

Avebury Steering Committee Meeting

20th October 2022 10:15 am – 12pm

Wiltshire Museum and Zoom

Minutes and Actions

Agreed at Avebury Steering Committee 22.03.23

Present:	Henry Oliver, Emma Sayer, Natalie Matthee, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (MPK), Cllr Nabil Najjar (NN), Jane Drew (JD), Robin Butler (RB), Kate Fielden (KF), Stephen Stacey (SS), Colin Shell (CS), Ross Simmonds (RS), Gill Swanton (GS), Martin Allfrey (MA), Jane Davies (JDavies).
Apologies:	David Andrews, Melanie Barge, Helen Woodhouse, Heather Sebire (Martin Allfrey in her place), Stephanie Payne.
Chair:	Henry Oliver
Minutes:	Natalie Matthee

1.	Apologies: as given above.	Action
2.	Update on Trust Transition Board Project: a. Governance structure - discussion on Option 1 from Sam Rose's report and Wiltshire Council's suggested compromise.	
HO	<p>Everyone in attendance greeted. He noted that it was the first time that we have tried to do a hybrid meeting, and the first meeting we've had in 2 and a half years, so a very special welcome to all. Members are to please introduce themselves and their roles in the committee.</p> <p>He welcomed all members, and thanked everyone for coming, especially on such short notice. He also thanked Emma for all her efforts when it came to organising everything for the committee meeting.</p> <p>The background was set out at length, to ensure clarity. He highlighted that this is a discussion meeting, and information exchange meeting, no decisions will be finalised today.</p> <p>Dr Sam Rose made recommendations, there was a consultation, it was felt important that everyone involved in the World Heritage Site Steering Committees had a chance to hear about that and comment on it. Dr Sam Rose considered those comments and came up with his final recommendation.</p> <p>After the last meeting of the TTB and Panel, it was a majority vote, not consensus that option 1 seemed more viable.</p> <p>After extensive conversations with Dr Sam Rose, Henry did have some misgivings about option 1. He believes that an amended version would have potential to improve the profile and effectiveness of the World Heritage Site Partnership and protect the same universal values while retaining strong community</p>	

	<p>representation, a strong independent chair, and a strong voice in a wide range of expertise.</p> <p>He believes that it is important to have the balance or equal representation. Equal representation of 4 main organisations, English Heritage, Historic England, Wiltshire Council, National Trust, community, and landowners in both areas. A suggestion of 7 members plus an independent chair was tabled by Wiltshire Council, National Trust and English Heritage, and Historic England, but the Trust Transition Board did not come to a consensus on this. The decision lies with the steering committees.</p> <p>It was decided proposal for 8 (Option 1) in report is not an option therefore either an amendment or revert to status quo. Either way, there is a lot of detail to agree on in terms of, procedures, terms of referencing to make whatever structure we end up with work effectively.</p> <p>Once governance decision concluded, the National Lottery Heritage Fund will need to see resumption of work on the establishment of the charity. At the moment, it is on hold pending resolution of governance review. No decision today. Stonehenge steering committee still need to discuss and meet and have the same discussion as the Avebury Steering Committee are having today. Vote via email will be sent out to both steering committees.</p>	
KF	Why is it that grant from heritage lottery fund depends on our governance, is it going to be withheld if we return to status quo?	
HO	Lottery Fund aren't prepared to put more money in, until governance is resolved. Whichever way it is resolved, with status quo or with another form of governance, we will be able to resume work with the CIO and Lottery Funding at that point. They just want to ensure proper spending, just waiting for resolved governance. We don't need to reapply; we can continue grant with charity.	
ES	<p>Introduce Sam's recommendations. Final report was circulated with meeting documents.</p> <p>As a result of the feedback that he received, 2 options in original report, slim majority but not a consensus for Option 1. Conclusion: balanced 8-person board, to reflect representation from all sides. His suggestion was for a new form of governance that would be able to make sound decisions with an 8-person board.</p>	
KF	Is Sam Rose's option 1 not on the table?	
ES	No Option 1 is not on the table as the TTB and Panel did not recommend this.	
KF	Could the committees still decide to go with option 1, an 8-person board or a different form of governance.	

