



Avebury Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes Agreed 13.07.23

Wednesday 22 March 2023, 11am – 12.50pm

Wiltshire Museum and online via Zoom

Present: Henry Oliver **HO** (Chair/North Wessex Downs AONB), Claire Selman **CLS** (Minutes/WHS Coordination Unit), Heather Sebire **HS** (English Heritage), Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger **MPK** (Wiltshire Council), Jan Tomlin **JT** (National Trust), Mel Barge **MB** (Historic England), David Dawson **DD** (Wiltshire Museum), Gill Swanton **GS**, Colin Shell **CS** (ASAHRG), Kate Fielden **KF** (Avebury Society deputy), Stephen Stacey **SS** (Avebury Parish Council), Donna Byatt **DB** (Avebury Parish Council) Jayne Drew **JDR** (Kennet Valley Parish Council), Councillor Jane Davies **JD** (Wiltshire Council), Neil Adam **NA** (Wiltshire Council Archaeology), Robin Butler **RB** (farmers’ representative), Phil Foxwood **PF** (DCMS observer)

Attending by invitation: Emma Sayer **ES** (Chair, Partnership Panel)

Apologies: Nick Snashall (National Trust), Stephanie Payne (Natural England), David Andrews (Visit Wiltshire), Helen Woodhouse (Historic England), Stephen Thomas (Avebury Society, Kate Fielden deputising)

Abbreviations: Steering Committee **SC**, Partnership Panel **PP**, World Heritage Site **WHS**, Coordination Unit **CU**, Charitable Incorporated Organisation **CIO**, Sam Rose Report **SRR**, English Heritage **EH**, National Trust **NT**, Historic England **HE**, Wiltshire Council **WC**, Trust Transition Board **TTB** Avebury & Stonehenge Archaeological & Historical Research Group **ASAHRG**, National Heritage Lottery Fund **NHLF**, Parish Council **PC**

Action	Lead	Status
Circulate agreed minutes of 20.10.22	CLS	complete
Circulate invitation for partners to take part in World Heritage Day social media.	CLS	complete
CLS circulate periodic report for comment & meet with Chairs to agree report before initial submission to DCMS.	CLS	complete
Volunteers for CIO working group contact CLS & ES	All	complete
RB contact JD re property in Avebury Trusloe	RB/JD	complete
Circulate proposal for comment and invitation to facilitated discussion to all SC & PP members	CLS	complete
Inform PP of Avebury SC's support for CIO workshop proposal	CLS/ES/HO	complete

Who	Minutes
	Item 1.0 Apologies
	Apologies given, members introduced themselves
HO	Explanation of new Agenda format, for information/approval/discussion, to give focus as a step towards tightening up processes. Today item 4 will run before item 3.
	Item 2.0 Agree minutes from last meeting, review actions and matters arising
HO	Do we agree the previous minutes? (no objections, all agreed) Action: CLS circulate
HO	Matter arising: general agreement that we should get on with establishing CIO, willingness from broad range of members.
	Item 4.0 WHS Coordination Unit Update
MPK	Staffing of Coordination Unit update: following a period of leave, Anne's post of Partnership Manager will become vacant on 10 April. No immediate plans to replace, taking time to consider options to use funding from vacant post for admin/business/consultancy support for key projects such as Management Plan. Will present options in the next few weeks. We thank Anne for her work and contribution to the WHS and invite members to add messages to circulated virtual leaving card for Anne.
CLS	Joined as Partnership Officer in December, update based on circulated information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keen to visit partners on site, do extend invitations. - Three stage website review, will work with partners to update. - Megalith last issue winter 2020, looking to either resume or review concept - Communications review: inhouse review of internal and external communications to ensure method and contents of CU activity is efficient and effective for audiences. - Stand at Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference with support from ASAHRG 26 March. World Heritage Day 18 April: social media invitation for partners to jointly share post to show range of partners and increase awareness, bigger event next year with longer lead-in time Action: CLS share details of social media post
GS	Recommend Megalith as printed, extremely popular in Avebury area. Visitors enjoyed it, maybe approach needs to be reviewed.
HO	Copies often had to be recycled. Decide whether it's learned WHS journal or a newsletter. I'm sure it has value as it is, but not fully awareness raising currently.
JT	Agree with GS: couldn't keep up with demand, the chapel may be good place for it.
MPK	Mixed views, expensive to produce, lots left from previous years. Prefer to rethink but take point that some aspects popular for visitors, also know visitors take & dispose of them. Support concept & a rethink so doesn't date quickly, could combine online/print summary.
CS	Take MPK point but has value as only paper to pick up. One B&B wouldn't accept as out of date. Waste if not distributed. Would support printed, funding could be found if an issue.
SS	Support review, CLS may send online questionnaire to collate our views.
	Item 3.0 UNESCO Periodic Report Approach & Progress
CLS	Circulated presentation that introduces Periodic Report. Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global survey led by UNESCO, completed by WHS, and submitted to UNESCO through the State Party/DCMS for overall sign off. Data collated and presented as regions (Europe & North America) to show overarching trends by region over time. - In its third cycle, reflecting activity since 2013. Over 200 questions, some not relevant to our WHS, most questions multiple choice with approx. 3 sentences for written responses so limited opportunity to go into detail. - Information sources: combination of desk-based assessment (Management Plan, State of Conservation Reports, 2013 Periodic Report, reports published by WHS), consultation with partners in their areas of work and responses to online survey. - On 6 April I will circulate pdf of this first draft of report to SCs, with opportunity to comment by emailing CLS & Chair HO by 17 April. - Email SCs to confirm this meeting has taken place, process minuted at next SC Propose I meet with Chairs to discuss comments, before submitting initial draft to DCMS

