

## World Heritage Site Partnership Panel Notes

**Meeting Room, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 10:30-12:30,  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017**

**Present:** Roger Fisher, Stonehenge WHS Committee (Acting Chair),  
Jan Tomlin, National Trust  
Cllr. Stuart Wheeler, Wiltshire Council  
Jennifer Davies, English Heritage  
Andrew Vines, Historic England  
Andrew Williamson, Avebury WHS Steering Committee

**In attendance:** Sarah Simmonds and Liam Wiseman (WHSCU/notes), Nick Snashall (NT),  
Derek Parody (Highways England) and Andrew Croft (AAJV)

Item		Action
1.0	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Alistair Sommerlad was unfortunately out of the country for work</p> <p>Colin Shell (ASAHRG) was held up on the M4 due to a truck fire and will send his contribution to the Panel members by email.</p>	
2.0	<p><b>A303 Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RF introduced AC and DP from Arup Atkins Joint Venture (AAJV) and Highways England (HE) respectively. He reminded the Panel that the meeting was to be exclusively about the proposed road scheme for the Stonehenge section of the A303.</li> <li>• AC began by saying this was an opportunity for questions to HE regarding the road scheme. AC provided brief overview and presentation about the scheme.</li> <li>• AC explained the route the road would take, as well as the major elements that would affect the landscape, such as the junctions at Countess and the A303/A360 and the two portals. DP reminded the Panel of the reason the western portal was causing concern including the proximity to the solstice alignment that has been flagged as an issue during the public consultation and its proximity to Normanton Down barrow cemetery.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AC reminded the Panel of the benefits of removing the road and placing the A303 in a 2.9 km tunnel, removing the current eyesore and joining the landscape once more.</li> <li>• AC discussed other possibilities and challenges including: Access for non-motorised users Issue of internet cables under the A303 needing to be accessed Wide range of portal design Lighting issues at portal entrances and on approaches – there will be none.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Consultation Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HE has asked for views and opinions from the public on the scheme. They have received a wide range of responses and views, over 2500 people participated in consultation events. Over 500 paper responses and 1500 online responses have been received so far, both from the UK and abroad.</li> <li>• AC explained the timeline related to the DCO process for the next three years. The project will not physically start until 2020.</li> <li>• AW queried whether the tendering process for the scheme had begun already. He asked whether the scheme submitted as part of the Development Control Order could change after it had been submitted. DP replied that it would be very difficult to make significant changes after it had been submitted. It will not be submitted until mid-2018 and necessary alterations should preferably be before submission. It would only be small scale changes after that point if any.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RF asked about the placement of the western portal. AC responded that there is only enough funding for a 2.9km bored tunnel. If the tunnel is longer than 3km it would require ventilation shafts within the WHS landscape which is another challenge. He wanted to reassure the Panel that they are committed to finding a solution for the western portal location.</li> <li>• RF reminded the group that AS had asked them to look at the scheme in relation to the WHS Management Plan policies which for the agreed framework for the management of the WHS. AV invited SS to begin as one of the original authors of the Plan.</li> <li>• SS informed the Panel that she would respond on behalf of the WHCU. She would comment on how the current scheme aligned with the policies set out in the</li> </ul>	<p>Individual members of the WHSPP to send in comments to consultation independently</p> <p>SS to send in comments based on the WHS Management Plan aims and policies</p>

