to issue an Experimental TRO allowing motorbikes access for up to 18 months duration to monitor the level of use and impact. Thereafter a decision on a future TRO would be based on the outcome of this experiment.

There was considerable discussion and debate on this work and the Committee expressed universal disappointment that Wiltshire Council had not issued a Permanent TRO.

The following issues were raised:

6.1. Lack of scientific basis/parameters for the 'experiment'

Action

The Surface Protection Group to discuss detail of the experiment

- 6.2. Greater consistency in communication from Wiltshire Council ROW requested. The map issued to the Parish Council was later changed to allow Green Street and Byway 5 to remain open alongside the stretch of the Ridgeway from Overton carpark to Byway 5 but this change was not communicated to the PC or the NT before the press release.
- 6.3. Effective management of Solstice parking. Debate around current and possible future arrangements.
- 6.4. Toned to use/recognise climate change and weather data in assessing the need for 12 month closure. Greatly increased wet and extreme summer weather support need for extending winter closure to protect the Ridgeway.
- 6.5. Debate about what is/isn't appropriate given the WHS designation as well as National Trail and AONB
- 6.6. Recognition of the growing knowledge and value of heath well-being and tranquillity.

7. Avebury WHS Transport Strategy

Progress with schemes:

Avebury World Heritage Site Signage

7.1. Avebury car park and road signage

Ian Turner presented the plans proposed by the project team to review, refresh and replace significant road and tourist signage throughout the village. The scheme will achieve a 25% reduction in signage, using roundels instead of repeater signs.

It is hoped to complete the works this summer; the brown tourist and car park signs being high priority for the NT.

SMC has already been applied for and Wiltshire Council Archaeology Services have commented on the plans.

There was discussion regarding the extent to which the scheme complies with the Avebury WHS Transport Strategy particularly with regard to backing boards, use of authentic materials and centre lines

Action

IT and the project team to review the plans against the design principles and update partners as necessary.

7.2. Wider WHS landscape directional signage - await response from partners on proposed principles

7.3. B4003 Repairs

An Update Report was circulated with papers for the meeting,

8. A303 Designated Funds - WHS Projects

8.1. A303 Designated Funds - WHS Projects

The WHSCU has secured £120k to deliver three key strategies identified in the Management Plan:

- Sustainable Tourism
- Sustainable Transport
- Landscape Access

Exploring the World Heritage Site and Beyond will bring these 3 strategies together and be concerned with both parts of the WHS and the links between them.

A Project Board has been established and initial meeting held to help shape the brief. Consultation on work produced will include the Committees and the WHSPP will need to sign off the project.

Timescales are this financial year. Funding is not dependant on the road scheme going ahead. Funding will go to Wiltshire Council specifically to procure consultants to deliver this work.

Note

A Community Forum has been established with representation from many partners including the WHSCU to discuss how to achieve a positive legacy from the A303 project for the communities. SS will ask the consultants delivering the Exploring the WHS and Beyond project to consult this forum on the benefits they would like to see in terms of sustainable tourism, transport and landscape access

8.2. Burrowing Animals Strategy will be funded and commissioned by Highways England from Designated Funds. The work will be overseen by a Project Board set up by WHSCU with representatives of the relevant WHS partner organisations. Historic England drafted the initial brief. This work is complex and sensitive. Consultants will need to work with WHS landowners and farmers who will be key partners in the project.

9. World Heritage Site Coordination Unit Update

An Update Report was circulated with papers for the meeting and is attached

9.1. SS feeding in to the DCO process based on the aims and policies in the WHS Management Plan.

9.2. HW highlighted work delivered for World Heritage Day 2019 with Kennet Valley and Chisledon Schools focussing on the meaning and values of World Heritage generally and the Avebury part of the WHS specifically. Schools were involved in a site visit and took part in creative activities responding to their experiences in the classroom. Artists from Create Studios in Swindon were employed to work with both schools thanks to funding from the Avebury World Heritage Site Charity.

A short time-lapse of the work with Chisledon School can be see here
<https://vimeo.com/327305735?ref=fb-share&fbclid=IwAR3ZEFrCj9dYZERm9qsSeQNZpDxAltqGBYQJcCqSkXqIQgaA-5VwOUzAZ-E>

9.3. HW offered to attend community events/schools

9.4. Megalith will be produced over the summer with a focus on community, living and working in the World Heritage Site.

Action

All to consider ideas for Megalith articles and contact HW

HW will circulate more detailed information about the requirements and timetable for Megalith as soon as it has been agreed.

10. Reports from Partners on implementation of WHS Management Plan and related projects

10.1. Natural England

- Article in Megalith 2018 about mapping species and habitats. Highlighted the importance of the WHS as a habitat.
- Input to Burrowing Animals strategy work including some on the ground mapping. Input into the brief.
- One new CS agreement set up starting 2018. In discussion about some sward enhancement and supported approval for archaeological survey work in Waden Hill area.
- Silbury Hill – will be working with EH to get grazing in place. Scrub management has been undertaken and fencing being repaired.
- 3 HLS agreements will be coming up for renewal next year. We will be visiting this summer to advise on the potential future options.
- Ridgeway National Trail project – provided written support for the project and advice on seed mixes.