HO	There is ample scope for confusion. The recommendation was for 4 Principal organisations, 2 Parish representatives, 2 landowners, plus an independent chair. The TTB could not agree. Therefore, it is up to us as a steering committee to guide and recommend. Those that suggested the amended version of 7 plus 1 independent chair have been able to come and present their case to the steering committee, if the amended version is not accepted, we will revert to status quo. Kate's point about the Steering committee having the ultimate say is perfectly valid.	
KF	Effectively we can still choose on numbers and options?	
HO	In theory we could say that, but it would be very hard for us to implement it, but governance did not accept 7, go back to status quo.	
KF	So, if we don't accept the option of 7 plus 1, will we go back to status quo?	
ES & HO	Yes.	
ES	Important to understand that Sam Rose's option 1 is not deliverable, we must operate in bounds of what is possible, pragmatic, and deliverable. We need to discuss accepting the amended version 1 or reverting to status quo.	
KF	The Proposed amendment does not make sense.	
JDavies	We need to understand the TTB's concerns	
HO	Absolutely, those that wish to make their case with the amended version to Dr Sam Rose's option 1 will do so in a minute, this might help to clear that up.	
ES	Four principal organisations that are supporting proposed amendment.	
HO	Invited Cllr Najjar to outline his concerns.	
NN	Thank you to Henry and Emma for their efforts. Originally the Council suggested a 6-person executive board with an advisory board, and we realised fairly quickly that that was not going to be accepted. The Council then came forward with a compromise of 7, 1 representative from each of the 4 principal organisations, alongside 1 representative from the parishes, and 1 landowner representative. We feel that 1 representative from the landowner part is fair as National Trust being the largest landowner is already represented. That alongside the addition of an independent chair will bring us to a panel of 8 which the Council feels is balanced and allows agile decision-making delivery. What I'm concerned about, and eager to ensure that everyone is happy with is that this in no way impacts or jeopardises the importance of community involvement in the governance of the WHS. This is where the importance of the advisory board comes into play. The executive board will exist to oversee strategic management, the importance of the advisory board cannot be understated which is why we like the view of a larger advisory board containing representatives from community	

	<p>organisations, natural bodies and a whole host of others who are able to effectively feed into the decision-making process. We are keen to see is the relationship between executive board and the advisory board set out in writing. That way those that are on the advisory board will know that their opinions and perspectives are being taken into account, and those on the executive board will have confidence to know that it's not becoming an oversized organization, which hampers its ability to deliver. We feel this is the way forward, and it is supported by the other principal organisations.</p>	
HO	<p>For clarity, pg 5 on Dr Sam Rose's report has a diagram which explains the relationship between the advisory board and management committee</p>	
JDavies	<p>The issue is balance between local and national bodies, and to achieve a workable effective balance.</p>	
MPK	<p>It's a bit more complicated than that. The Council isn't a national body, but a local body. The representative from Council would have to be elected. The elected representative would be on the executive board.</p>	
HO	<p>Partly correct with the 4 principal bodies and the issue of balance of community voice – generally. To bear in mind, the Dr Sam Rose advisory board had a large body with a wide range of expertise.</p>	
SS	<p>Detail from proposal. How you imagine it would be possible that the local community, 1 person from parish, would be able to work, as there is more than just 1 parish.</p>	
NN	<p>The representative from the parishes, for local community to decide. There will be one representative from the Avebury area, 1 from the Stonehenge area, and under our proposal, 1 landowner from across both areas, backed up by the largest landowner, National Trust, that will also be represented. I don't think it is unreasonable for 1 representative to represent 1 community area. Otherwise, we risk becoming too large to be functional. Very open to having additional members on advisory board feeding into the executive board, to ensure that all representatives on the executive board are armed with all the facts and information needed to make sound decisions.</p>	
HO	<p>The issue raised at the TTB was does it mean each parish, and the answer is no, it means 1 community representative from each half of the WHS. To clarify, we gave people opportunity to circulate their position statements. We did offer to all 4 organisations who are proposing the amendment to circulate their position statements, National Trust, English Heritage and Historic England all said no thank you. English Heritage Trust said yes, only 1.</p>	
RS	<p>I was perfectly happy to share our comments, I don't recall suggesting otherwise.</p>	
ES	<p>Let me clarify, English Heritage were the only ones that came back and said they were happy to circulate their position statements. If the 4 organisations want their position statements to be circulated after the meeting, we can do that.</p>	

