



## WHS Partnership Panel

### Minutes

Tuesday 14 May 2024, 11am – 12pm

Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Chippenham (in person only)

Minutes agreed: 05.03.25

**Members present:** Emma Sayer **ES** (Chair), Claire Selman **CSe** (WHS Coordination Unit), Cllr Dominic Muns **DM** (Wiltshire Council), Hugh Morrison **HM** (Stonehenge WHS Steering Committee Chair), Colin Shell **CS** (ASAHRG), Lynn Trigwell **LT** (Wiltshire Council), Ross Simmonds **RS** (Historic England), Stephen Stacey **SS** (Avebury WHS Steering Committee Chair), Jan Tomlin **JT** (National Trust), Becky Eade **BE** (English Heritage Trust), Becky Banbury **BB** (Minutes / WHS Coordination Unit)

**Chair Item 6.0:** Ashleigh Taylor **AT**, World Heritage UK

**Observer by agreement of the Chair:** Cllr Jayne Drew **JED** (Avebury WHS Steering Committee Deputy Chair/ Kennet Valley Parish Council), David Dawson **DD** (ASAHRG / Wiltshire Museum)

**Abbreviations:** Steering Committee **SC**, Partnership Panel **PP**, World Heritage Site **WHS**, Coordination Unit **CU**, English Heritage Trust **EHT**, National Trust **NT**, Historic England **HE**, Wiltshire Council **WC**, Trust Transition Board **TtB**, Trust Transition Project **TTP**, Avebury & Stonehenge Archaeological & Historical Research Group **ASAHRG**, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport **DCMS**, Development Consent Order **DCO**, State of Conservation Report **SOCR**

<b>Meeting summary</b>	Members received key partnership updates, reviewed the 2024-25 Annual Action Plan and discussed the recruitment process for the WHS Partnership Panel Independent Chair.  Key decisions are detailed in the table below.
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Decision	Outcome
<b>1.2 Previous PP Minutes 19.01.24</b>	Minutes agreed as true and accurate record of the meeting.
<b>6.0 WHS Partnership Panel Independent Chair</b>	<b>Meeting agreed following action:</b> To extend the Chair’s current term of three years to 31 March 2025 in line with the completion deadline of the Trust Transition Project (as per NHLF funding). When the Chair’s new role description and terms of engagement have been achieved as part of governance work within the Trust Transition Project, the Chair’s recruitment will be prioritised for action.

Item	Action log	Lead	Complete
<b>1.3</b>	Send update on Avebury Transport Strategy to Avebury Steering Committee.	<b>LT</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	Discuss A303 National Highways community engagement plan in respect of Management Plan / partnership activities.	<b>CSe /CS</b>	
<b>2.2</b>	Arrange DCMS/ Partnership TEAMS meeting in advance of World Heritage Committee decision in July.	<b>CSe</b>	Placeholder issued for 14 June 2024
<b>3.0</b>	Provide further updates on progress of Setting Study.	<b>LT</b>	
<b>3.0</b>	Produce detailed plan/timeline for delivery of Setting Study within Annual Action Plan	<b>CSe/LT</b>	

	for review by PP.		
<b>3.0</b>	Review & refine draft Woodland Strategy with NT and other partners.	<b>CSe</b>	