10.2. Historic England

- New Regional Director Rebecca Barratt will sit on Partnership Panel and Trust Transition Board.
- Helen Woodhouse is replacing Phil McMahon for the DCO application work.
- Grant aid for the WHSCU confirmed so officer position safe until 2021
- Monumnt Condition Survey – Nick Croxson is leading.

10.3. Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service

- WCAS are attending a number of World Heritage Site project meetings including the Ridgeway Project, Setting Study, Burrowing Animals Strategy, and Condition Survey.
- WCAS are monitoring the gates and barriers on the Ridgeway for the temporary Traffic Regulation Order this week.
- WCAS continue to provide advice on a number of planning applications and utilities consultations. Historic England has given Scheduled Monument Consent for the Water leak on Green Street which was due to be monitored by a professional archaeologist.

- Research continues with the Living with Monuments Project, led by Josh Pollard at Southampton University – Waden Hill this Spring and West Kennet Palisades this summer (SMC has been obtained from Historic England).
- WCAS will be helping run a Stonehenge Walk on 27th July for the Festival of Archaeology.
- WCAS are seeking a grant for extending the WHS Partnership Officer post.
- WCAS continue to provide advice in relation to the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down road scheme and the three Legacy Projects.
- Bulford site E of WHS - post-ex assessment received by WCAS and Monument Management discussions are being held for the double henge.

11.Parish/Town Council, Farmers’ Group Updates

11.1. Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council Report from Sarah Nichol

1. Background.

The Chairs and Traffic Group representatives from the Parishes along the A4 from Marlborough to Beckhampton share concerns about road safety on the A4. Accordingly, they have joined to form a single Group to focus on the issues; specifically to develop a collective approach to seek improvements in traffic management and road safety along the A4 from Manton to Beckhampton.

2. The main issues

Concerns about traffic safety issues in Avebury contributed to the development of the 2015 Avebury World Heritage Site Transport Strategy addressing issues within and beyond the village including the A4 and the A361.

The main concerns of the joint Parishes Group relate to;

- the speed of traffic along the route
- variations in the speed limit ranging from 30mph to 60mph along the area in question
- road layout including bends, hills and areas of restricted visibility
- the safety of pedestrians; lack of pavements and crossing points in particular within the WHS site area; Silbury Hill, West Kennet Long Barrow, the Sanctuary
- narrow pavements in the Manton area

The most recent speed assessment along the A4 was carried out in 2008 and the key factors for a reassessment include the presence of recent frontage developments (eg housing etc). Such development has not taken place in the area in question during the intervening period and consequently alternative options have been suggested for consideration such as road re-design measures and associated visual features as a means of influencing driver behaviour.

3. Next steps

Accordingly, a collective set of objectives and recommendations are being developed for consideration with the Wiltshire Council Highways Department and the proposed Marlborough Community Safety Partnership.

With support from Councillor Jane Davies the Group will meet with Diane Ware, Principal Technical Officer (Highways) Wiltshire Council in July 2019 to explore the potential to address some of the problems in association with planned road maintenance works in the Marlborough area over the period 2019 – 2023.

11.2. Avebury Parish Council

Considering how to reduce road speed from Beckhampton roundabout to Trusloe. Footpaths 22 and 21 are being refurbished. Concern expressed about Sarsen Kennel sign and the flags at Elements shop in the centre of the henge It is the Parish Council responsibility to limit signage and clutter in the setting of monuments that does not require planning permission in line with the relevant action in the WHS Management Plan.

Action

Individual committee members are encouraged to report their concerns to WC Enforcement

11.3. WHS Farmers

Concerned about managing burrowing animals especially at Windmill Hill.

12. Report from the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Panel

Meeting 9th May 2019

13. Report from Avebury & Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group

ASAHRG have received the following presentations:

13.1. *Living with Monuments Project Fieldwork Easter and Summer 2019* – Josh Pollard (University of Southampton)

13.2. Action HW to arrange site visit for ASAHRG

13.3. *Riders after the Storm - further consideration of the archaeology on the Ridgeway and its protection* – Colin Shell

13.4. *Devizes Assize Court – a new home for the Wiltshire Museum* - David Dawson

13.5. *Update on DCO Process* – David Cox (Highways England)

14. Information exchange and AOB

14.1. GS Open Farm Sunday – no single big event in 2019 as too successful last year and no farm has necessary capacity, some individual farms will take part and there are hopes for a big event again in 2020.

14.2. Thanks extended to Andrew Williamson for his long-standing commitment to the WHS as this is his last meeting.

14.3. HW Megalith – the group supported maintaining a good quality printed version, this year's theme will be communities and partnerships

Dates of next meetings

- Wednesday, 6th November 2019
- Thursday, 30th April 2020