

# Avebury WHS Steering Committee

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017

2.00 PM

Bowman Centre, Amesbury

Minutes

## Present:

Andrew Williamson	(Chair/Avebury Parish Council)
Nick Snashall	(WHS Archaeologist, National Trust)
Jan Tomlin	(National Trust)
Rachel Foster	(Assistant County Archaeologist)
Henry Oliver	(NWD AONB)
Robin Butler	(Avebury Farmers' Representative)
Colin Shell	(ASAHRG)
Gill Swanton	(Avebury Environs Group)
Kate Fielden	(Avebury Society)
Grant Lock	(ICOMOS UK)
Sarah Nichols	(Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council)
Bill Buxton	(Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council)
Sarah Simmonds	(Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Manager)
Nicola Trowel	(Minutes/Wiltshire Museum)
Stephanie Payne	(Natural England)

**Apologies:** Sarah Nichols, Stephanie Payne, Jane Davies, David Dawson, Robin Butler

Item	Matters Arising	Action
1.0	<b>Introductions and apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apologies noted above.</li> </ul>	
2.0	<b>Review minutes of the last meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of the last meeting were agreed</li> </ul>	
3.0	<b>World Heritage Site Trust</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SS gave presentation on plans to create a World Heritage Site Trust (attached as a PDF).</li> <li>Aim of the Trust to establish a clear identity and secure sustainable funding for the Co-ordination Unit</li> <li>HO commented that AONB are doing something similar, warned of issues with Trust becoming an independent entity. SS noted concerns and</li> </ul>	<b>SS to invite group to a Visioning Workshop at Antrobus House on Thursday 30th November</b>

