



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Stonehenge, Avebury  
and Associated sites  
inscribed on the World  
Heritage List in 1986

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## **AVEBURY WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Date:** Wednesday 16 November 2011 at 10.00 a.m.  
**Venue:** Council Chambers, Browfort, Devizes (Wiltshire Council East Hub)

### **Present:**

Andrew Vines (Chair) – English Heritage  
Amanda Chadburn – English Heritage  
Sarah Simmonds – World Heritage Site Officer  
Gill Swanton – North Farm, West Overton  
Colin Shell – AAHRG  
Cllr Stuart Wheeler – Wiltshire Council  
Andrew Williamson – Avebury Parish Council  
Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger – County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council  
David Vaughan – Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council  
Andrew Lord – Planning Advisor, North Wessex Downs AONB  
Jane Brunning – Avebury Society  
Sue Rogers – Fyfield & West Overton Parish Council  
Mike Wilmott - Area Development Manager, Wiltshire Council  
Robin Butler – Avebury Farmers Group  
Georgina Clampitt-Dix - Wiltshire Council  
Jan Tomlin – National Trust  
Beth Thomas (guest) - Stonehenge WHS Coordinator  
Paul White (guest) – Wessex Archaeology  
Matthew Maynard (minutes) - Wiltshire Council

### **1. Introductions & Apologies**

Apologies were received from Christopher Young, Alistair Cunningham, Henry Oliver, Paul Blaker, Kate Fielden, David Vaughan, Stephanie Payne, Bill Buxton

Jane Brunning deputised for Kate Fielden and the Avebury Society. Beth Thomas is the new Stonehenge WHS Coordinator. Paul White from Wessex Archaeology attended at item 10 to present the results of the World Heritage Site (WHS) Condition Survey and Woodland Strategy.

### **2. Minutes of Last Meeting & Matters Arising**

The minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting held on 11 May 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed off.

AV welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. The Steering Committee meetings are important for all partners to come together and achieve a strategic consensus on key issues related to the World Heritage Site

The list of actions was reviewed and progress noted. Those not fully reported on as agenda items are set out below.

- Action 2 Complete: JT has circulated a list of emergency contacts.
- Action 4 David Trump will complete the report on the badger survey by the end of the year (2011).
- Action 8 JT reported that the felled trees were diseased and therefore a danger to public safety.
- Action 10 SS reported that the Friends of the Ridgeway are currently reviewing tenders for the planned environmental impact study on the Great Stones Way. Statutory stakeholders have been asked for advice on the brief and tenders.
- Action 12 SS informed the Steering Committee at the start of the Core Strategy consultation.
- Action 13 Work on the National Character Areas has not yet progressed to the point where WHS input is required. Natural England (NE) will be in contact when advice is required.

### **3. Avebury WHS Management Plan Update – SS**

SS gave a presentation outlining the background to the Management Plan review and update, the importance of undertaking the work now, and the proposed approach to the project.

SS pointed out that coordinated partnership input into and ownership of the update is important to ensure the Management Plan is capable of protecting Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) while incorporating local values and interests.

The process of updating the Management Plan is often as significant as the finished document itself. It allows for reengagement and consensus building among partners. The process will require additional time and resources to be made available from WHS partners.

The formation of a small project board was recommended. A project board will provide a more flexible and streamlined approach to overseeing the project than the full Steering Committee. The project board will meet more regularly to approve plans for the stages and sign them off when complete, provide advice and facilitate access to resources as required. It will include representatives of key suppliers and users. The Committee will play a central role in consultation on drafts as well as retaining responsibility for signing off the Management Plan before it is sent to DCMS.

The current timetable is indicative and will need to be agreed by the project board however we should aim to submit the Plan to UNESCO by February 2014.

A PDF of the presentation will be circulated with the draft minutes.

Key comments arising from the group in response to SS's presentation:

AC agreed with proposed approach to the review and update. It is similar to approach for updating the Stonehenge Management Plan (2009). As the Plan needs to be signed off by DCMS before going to UNESCO it should be with them January 2014. There is little room for project slippage in the current timeline. SS will review the timetable in light of this.