HO	Can we agree the process which has been agreed at Stonehenge SC?
CS	If people have comments, should be able to share with other SC members. As a formal WHS document, should it be signed off from SC.
JT	This doesn't reflect the advice of DCMS
GS	Previously, report was circulated to committees.
KF	It is DCMS duty as State Party to sign off final version.
MPK	Sent for information last time (JT agreed)
HO	Last time fully staffed unit and had more time. Is everybody content with that?
JDR	Question regarding timescale, could process have started before CLS came into post.
MPK	Process had begun, Anne started & attended training. I've had ongoing conversations with DCMS & explored different options. When CLS joined we decided with DCMS we would have enough time for CLS to complete report with support.
ES	We recently updated State of Conservation report, due to short deadline we made decision for Chairs to agree draft report by Historic England. Propose we use same approval process. Appreciate CLS position, not huge amount of time even with agreed extension of a few weeks.
HO	Can I take it that, albeit there are some misgivings about the speed, we're content with the process CLS outlined? (no comments, all agreed) Happy with others being copied into comments where felt relevant in the spirit of collaboration.
	Action: CLS circulate periodic report for comment and meet with Chairs to agree report before initial submission to DCMS.
	Item 5.0 Report from Stonehenge & Avebury WHS Partnership Panel
HO	PP met 20.02.23, everyone's seen minutes and aware of content. Main thing to get approval of as a group is renewed suggestion at PP that a CIO, that we all agreed we wanted to set up, as a body to host CU is again something to be considered. Some may remember that was part of original NHLF project brief. Considered partly as could address WC concerns about funding. For Item 10, report to PP, the proposal is this SC approves that this option should be in the frame of reference to take forward CIO.
CS	My understanding is this SC said CIO should be sought as the conclusion of last meeting (HO agreed) Why is this being asked again?
HO	The PP has raised again possibility of CIO hosting CU, option was discarded after SRR. Like to get SC endorsement that this has returned as an option as proposed by PP for consideration. PP propose we should hold a facilitated workshop open to SCs & PP to move to next step in setting up a CIO. I believe this is a constructive suggestion, recommend as next step. Members of SC have volunteered to help with CIO working group, will ask ES to speak on this.
JD	To clarify, there are two questions. Asking to give approval of CIO hosting CU as an option. And would we be happy to attend a facilitated discussion. My answer to both is yes.
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For clarity, in Oct we were discussing SRR. CIO option reflected in SRR was an Enhancement Fund sitting alongside proposed governance for income generation, no reference to hosting staff. - Discussion has progressed, at PP it was suggested one way forward was to explore fully what CIO would look like that also hosted the CU. Since Oct/Nov SCs a number of people volunteered to join CIO working party to move forward & understand what was required to set up CIO and recognised that NHLF bid is one of the longest to deliver for the amount awarded. Haven't yet completely spent first tranche of money, when complete a report is sent to NHLF showing expenditure against approved purposes of the grant. If happy they then give further 40%, retain 10% for evaluation. They recognise impact of pandemic, but we need to deliver. - CIO working group: SS represents this SC, Tim Edwards from Stonehenge SC, Historic England strategic engagement advisor, myself & MPK. If others want to join, we would welcome that. So far, I have built awareness of NHLF expectations for progress report & spoken with a community trust development expert CS recommended who has helped Taunton Museum establish a Trust. SS has looked at what Charity