	<p>explained that they are in conversation with Jurassic Coast, who have formed a Trust themselves, about potential issues that may arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW suggested that a way of making sure the Trustees stick to the aims of WHS Management Plan should be discussed. SS suggested this could be bought up at the Visioning Workshop.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Avebury WHS Transport Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on initial proposal from Tim Lewis looking at WHS Rights of Way circulated prior to the meeting. SS underlined that this was a draft proposal requiring partner input</li> <li>• SS added management plan supports having unified signs with for example the WHS symbol across the site to raise awareness of the special landscape and its extent</li> <li>• SN highlighted that some parishes had not been consulted on proposal</li> <li>• RF and the NT agreed that further details need to be provided before a comment could be made.</li> <li>• RF, JT and HO echoed need for a map</li> <li>• HO suggested an audit based on need. Questioned whether there is a need for a separate group/task and finish group. Emphasised need to look at how many signs are needed before thinking about replacements. Signage should be kept to a minimum in line with Design Principles in the Avebury WHS Transport Strategy</li> <li>• SS suggested that this was a project the new partnership officer could take on. Set up meetings with relevant parties to look at what we are trying to achieve and the necessary next steps.</li> <li>• A4 – AW reports Parish Council are looking into progressing designs for West Kennet and Beckhampton. Moving forward with objective to calm traffic and make traversing easier for pedestrians. BB commented that problems with speeding are widespread, not just in Avebury.</li> <li>• GS explained that she had proposed 50 mph limit to Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council 2 years ago, but had not got anywhere. SN suggested this may be worth revisiting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tim Lewis to be congratulated and thanked for hard work on the WHS Rights of Way proposal</b></p> <p><b>WHSCU to arrange a meeting to review the aims of the project and identify necessary next steps</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS commented that WHS Transport Strategy proposes road design to slow speeds. Signs are both intrusive and not fully effective.</li> <li>• B4003 – AW said that damage/potholes half-way down the Avenue is very dangerous. The transport group are developing a draft of pros and cons related to closure of the Avenue and will then have a consultation with Avebury Parish.</li> <li>• SS – Reported on WHSCU, HE and county archaeologists meeting regarding a short term approach to repairs on the road to possibly build out the bank once more. This is unlikely to be sustainable as it will be eroded back by the two way traffic on the Avenue. NS and RF added that the NT and WC are also working on this. Evidence needs to be provided on the current damage from traffic to the monument. SS to liaise with NS.</li> <li>• SS emphasises that repairs will not hold and must be carefully monitored. Important to gather evidence to showcase the damage</li> <li>• RB asks whether group can write again to bus companies to stop using the road.</li> <li>• HO suggested that it may be more effective to show local people and farmers in person the damage that is being caused. NS added that the NT have condition survey photos of damage on NT land. Group members to see if they have any historic photos that may be useful and will send them in.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SS to write again to bus companies to ask them to stop using B4003</b></p> <p><b>All to send any historic photos of damage to B4003 to RF or NS</b></p>
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>World Heritage Site Coordination Unit Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS gave update on the work of the Unit</li> <li>• New Partnership Officer has been recruited, to be in post soon</li> <li>• SS asked partners to update actions on spreadsheet. Will be in touch to set up meetings with partners about this. It is nearly half way through the Management Plan period and we need to gain a picture of progress as well as identifying future priorities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>All to update action spreadsheet</b></p> <p><b>SS to arrange meetings with individual partners to discuss progress on the MP actions</b></p>
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Partner organisation updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NS for the NT: Working with partners on burrowing animals. The NT have been working with English Heritage Trust on ‘Stones and Bones’ project. Were at Salisbury Museum for Festival of Archaeology.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JT for the NT: the NT are currently putting in for planning for directional signage nationwide. The NT have recently purchased former URC Chapel in Avebury. Thanked SS for helping identify how the Chapel could meet the WHS MP aims and interpret the wider WHS. Added the Chapel needs work doing, will be inviting partners to help with interpretation.</li> <li>• JT further asked for opinions on whether the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plaque of Avebury as a WHS should be placed on the Chapel. Group agreed that this was a good idea.</li> <li>• BB raised issue of Avebury toilets with the NT. JT says there have been no complaints and emphasised that there are toilets open whenever the NT facilities are open. JT added that the issue of toilets is being discussed with Wiltshire Council and Avebury PC who are considering options.</li> <li>• Historic England: SS read out email update from Phil McMahon. They are currently engaging with Highways England at Stonehenge, in accordance with their Constructive Conservation approach. HE joined task and finish group to look at solution for vehicle erosion at B4003. HE currently undergoing national restructuring.</li> <li>• Visit Wiltshire's Great West Way project was briefly discussed. SS clarified the project is not about directing large numbers of tourists to specific sites but looking at the whole route and what can be found along it.</li> <li>• Natural England: SS read out brief email update from Stefanie Payne.</li> <li>• RF for Wiltshire Council: Moving forward with vehicular traffic restrictions on Ridgeway National Trail. Working with Parish council to review signage of footpaths in Avebury. Wiltshire Council have undergone an internal re-organisation. Now have 4 directors as opposed to 3</li> </ul>	<p><b>JT to take forward idea of displaying Avebury 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plaque on newly acquired Avebury Chapel</b></p>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>Parish/Town Council Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SN for Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council: Have new chairman. Noted that proposal for a large phone mast in WHS has been declined. SN emphasised wish for the parish to be included in discussions regarding road use</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW for Avebury Parish Council: Welcomed Jane Davies as new Parish councillor</li> <li>• KF for Avebury Society: Raised the issue of A303 and risk of losing WHS status. Asked whether group could make comment to UNESCO about concerns. HO added that NWD are also concerned about A303 plans</li> <li>• RB, CS for ASARGH, JT and NS for the NT, and RF for WC could not comment on the issue</li> <li>• BB stated he felt it was the duty of the group to defend the WHS. AW concurred that the Avebury Parish Council were concerned about the possible loss of WHS status if UNESO were unhappy with plan for the A303. AW emphasised that the project would need ICOMOS backing</li> <li>• AW questioned if the group should write to relevant bodies with their concerns. NS highlighted that absent group members should be consulted before a letter was sent out</li> <li>• JT and NS asked that if a letter is sent, those who agree can sign and it must be made clear that not all group members concur and which not signed and are not in agreement. SS asked that the draft be circulated to all the group members so that they could ensure they were satisfied that their position is accurately represented. SS will forward and collate responses.</li> <li>• AW asks if HO can draft the letter. Letter to be distributed to all group members for comment before being sent</li> <li>• Discussion of where the letter should be sent. GL suggested DfT and also to DCMS and World Heritage Centre</li> </ul>	<p><b>HO to draft letter expressing concerns about A303 preferred route by some members of the group</b></p> <p><b>Letter to be forwarded in draft to SS to be distributed to all group members for comment prior to its being sent</b></p>
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b>WHS Partnership Panel Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS explained that the previous meeting had been predominantly focused on the forming of WHS Trust. Her presentation earlier had covered these issues. The WHSPP is supportive of the move to a trust. A Transition Project Board is being set up to oversee the process.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9.0</b></p>	<p><b>ASAHRG Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CS gave brief ASAHRG update.</li> <li>• Josh Pollard recently gave presentation on the Living with Monuments project at Avebury to group</li> </ul>	

<b>10.0</b>	<p><b>WHS Committee Chair Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS explained that Chair needed to be reviewed every 3 years.</li> <li>• SS set out which members of the group were eligible to chair according to the ToR. She invited any members interested in nominating a new chair to send proposals by 31<sup>st</sup> December. This will be announced in April 2018</li> <li>• Organisations represented on WHS Partnership Panel (Wiltshire Council, Historic England, English Heritage, National Trust) are not eligible. If no nominations are received the chair will remain in place. If there is more than one nominee, a vote will be taken.</li> </ul>	
<b>11.0</b>	<p><b>Information exchange and AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HO gave brief update on NWD AONB. PhD students have started looking at ecology of Ridgeway Trail. The AONB new management plan review has been launched. In talks with Visit Wiltshire about a Great West Way itinerary. The Ridgeway National Trail Strategic Links project is now underway, the first of which has just been unveiled in Bishopstone.</li> <li>• KF highlighted an Avebury Society talk on 10<sup>th</sup> November by Josh Pollard and Mark Gillings about excavations in the Avebury/West Kennett area.</li> </ul>	
<b>12.0</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018</p>	