RB	It concerns me about the Lack of representation of the different parish councils, but to have 1 landowner, situations and farming at Avebury are very different to that of Stonehenge.	
NN	For the board to be viable it needs to a small size. We can't have the executive board with a representative for each interest. Therefore, we put forward the idea of the advisory board, which can have more representation. We can define exactly this how advice feeds into the executive board decisions.	
CS	Disagreed with this.	
GS	The conception of statutory bodies, the 4 organisations, they do have statutory duties in certain areas, but they do not have overall governance over the rest of how people run their lives. Correct me if I'm wrong, Wiltshire Council are not fully representative of the entire communities. The local communities are very aware of the WHS, and, speaking on behalf of Avebury, do not have statutory rights over a lot of our lives any more than the National Trust has statutory rights over its own property. They may be owners, but they are not the farmers or tenants that they allow to work on the property. They don't understand what it means to work with the land in all the weathers and to do the best for the WHS in either part of the WHS. A lot of people have worked very hard to make the WHS work, and they need a voice. They get their feet and hands dirty, and they do a lot of sacrificing in their commitments to the WHS, and to the AONB in the Avebury area. As far as EH and HE is concerned, they are involved in the management of such properties. That does not give them statutory rights over everything. There is a misnomer that there are 4 statutory bodies, and this has been confusing the issue quite a lot. There are a lot of other people involved who have the freedom of thought and have every right to take part in this conversation.	
NN	Clarified, all this compromise sets out to do, is to remove one landowner representative. The other representatives remain as before.	
GS	to recap, Dr Sam Rose unfortunately used statutory rights to give the 4 organisations more power that they deserve to be accredited with. The World Heritage Convention has put out the 5 C's, which I have circulated in the past. Credibility, Conservation, Capability, Communication and Communities. Credibility is something that needs to be considered very carefully now.	
JD	How come in my Parish council there are more than 8 members, and we can make decisions? The Parish council representative, how could we figure out a fair representation? Do we have an election? How do we ensure that this is done fairly?	
NN	This is a difficult recommendation we find ourselves with. I don't know if there has been enough thought yet given as to how that individual will be selected. I think the recommendation put down is a good start. I fully agree that more thought needs to be given as to how that representative is selected.	

JD	Who is WC representative?	
NN	Currently myself.	
JD	Who is the WC representative going to be going forward? Will they be elected, and will it change every so often?	
HO	It's very difficult to try to write the how, focus on principal. It is helpful to raise these questions, as it helps with the deliverability of the whole option. The principal on discussion is whether the board of 7 plus a chair is something we could accept, in contrast to the recommendation of 8 plus the chair.	
CS	We have a structure that could be deemed to be community based, it has not been working, the reason relates to problem of management rather than the governance structure itself. In other circumstances we have noted that there is conflict between a top-down bureaucratic institutional approach as to a community approach, which is a bottom-up approach. The strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention relate to ensuring that there is community and diversity within the representation. It needs to be well represented and well respected. I have yet to see where change of governance is going to make a significant, or even minor, firmer, more sustainable long-term basis for a coordination unit. The point about present structure not working, partly because it is not well defined. If it were to continue, it will need more enthusiasm, closely defined roles and expectations. The proposal from the consultant is not closely defined. In my view it shouldn't be accepted and needs further details.	
NN	Clarify, we do have a breakdown on exactly what the advisory board would look like.	
CS	Not agreed on, the advisory board still needs to be discussed.	
HO	If we as a steering committee decide on option 1, we would have our work cut out to colour in all the details about how we would do that, that would be an in principal decision, I don't want to underestimate the amount of work that would be involved in that.	
KF	I am puzzled by the Council's suggestion. 4 representatives by community. Who would be the other landowner to drop out? Which person would drop out?	
NN	Our suggestion is to remove 1 landowner, so there would be 1 landowner representative, plus the National Trust. We would try to ensure that there is one representative from the Avebury and one from the Stonehenge.	
KF	Not sure how a landowner could be removed, they protect monuments, look after land.	
NN	This can be quite tricky, I think if 1 individual can represent Wiltshire Council, and 1 can represent National Trust, then 1 landowner, backed up by more on the advisory board would work.	
KF	There are too many people involved in managing the land at Stonehenge. You would need 1 landowner from each WHS, with their particular concerns, different farming. It's not feasible. I would suggest National Trust be left out as landowner.	