<b>1.0</b>	<b>General Items</b>
<b>Dec:</b>	<p><b>1.1 Apologies and introductions:</b> The meeting welcomed Cllr Dominic Muns who has replaced Cllr Nick Holder as Cabinet Member for Waste and Environment and Ashleigh Taylor, World Heritage UK who joined meeting to chair Agenda Item 6.0. The Chair thanked AT for her involvement. Chair thanked Partners, Chairs of the Steering Committees and Coordination Unit for their work to support the delivery of Partnership activities/objectives.</p> <p><b>1.2 Minutes from Partnership Panel of 19.01.24.</b> Agreed as true and accurate record of meeting.</p> <p><b>1.3 Report from Joint Steering Committee 12.03.24.</b></p>
<b>Action:</b>	<p><b>CS</b> requested update on Avebury Transport Strategy.</p> <p><b>LT</b> confirmed an update (including how it aligns with local transport plan), has been requested from WC Highways colleagues and will be shared with Avebury Steering Committee when available.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>A303</b>
<b>Action:</b>	<p><b>2.1 National Highways Update - A303</b> Written update from National Highways on A303 Stonehenge Project was provided in meeting papers. A number of members attended recent National Highways public information events and found them useful. <b>HM</b> informed meeting that landowners/managers affected by A303 Stonehenge Project had been notified of delays / changes to dates. Meeting welcomed greater engagement with National Highways and its delivery organisations on proposed PACE community education programme. <b>CSe</b> and <b>CS</b> to discuss partnership involvement / related actions in Management Plan.</p> <p><b>2.2 DCMS Update</b> <b>CSe</b> informed meeting that she had spoken to Phil Foxwood, DCMS and there was no further update. Update to Steering Committees shared in papers. Meeting endorsed <b>CSe's</b> proposal to organise a TEAMS meeting with DCMS and whole partnership in advance of World Heritage Committee decision in July so that partnership understands process and is prepared for all outcomes. <b>CSe</b> to progress with <b>PF</b>.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Receive Annual Action Plan from Steering Committees</b>
	<p>The Stonehenge &amp; Avebury WHS Annual Action Plan 2024-25 was shared in meeting papers.</p> <p>The Annual Action Plan is the first created by the CU for the Partnership and has been reviewed and agreed by SCs (24.04.24). It is intended to act as a mechanism to function relationship between SC's and PP, to record decision, discussion and progress between the two groups on 7 key areas of focus; <i>Trust Transition Project, Setting Study, Condition Survey, preparation for Management Plan Review, Management Plan Review, Exploring the World Heritage Site Project and Transport matters.</i></p> <p>The meeting did not go through the document fully, however the following comments were provided to enable the Partnership Panel to 'review and identify resources/funding for delivery' (WHS Management Plan 15.3.1) in future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Annual Action Plan was welcomed.</li> <li>• Members agreed that it provides a useful list of aspirations and targets which requires further work to be developed into a prioritised 'plan of works'.</li> <li>• A balance needs to be struck between functioning the administration of the Annual Action Plan and delivering the programme itself – how much granular detail can the CU function and Partnership Panel require to review and monitor?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Action:</b> <b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members agreed that some key projects will require more detail and Partnership Panel support/resources, whilst others can be delivered by CU with minimal input.</li> <li><b>Setting Study</b> (MP Action 15) - <b>RS</b> requested that this project is prioritised. <b>LT</b> added to written update (Item 4.2) that budget has been set aside and WC is working with consultants on dates to progress. <b>LT</b> will bring regular updates on Setting Studies to future meetings. <b>CSe</b> to develop detailed programme with accompanying timeline and share with PP.</li> <li><b>Preparation for Management Plan Review</b> – (MP Action 62, <i>Promote the WHS Woodland Strategy</i>). <b>CS</b> made point that there is no formally adopted Woodland Strategy to promote, and flagged developments arising from Forestry Commission, DEFRA and Natural England which could directly affect the WHS. <b>RS</b> informed meeting that this was being considered at a national level and members will be updated in due course. <b>LT</b> flagged that WC is currently undertaking both a Tree and Woodland Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation this year which members are invited to engage with. <b>CSe</b> to review, refine and update draft Woodland Strategy with NT and other key partners for future SC review.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Update on key projects</b></p>
	<p>Updates on the following projects were provided via meeting paper 4.0.</p> <p><b>4.1</b> Condition Survey</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Setting Study</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Management Plan Review</p>
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>Coordination Unit Update</b></p>
	<p><b>5.1 CU Finance 2024-25</b></p> <p><b>CSe</b> provided an update on CU Finance 2024-25 with breakdown of costs for Coordination Unit and announced new partnership funding from Historic England (£50k), English Heritage Trust (£20k) and NT (£5k). These funding agreements will be in place from June 2024 in addition to cash and in-kind contribution from Wiltshire Council (£64,908). The meeting thanked EHT, NT, HE and WC for their financial support. <b>CSe</b> will be providing all funding bodies with updates during the course of the year.</p> <p><b>5.2 Staffing</b></p> <p><b>CSe</b> announced <b>BB</b> will leaving the CU but will continue to provide support for 1 day a week whilst the Partnership Officer post is being recruited. <b>BB</b> was thanked for her support.</p> <p>The role profile and description for the Partnership Officer was shared in papers and will be an 18 month/2year contract, full-time position (£29-31k / with on-costs £35-37k). Partner funders are invited to join WC and CSe on the interview panel.</p> <p><b>CSe</b> confirmed that her contract has been extended until March 2025. <b>LT</b> expressed aim to extend longevity of funding to make the World Heritage Site Partnership Manager post permanent or extended to 2-3 years. Meeting welcomed the ambition to provide continuity and job security.</p>
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>WHS Partnership Panel Independent Chair</b></p>
	<p>ES was not present from this item. The partnership requested an independent chair to support this agenda item from World Heritage UK. Ashleigh Taylor (Treasurer and trustee of World Heritage UK) took the role of Chair to support a discussion on the options presented in paper <i>6.0 WHS Partnership Panel Independent Chair Process</i>, prepared by <b>CSe</b> (circulated to members on 07.05.24).</p> <p>Acknowledging the view of the Partnership that there was a lack of robust governance guidance to inform the next steps for the Chair’s position, <b>AT</b> provided a summary of discussions/papers produced to date and set out the requirement for the panel to agree the approach for the next term.</p>