	<p>Commission requires as charitable objects for a new CIO. I have also talked to other WHS who have been through the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A CIO has to have a board of Trustees, as few as 3 or many more. Would be possible to have a Designated Committee that sits underneath, as done in Jurassic Coast Trust and it is hoped to speak to them. - Purpose of facilitated workshop is to recognise that there are different views, it's been a long process to understand what we want CIO to achieve & the outcomes we're seeking. An external facilitator would be a helpful host of that.
GS	Supports idea of facilitated discussion, outside view is beneficial and will help focus.
HO	If anyone can recommend facilitators please let CLS & ES know.
DD	We've recently set up a CIO for Wessex Museums Trust. Very straightforward, I'm a Trustee, with nominated Trustees by the organisations & independent Trustees for balance.
KF	Highly recommend all speed, let's start this as soon as possible.
MPK	WC position circulated to PP & SCs this week, support setting up CIO for fundraising or to host CU. If there's significant progress towards this and a Partnership Funding Agreement in the next few months that will meet WC criteria set out in letter. Agree with KF & others that speed is of the essence to get those things agreed.
HO	<p>Can I confirm we have the SC agreement for these two things, the option of CIO hosting CU and attending facilitated workshop? If anyone would like to volunteer for CIO working group please contact ES & CLS.</p> <p>Action: volunteers for CIO working group contact CLS & ES</p>
JT	To raise here for consistency across meetings, I'm seeking legal advice from NT legal team. Standing advice from my own legal team is that NT could neither sit as a Trustee or contribute funding directly to another Charity, that is our charitable position. That doesn't mean in any way that NT objects to the setting up of a CIO but it is quite possible that we will not be able to either fund or sit as a Trustee, that's the current legal position.
HO	I understand that there's a series of questions that you're putting to them.
JDR	NT North West Director sits on Lake District Foundation as Trustee. Is it worth making contact to establish how this differs?
JT	Lake District Foundation rather than WHS, rather than get into details in this meeting as I'm currently seeking legal advice, I'd much rather get the answer from the legal team.
SS	Could well be a way round this, NT donates to Avebury PC for community benefit which we're grateful for. I don't think this is a block. Agree with KF, sooner we start the better.
HO	Willingness on all sides to take it forward, will be useful to have definitive understanding of legal position so we can construct something that works, thank you JT for making that clear.
Item 6.0 Proposed changes to Terms of Reference, responsibilities, processes	
HO	<p>Pick up point made in Autumn SCs that SCs weren't happy with SRR proposal. As a result we felt there's urgent need to improve how existing setup operates. We will update here on work that has begun by ES with support from Hugh Morrison/myself/CLS, to get your views & what might be missing. Areas to focus on include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of coherent process for function & collaboration between SCs/PP/CU - Formal mechanism for decisions between meetings to move forward more quickly - Formalise ability to hold hybrid meetings - Create terms of reference for SC Chairs - Review membership of SC in the round as differs from Management Plan
ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spoken to a number of WHS Chairs for similar ways of working, some have decisions between meetings protocols. My proposal is that I share these with CLS for her to draft and circulate to SCs for comment. - We need an approval process for decisions between meetings, probably most important. - No written process how to request an Extraordinary Meeting for SCs or PP - No role descriptions for SC Chairs, although is in Management Plan for my role as Independent Chair of PP.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There's no formal list of deputies for your attendance at SCs, although some PCs have a process, and there's no documented deputy for SC or PP Chairs. - Our thinking is it makes most sense for deputy to PP Chair to be the SC Chairs. - Terms of reference in Management Plan should be reviewed/strengthened /amended if required and adopted by all parties. - SRR felt it would be helpful to have a Memorandum of Understanding, which was drafted as an annex. - It's a question of taking it forward now we have staff in the CU. - We're making progress on what was suggested, won't have anything for SCs to approve until after Periodic Report.
CLS	Next SCs are in July, which could give a timescale for that.
HO	Regarding a Deputy for Avebury SC Chair, I've asked Stephen Stacey if he'd be willing to deputise for me in this SC which he's agreed and I'm very grateful for. I would like your endorsement of that so it's approved by the SC.
	Stephen Stacey: Deputy Chair for Avebury Steering Committee, proposed: GS, seconded: DB
CS	HO also represents AONB, as Chair you're independent & we should have an AONB representative. Also, it's not necessary that the Chair is drawn from committee, could be independent. Important that this review keeps momentum.
HO	I can't see reference either way in Management Plan so something to consider in review.
GS	Recommend in review: induction for new members to explain their duties for their own bodies & in promoting WHS/its functions. Experienced members could talk to new members.
JDR	I agree an induction pack would be useful, with all key information collated to refer to.
CS	ICOMOS UK conference: Embedding a Rights-Based Approach into UK World Heritage Sites on 25 April, where PF is a speaker. In my view our current set up already has this in place.
KF	Agree we need to review membership of SC & PP.
HO	Need to ascertain whether this is part of the Management Plan Review (ES agreed it is)
	Item 7.0 Management Plan
CS	Management Plan Review Group to meet in May, report back for next SC in July. Funding from vacant post proposed to support review. Management Plan Actions: April 22 CU updated spreadsheet with partners & Management Plan Review Group went through in detail.
GS	From experience with previous Management Plans, recommend drawing on group support
MPK	Management Plan Review Group started by Anne, meeting again to pool collective experience. Different ways of doing it, will create options to present to PP & SCs to look at funding etc. Doesn't have to be wholesale review as last time brought two plans together. Focus could be on updating the actions and objectives rather than the background text.
ES	Jurassic Coast have separated all that doesn't change as a permanent annex on website with a living document that's kept up to date. Clever move away from daunting large document, more relatable for those who live in and visit WHS. Historic England international team have done some work on management plan reviews and created a new template for Management Plans, seeing whether they want to test this here.
GS	Original plans were in physical folders, easily updated. Good idea to separate and update
CS	Light touch review worries me. Things have happened since last time eg new Impact Assessment directive, climate change, sustainability. It should be a serious review. A lot of actions, should be tested against how they relate to conservation & enhancement of OUV.
HO	My experience of 'light touch' Management Plan reviews is they take more than expected. Key to decide which parts need changing, what's missing, what's redundant. Re a live document as ES suggests, that Management Plan has to be signed off by Secretary of State and adopted by local authorities formally, therefore you may not be able to have a live document but could have associated guidance & action plans attached.
	Item 8.0 Members Updates
	Members' Updates circulated in advance and shared in supplementary doc.
	Item 9.0 AOB