MPK	At the moment there is no land ownership directly represented on the panel, so having a landowner representative included on the executive board, even if it is only 1, would be quite beneficial.	
KF	Steering committees have representatives on all areas.	
RS	I would like to challenge Colin; the existing process or governance arrangements don't function. There is a lack of clear decision making in existing structure. Status quo is not a viable option. We need to do something different.	
JDavies	Picked up, Colin identified that there is a feeling that we are moving from community-based model to a more management-based model – trust, there is an issue on trust here. The consultant's option of an 8 +1 independent, as there is more representation on that option, would that be more acceptable or something that would be considered by the TTB to moving us forward? Is consultant's original suggestion an option?	
HO	The discussion at the last TTB, there was a view put forward by Hugh, which I largely agree with. Given the shift in proposed recommendation from what we have now. He felt that the community interest already had a major compromise and put a lot of faith in the advice from Dr Sam Rose. The view of the compromise of 7 rather than 8, the community didn't agree. At discussion both Hugh and I felt that the compromise was too far from community representation.	
ES	We have had two TTB meetings, discussed the balanced board of 8. It was made clear, not much room for option 1.	
NN	hearing criticism of consultant's recommendation and our compromise, before we take this conversation further, is there any scope in this room for the consultant's report to be accepted at any level? Hear your concerns and would like to find a way that we could deliver what works for everybody. Would anyone agree in principle with the consultant's report?	
HO	With respect, we have said that option 1 with 8 is not on the table.	
GS	The communities in two different parts of WHS are totally different. Land management and land ownership are also very different. The NT is a landowner. They don't understand day to day running and work. They are not subject to the hardships.	
HO	These are different perspectives to keep in mind.	
RS	Primary purpose of me being here today is to listen to steering group. This is valuable conversations and opinions and possible options to be hearing. Interested in hearing options and comments around different options in consultant's report.	
HO	We were unable to reach agreement on the Dr Sam Rose recommendation.	
JDavies	To Ross – thank you for open and flexibility – we are all passionately involved. The end goal get system that works. I appreciate what you are saying about procedural issues. The option of 8 gives us a way forward.	
HO	Thank you for contributions. How do you feel about the viability of option 1 with 8 if it were on the table?	
JD	Not sure, want to see more community involvement.	

RB	No. I think that the representation on the farming community is underrepresented.	
KF	Agree with Robin. It needs a great deal more consideration. I would be prepared to compromise, but it needs a larger representation, even representation from the community.	
SS	Not workable, my personal view, I haven't seen any proposal yet that I can agree with.	
CS	If option 1 in either form were to go forward, given what I understand about the circumstance with the people involved, there might be reluctance to participate and contribute within that structure.	
MA	Clearly a much greater need for community representation, how we do that, I don't know. It needs further discussion by TTB, not working if group doesn't work together. Getting wrapped up in this kind of conversation is not getting us where we need to be.	
GS	with greater community representation – it's time for proper involvement, proper consultation, trust of process. Governance and management are two separate issues.	
ST	The feeling that I got was that the 4 major organisations wouldn't have enough majority if there was too great a representation from communities, but it is essential that communities are represented properly, not sure if its either of the two options on offer.	
RS	Yes, we'd consider option 1.	
JDavies	Thank you for this section to give everyone's opinion, in a very flexible and positive way. Yes, open to flexible discussion on anything that will work to the benefit of the WHS.	
NN	This raises more questions than answers. Option 1 not workable in any form. Leaves the question are we going to disregard the work done by the consultant, and start again which I don't think is what any of us want to do, are we going to revert to status quo? But what we've heard around the table is that that's not really working to the best of its ability, or are we going to try and find a compromise which is viable? Not revert to status quo. Speaking on behalf of Council, the option of 8 plus one independent chair, with a few tweaks, I might be able to sell something like that. Expanding outside of the consultant's recommendation will be a tough sale.	
HO	TTB was not happy to go with option 1, they agreed that the amended version of option 1 could be a better workable option. There may be less scope than we imagined. I would like to thank all for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. For being here, b. contributing, c. not losing your temper, d. listening to each other e. Being generally positive. 	