<p><b>Dec:</b></p>	<p>The options presented at the meeting were:</p> <p><b>Option A: reappointment of Chair</b> An invitation for the Chair to remain in post for a second term of three years.</p> <p><b>Option B: recruitment of Chair</b> A decision to advertise the role. This will require a review of role description, promotion of opportunity and panel member involvement in interviews over the next 2-3 months.</p> <p><b>Option C : compromise option</b> A temporary extension of the Chair in role until the new CIO is incorporated by the Charity Commission, the partnership governance structure is re-shaped and a skills audit and revised Terms of Reference for the partnership can inform the Chair’s role description.</p> <p>Members of the meeting discussed the WHS Partnership Panel Independent Chair process at length and many different stakeholder views were expressed.</p> <p>Key points raised related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge and expertise of the current Chair being lost if not re-appointed and the challenge in finding a new chair.</li> <li>• The achievements of the current Chair during their term in what had been challenging circumstances with many differing partner views.</li> <li>• Concerns that the performance management of the Chair had not been suitable as there was no formal process outside of individual organisational process.</li> <li>• The performance management process in place had not been effective in challenging potential areas of concern due to a lack of engagement.</li> <li>• Concern that a potential re-appointment would not reflect the lack of full partnership consensus in renewal of the Chairs position.</li> <li>• Concerns around a lack of transparency if Chair’s position was not re-advertised publicly at the end of their current term.</li> <li>• Potential increase in risk relating to danger list if consensus could not be found and having to report a lack of robust partnership management for the WHS due to not re-appointing a Chair.</li> <li>• Potential risk to the future CIO development as the Chair was linked to the development.</li> </ul> <p>After much debate and consideration, Options A and B were discounted on grounds of lack of consensus and <b>Option C, a compromise option</b> was agreed as follows:</p> <p><i>To extend the Chair’s current term of three years to 31 March 2025 in line with the completion deadline of the Trust Transition Project (as per NHLF funding). When the Chair’s new role description and terms of engagement have been achieved as part of governance work within the Trust Transition Project, the Chair’s recruitment will be prioritised for action.</i></p> <p>In making this decision it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair’s role description and terms of engagement require review and revision to reflect future requirements of Partnership moving forwards.</li> <li>• Application for the new role is open to the existing Chair.</li> <li>• Recruitment process to commence as soon as Chair’s role/governance has been completed (no later than November 2024) providing a period of time for recruitment to be undertaken by 31 March 2025.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event that there are delays to completion of the TTP, open recruitment will commence on 31 March 2025.</li> <li>• A full HR process needs to be put in place to function/support the Chair's role. Management of this needs to be agreed.</li> </ul> <p>At close of this agenda item this decision was conveyed to the Partnership Panel Independent Chair [ES] by AT and CSe.</p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Confirmation of decision and actions</b>
	See page 1
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>
	<p>Partnership Panel members are invited to cross-partnership governance shaping workshop as part of Trust Transition Project on Wednesday 10 July, Antrobus House, timing tbc.</p> <p>Next Partnership Panel: Thursday 19 September 11am-1pm via TEAMS only</p>

**Meeting started:** 11.00am

**Meeting ended:** 1.12pm