GS	I think in the Management Plan, Robin represents farmers in Avebury Parish. We need in the review to rationalise equal coverage and could involve Gemma to do this.
RB	Are Stonehenge fairly behind the idea of a CIO?
HS	EH are in the same position as NT, we also have to consult legally, because we're a charity ourselves as well, what the situation is. But I think in principle, yes very much so.
ES	Regarding the wider Stonehenge SC, we had a useful conversation and they certainly indicated they were open to discussing the idea of a CIO hosting the CU.
HO	I sat in on Stonehenge SC in November, and it was a similar tone to our conversation.
RB	Grade II house in Avebury Trusloe deteriorating, now has scaffolding. Unclear how long until work is done, shame allowed to deteriorate to such a state.
MPK	Something to communicate with for WC Conservation Officer about. Not an OUV related issue, CU can pass on to conservation.
JD	As local elected member, I can raise this with planning on your behalf. Action: RB contact JD direct
JT	Avebury Papers project, 4 year collaboration between NT/EH/York & Bournemouth Universities looking to digitise archive in Alexander Keiller Museum. For first time letters & papers transcribed; looking at his finds from excavations in the henge and West Kennet Avenue and end product will be digitised archive accessed globally free of charge.
SS	Fran from the project will be giving a talk on 12 July 7pm at Avebury Chapel.
HO	Interesting list of talks at Avebury Chapel in the member updates.
CS	Suggest that observer status for Chairs of opposite SC is appropriate (HO supported concept, have to check with Stonehenge as a reciprocal arrangement)
Item 10.0 Confirmation of what to feedback to Partnership Panel	
HO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are happy with the suggestion of the CIO hosting the CU being an option for consideration as part of process going forward - We support the facilitated workshop - We have agreed appointment of Stephen Stacey as my Deputy.
We formally note our thanks to Anne Carney for her support to the WHS.	
Item 11.0 Future Meeting Dates	
Next meeting: Thursday 13 July, 11am – 1pm Wiltshire Museum 2023-24 calendar of meetings circulated with minutes.	

Meeting ended: 12:50pm