2.	b. Establishing an independent CIO - next steps.	
HO	We can only resume charitable aspect once agreed on governance aspect.	
ES	My understanding was that in the past the TTB explored the setting up of independent charity, we must raise additional income, there is not a unanimous decision, but the majority are happy to explore other sources of income. New CIO model that has been developed has to be more deft and agile. It's a new form of charity, which allows to access the most amount of private trust and grant making bodies. The TTB now recommend that we move this forward, establish a small working group from across the steering groups to take us forward.	
CS	Comment that our present circumstances due to a lack of resources, Wiltshire Council and Historic England are not able to increase funding. Lack of basic funding, which this trust should be able to fund projects for. How it would develop and so on would depend on how successful the trust would be. Wiltshire council cannot receive charity funding.	
HO	By securing funding for projects, the charity could potentially cover some of the costs for a coordination or expansion unit.	
MKP	The wider context is that the lottery funded project started 4 years ago, with the concept of seeing if we could set up an independent charity to host the unit. The Council was very much in favour of that happening because that would give a degree of independence to unit and ability to raise funds. But after discussion this option was not supported by NT and EHT.	
HO	It is challenging at the very start to cover costs, that is a high bar set. Possibility that it would develop.	
KF	Can we know why the NT and EH didn't want the separate CIO?	
ES	It had been taken back to their organisations NT position – organisationally, structurally, cannot be connected to an independent charity.	
KF	Why don't we go ahead and do it.	
HO	That's exactly what we proposed.	
KF	Why do have to wait for governance to be sorted?	
ES	Once the governance has been decided upon, we can start the whole process, there are not enough funds outside that chunk of money to do that work that is needed.	
KF	Why is it dependent on us changing our governance?	
HO	Not contingent on changing, contingent on us concluding the decision on governance.	
MPK	We would have to apply for the second amount of money.	
ES	The Heritage fund works, they give you 50% of your amount up front, and you have to report how you spend it, and then you apply for the next 50%.	
HO	The sequential nature of this is puzzling, just making sure funds are used well. Due diligence on their part.	
SS	I would be more positive about the setting up of a CIO, it does look rather intimidating to raise a large sum of money, but there are	

	options we can visit for funding salaries. There has been limited progress with this idea and discussions around it, this is the way forward.	
HO	CIO could be set up in 6 weeks. If you expected that organisation from birth to be the hosting body for staff for the unit, that would be quite challenging. Project costs are quite different, with the CIO sitting beside the unit, it would be a much more flexible model where you can start from 0 and start to make progress.	
ES	Many other UK WHS have set up CIOs, they generate some surprising funds, helpful vehicle to build momentum, to start to rebuild that level of trust.	
HO	Asking for volunteers for working groups.	
CS	If there is a CIO set up and successful and be involved in directly involved in resourcing the coordination unit, that will depend on the success of trust, there is an interconnection in how WHS is managing itself.	
KF	There is already a charity at Avebury, we could talk to the trustees as to whether they would be willing to expand their interests.	
CS	Spoken to member of that trust (Avebury trust), they are willing to be involved.	
HO	That is helpful, thank you. Volunteers? We will be sending around an email asking for volunteers.	
MPK	Wiltshire Council would want to be involved and help.	
HO	It's important that the NT and HE are involved in the charity and are informed of process, how charity can complement their position.	
3.	AOB	
MPK	We are interviewing tomorrow for WHS officer.	
ES	a huge thank you to everyone, late notice, thank you for positive nature of discussion.	
NN	Echo Emma, it has been constructive and helpful, recommendations for future will be interesting.	
ES	intention of this was to wait on both steering committees to meet—then the vote can be sent out, 3 options on that list, we should relay their discussion to TTB.	
CS	I thought the TTB would pass it on to the partnership panel, which will then be passed onto the steering committee.	
NN	TTB still need to be realistic on viability. Let's revisit what they've heard today and perhaps visit other ideas or options.	
HO	vote on that option 1, probably not viable. There is an awful lot to do to improve the way we work without changing structure.	
ES	I would like us to consult with those unable to attend today.	
4.	Future Meetings	
HO	Don't have dates yet, hopefully we will go ahead with more meetings more regularly. Thank you.	

Please note, there was a slight technical hitch during the meeting, in which Gill Swanson raised the following points:

1. English Heritage and Historic England variously have legal responsibilities for maintaining and protecting land held in the name of the U.K. Secretary of State and protected by law such as

guardianship and scheduled monuments It is unfortunate that lack of funding is preventing the correction of matters like mis-mapping of e.g. scheduled monuments and preventing HE from carrying out its responsibilities.

2. Wiltshire Council has of course got numerous responsibilities regarding housing, highways and roads, social care, emergency services and so on. The Council also suffers from lack of funding to fulfil everything the population - largely not within the WHS - would like to see. The Council is too stretched to spend time on the real concerns of the mainly rural residents of the WHS. Certainly in the Avebury part the local people are very aware of the WHS and to a large extent care about it. This is where Parish Councils are so valuable.

3. The National Trust has rights and responsibilities over the property it owns but is a landlord not a hands-on farming organisation.

It has no rights over the rest of the farmed properties and certainly cannot represent the interests of those who, whether owner-occupiers or tenants, have to do the day to day management, deal with the demands of environmental legislation, have the welfare of livestock to consider and the care of their staff.