AW requested that SS could provide a similar presentation to local groups to encourage their involvement. SS agreed that this will be possible during the first stages of the project in early

next year. A consultation and engagement strategy aimed at maximising local engagement will be presented to the project board.

GCD added that Area Boards could act as a useful forum for engagement, consultation and communication with both statutory groups and local communities.

MPK wanted to know the estimated costs. SS reported that she had spoken the company who had published the last Plan and the estimated cost for the publication is likely to be c. £30,000. Possible cost savings in relation to print on demand and other approaches will be explored. There will be additional costs associated with meeting facilitation, facilities and catering.

AV asked if there would be a partnership approach to funding the project. SS confirmed that this would be explored with key organisations in the near future. Initial discussions have begun.

AV asked the group if it agreed the approach as presented. He asked for confirmation that the group approved the creation of a small project board representing the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will retain responsibility for signing off the Management Plan but the project board will meet more regularly to oversee its production, offer advice and facilitate access to resources required.

There were no objections to the approach and a general consensus that the SS should proceed with the approach as presented and set up the project board.

**Action: SS to circulate a copy of the presentation and consider any subsequent comments.**

**Action: SS to set up the project board and initiation meeting**

#### **4. Governance Review – AC**

AC noted that the WHS governance structure was first established in 1992 and since then there have been a series of environmental, societal and political changes that necessitate a review; the same issues highlighted in relation to the need for the update of the Management Plan outlined at item 3. That the timeline for these projects coincide provides an opportunity to link them through sharing findings and aligning solutions.

EH is now able to employ of outside contractors for the governance review as originally planned. Invitations to tender have gone out. The review should be complete by the end of this financial year. The recommendations will be presented to the Steering Committee for discussion at the subsequent Steering Committee meeting.

Beth Thomas (BT), the Stonehenge Coordinator, is dealing with the project on a day-to-day basis. She will be contacting Steering Committee members regarding administrative arrangements for the review.

**Action – AC to provide recommendations arising from the Governance Review to the Steering Committee for discussion**

## **5. WHSO Report – SS**

The WHSO report was circulated in advance of the meeting. SS reported that she is a member of the project boards for the Condition Survey, Woodland Strategy and WHS Research Framework. She is leading on the development of the Management Plan review and update project and has played a key role in initiating and progressing the WHS Traffic Strategy project. SS has provided advice on development management in the WHS and its setting as well as continuing input into the draft Core Strategy. SS briefly summarised progress on some of the other projects not covered under other agenda items.

- SS lead a field visit of UCL Masters students to Avebury and presented a seminar the on Managing Archaeological Sites course.
- SS mentored two UCL Institute of Archaeology Masters placement students who are producing a repo on the potential for digital media for interpretation and orientation in Avebury WHS.
- SS has been promoting the *Making Sense of our Sites* Project competition which is open to schools in Wiltshire and Swindon. Entrants need to produce a digital scrapbook illustrating what the WHS means to them and how it has helped shape them. Details of the competition have been circulated via contact lists and uploaded to the schools' resource WISENET. The winner of this competition will represent the Avebury & Stonehenge WHS at the UNESCO Youth Summit 2012 in Greenwich.
- SS is working with the four South West WHS to plan for the £130,000 RDPE funded project to encourage understanding of WHS and sustainable visits in the region. As part of the project research into perception, interests and aspirations of visitors is being carried out via questionnaires and focus groups. The research is also looking at how the WHS's currently present themselves in relation to their status. The outcomes will inform the next stage of the project which may involve digital media. Partners will be consulted on any projects recommended as a result of the research.

**Action: SS to forward UCL Masters students' report to Emma Carver (EH) Head of Interpretation for the Stonehenge Project once complete**

**Action: All those with links to secondary schools in Wiltshire and Swindon to pass on information on the UNESCO WHS Youth Summit competition**

## **6. English Heritage Update – Amanda Chadburn**

AC reported that the Condition Survey and Woodland Strategy will be covered by Wessex Archaeology. Staff are receiving training on the associated GIS database.