	<p>WHS Management Plan. She added that she would look at alignment with the attributes of OUV including solstitial alignments and interrelationship of monuments in the landscape. SS pointed out that there are areas where the scheme aligns extremely well with the policies particularly in the relation to the bored tunnel but that the above ground elements appear to raise fairly substantial challenges for mitigation particularly in the west. SS referred to the need for a large amount of work from partners to deliver related aims and actions in the Management Plan once a scheme is decided on in order to ensure it has the greatest benefit for the WHS, visitors and the wider community. Examples include the need for Wiltshire Council to decide to look for a solution to issues related to the management of byways in the WHS, the National Trust to work on access to and around the landscape in partnership with farmers and local farmers etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DP reiterated that it is impossible to tick all the boxes and there will always be some harm likely with every scheme. Compromise is the key. AW disagreed, citing the policies in the WHS Management Plan and the Convention which gives them a duty to protect the OUV of the WHS. He advised a discussion again regarding whether this scheme should happen at all before discussing how it should be done. Concerned about the 60 monuments that will be affected by the scheme as stated in the TAR accompanying the application.</li> <li>• AC replied that the 60 monuments referred to would not be destroyed but the setting will be affected. AW stated that if this were to happen, there would need to be a real benefit to the environment. AV was concerned about the terminology related to the scheme, it should be clear that the scheme is aiming to protect the WHS if it hopes to gain public support. Financial constraints should not be described as placing the objective of protecting the heritage assets in jeopardy. NS replied that achieving balance is the issue. Financial concerns are not the only denominator in the design of the scheme. SW reminded panel of the benefits of the scheme, and noted that affordability is a major concern if we want to succeed in delivering it.</li> <li>• The Panel discussed the original scheme versus the current plan. NS stated that due to changes in SOUV, the Management Plan and ICOMOS guidance, the original scheme would not be acceptable today.</li> </ul>	
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	<p>Suggested the Panel thinks more widely about the potential damage to the WHS, not just about monuments and archaeology but the other aspects of OUV. DP queried whether HMAG had consulted the work done on the previous schemes; NS and AV said they had and had also provided evidence regarding their assessment of it in relation to the new context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW suggested the possibility of an asymmetrical tunnel, utilising the existing road. DP stated it had been considered an unacceptable option. AV agreed, saying it kept the harm and provided no benefit. AW then suggested two roads with a shorter tunnel. DP said it was not impossible but would be unlikely to provide adequate benefit. NS said that with the necessary portals, it would have a much more adverse impact on the environment. AW wondered if the option had been explored thoroughly. RF reminded the Panel that this meeting and the wider consultation was about the proposed route for the scheme; comments should be provided to HE by members of the Panel for consideration in the decision making process.</li> <li>• DP said the scheme appeared to be generally acceptable for most people except for the western portal. AW asked again about the damage to monuments. AC replied that it was setting damage not physical harm to the monuments. AW wanted to know more about the damage to individual monuments. SS reiterated that the Panel should be considering how the development affects the attributes of OUV including the setting, the interrelationship of monuments and the wider landscape in line with the aims and policies of the Management Plan. AW was concerned that the technical appraisal reports lacked archaeological assessment to provide that information. DP reminded the Panel that they do not have a scheme at present; they simply have the proposal for two routes.</li> <li>• AC summarised the archaeological work that had been done, and that there was ongoing geophysical work. NS reassured the Panel that the highest quality work had been undertaken and would continue to be the case for the duration of the project. SS added that MPK had assured the WHS Committees of this and the oversight of the County Archaeologist as their extraordinary meeting earlier in the month. NS explained the role of HMAG and the organisations involved: Historic England, English Heritage, the National Trust, and Wiltshire Council. They helped to</li> </ul>	
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	<p>monitor and set the standards for the archaeological work undertaken. The standards were much higher than they would usually be due to working in the WHS. AW asked whether there was money included in the budget for more archaeological work to be done. NS replied it was up to HE but the NT would not support a scheme that lacked proper planning and evaluation. AW stated that the purpose of the Panel is to push for the best scheme possible. SS replied that the partners are doing this by ensuring that the scheme adheres to the WHS Management Plan framework endorsed by them.</p>	
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW suggested Panel view on the long term impacts of the project; would this tunnel seem beneficial in the future? LW asked if the archaeological investigation had been done across the entirety of the proposed route. NS confirmed that further work was still to be done on this once a route was identified.</li> <li>• SS highlighted the need to ensure the project could support other actions of the Management Plan, for example improving access across the WHS. RF reminded the Panel that this is something we will know only when the final route has been decided. SS mentioned the Stonehenge farmers meeting on the 20/02/17 and concerns raised around increased public access in the landscape. Partners will need to work collaboratively to ensure values across the WHS are taken into account in the design of any new access arrangements.</li> <li>• AW mentioned the absence of AS and whether his views had been presented to the Panel. NS said that it would be difficult for the Panel to have a single view on the scheme as many of the members represented organisations that will have an official position.</li> <li>• SS stated that the response from the WHSCU will reflect not the Panel view but how the scheme aligns with the policies of the Management Plan. The Terms of Reference for the Unit set out its role in offering impartial and independent advice on issues relating to the implementation of the Management Plan and the protection of OUV.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised by SW regarding this role. AV said this was always a challenging issue for the host organisation. It would need to be resolved outside the meeting. AW reminded the Panel that it is a partnership; all the partners should support SS and the WHSCU fully including in its role of offering impartial advice.</li> </ul>	

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> 10.30 am, 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2017, venue tbc	
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