AC provided updates on several roles at EH where the previous employee has retired or changed role. A contact list will be circulated in addition to the report on progress tabled.

The academic monograph on Silbury Hill will be with publishers in the near future and there is a write up of the Later Silbury project in the edition of *Research News* available at the meeting. Work is continuing on UNESCO periodic reporting which follows a 6 year cycle. Work is also progressing in the Governance Review. The brief has gone out to tender. Any findings can help inform the Management Plan review and update and Periodic Review.

AW asked if there has been any progress on the issue of safe pedestrian crossings in the WHS. AC reported that the solution involves EH, NT and Wiltshire Council. The council Highways Department will need to be involved in the reconfiguration of the road to expand

the area at each of the crossing points. SS suggested Tim Davis would be the most appropriate contact as he is leading the on the WHS Traffic Strategy and working closely with Highways.

**Action: AC to draw up a list of current EH contacts and circulate**

**Action: SS to contact Tim Davis regarding crossing points in the Henge and the design of DDA access**

## **7. Wiltshire Council Update – Georgina Clampitt-Dix**

The Wiltshire Council report was circulated prior to the meeting; GCD summarised the main points.

An initial paper has gone to cabinet. It will be subject to further meeting in February. The Core Strategy has been written to be as comprehensive as possible so that it requires as little support from other policy documents as is feasible. In the policy on the WHS there is mention of an SPD in the current version although this is subject to review. There will be a formal round of consultation period before Easter. Comments on the soundness of the plan would be greatly appreciated.

The WHS project plan brief has been approved.

MPK reported that the Archaeology Service has funding to produce an Historic Landscape Characterisation of Wiltshire with funding from EH for a three year project. This involves involve liaison with partner organisations and other council officers.

The HER system has been updated from an AutoCAD to a digital system using ArcGIS 10. This offers great opportunity to share information both within the council and with partner organisations.

## **8. National Trust Update – Jan Tomlin**

JT reported on the extensive work carried out to provide an appropriate feel for the NT properties in the area. Steps have also been taken to improve the accessibility at Avebury. Information is available in 12 languages. Information is also being provided on the surrounding area to encourage visitors to explore further afield.

The upcoming series on the BBC - *The Manor Reborn* - focuses on the traditional skills and craftsmen involved in producing the furniture and decoration of the Manor. Staff will be on hand to manage and monitor visitors arriving as a result of this promotion and to mitigate car parking issues.

RB pointed out the potential that increased visitor erosion of sensitive areas of the site might be a possible result any substantial increase in visitors as a result of the BBC series. The Management Plan makes it clear that the WHS is already at capacity and that a policy of non-promotion is in place.

SS suggested that careful monitoring of visitor numbers should be carried out and any impacts documented. The results should inform a review of the sustainable tourism objectives in the current Management Plan and inform policies in the forthcoming update. There is a delicate balance to be achieved between access, the aspirations of partners and the protection of the WHS. GS suggested that this monitoring should include the ongoing issue of inappropriate car parking in the WHS.

JT asked the committee to recognise the achievements of Chris Gingell who is due to retire on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011. He has devoted over 20 years to the WHS and its care. AV seconded this and affirmed that the Committee recognised Chris Gingell's very important contribution and would like to thank him and wish him well for the future.

#### **9. Natural England Update – Stephanie Payne**

The NE report was circulated prior to the meeting. Any questions regarding the report should be forwarded to SP.

CS raised concerns that conversion of land from arable to grassland or its retention in grassland may be prejudicial for farmers. There has been a situation where land has been returned to arable in the WHS area. This needs to be addressed to avoid a negative precedent. It needs to be addressed at a national level.

AC suggested that this is an issue for NE to consider and relates to the wider issue of additional incentives for HLS schemes in the WHS areas.

AV added that it is best to await the response to the letter that has been sent on to NE on this issue and then act once the information is available.

**Action – AV / AC/ SS to await NE response to NE letter and circulate. An update will be provided on the national situation and other relevant feedback at the next meeting**

#### **10. WHS Woodland Strategy and Condition Survey Presentation – Paul White (Wessex Archaeology)**

A summary of this presentation has been provided with these minutes by Paul White.

SS – The final draft is going to the project board for review prior to Christmas and its findings will feed into the WHS management plan as it provides an extremely valuable assessment of OUV and establishes a strong evidence base.

#### **11. Report from AAHRG – Colin Shell (AAHRG)**

Jim Leary has results of radio carbon dating of Marlborough Mound and has identified it as the third largest Neolithic manmade mound nationally. Its value is comparable to Silbury. This may have potential implications for the WHS boundary.

The Avenue to Learning project for primary schools has been a success. There is an extremely positive case study available in St Marys School, Swindon. Wiltshire primary and secondary schools in the local area will be invited to take part in a similar scheme. There is potential for raising awareness in the Wiltshire and Swindon area as there are a number of academies which have the freedom to determine the components of their curriculum. It would be possible at these schools to emphasise prehistory and the WHS in the curriculum. There has been wide partnership involvement including the NT, WHSO and EH who have provided a good deal of surveying expertise and support to St Marys.

SS suggested that partner schools in the Avenue to Learning Project are encouraged to join the UNESCO Youth Summit competition.

#### **12. Report from the TVM – Jan Tomlin (NT)**

JT reported the full support of the TVM for the WHS Traffic and Design guide. It should examine speed limits, crossings, car parking and other issues. The current working group is

working well towards resolving these issues.

Long term camping along Ridgeway is an issue which also needs resolving. The NT has been working towards this in partnership with AW from the Parish Council.

SS added that addressing the issue of the definitive route and responsibilities will need to involve Wiltshire Council Rights of Way. Richard Broadhead the Countryside and Rights of Way Manager has suggested a meeting for relevant partners once the outcomes of current discussions is clear. AW added that since 14<sup>th</sup> November there have been no more tents on the Ridgeway.

### **13. Information exchange**

GS reported that she would be attending the meeting on the Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Areas and would report back to the committee. SS requested that she remind the group of the need to coordinate with the WHSO to ensure that there is no conflict with the WHS Management Plan objective

CS reported that funding for education is available through the “Connected Communities” initiative. It provides funding to research bodies and would be a good vehicle for promoting the WHS. Historic Scotland are eligible and he asked if EH could benefit from the initiative. Eligibility would need to be checked soon as the deadline for bids is 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

#### **Action: AC to check if EH is considered an eligible research body for grant funding**

RB asked if and when the Condition Survey report would be available. AC said that the information should be available to share with landowners on request once the finalised report is received.

Andrew Lord reported that the Big Chalk project boundary will now include more of the WHS area. He will provide updates on the project as it evolves. There is the potential for funding from the Sustainable Development Fund towards the WHS Management Plan Review and Update project costs.

AW reported that the Parish councils will be setting up a local transport group and one focussed on livelihoods and tourism. The outcomes can help inform the development of the Management Plan review and update. They are also considering producing a Community Plan in 2012.

SS reported on the Great Stones Way project. Tenders have been received by the Friends of the Ridgeway (FoR) for the planned environmental impact study. They are currently being commented on partner organisations. FoR will make the final decision.

### **14. AOB**

There was no other business.

### **15. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2012

## ACTIONS

Item No.	Action and Person Responsible
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS to circulate a copy of the presentation and consider any subsequent comments</li> <li>• SS to set up the project board and initiation meeting</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AC to provide recommendations arising from the Governance Review to the Steering Committee for discussion</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS to forward UCL MSc students' report to Emma Carver (EH) Head of Interpretation for the Stonehenge Project once complete</li> <li>• All those with links to secondary schools in Wiltshire and Swindon to pass on information on the UNESCO WHS Youth Summit competition</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS to contact Tim Davis regarding crossing points in the Henge and the design of DDA access</li> <li>• AC to draw up a list of current EH contacts and circulate</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AV / AC/ SS to await NE response to NE letter and circulate. An update will be provided on the national situation and other relevant feedback at the next meeting</li> </ul>
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