

Stonehenge World Heritage Site Committee

Meeting on Tuesday 19 November 2013

10.30am at Antrobus House, Amesbury

FINAL MINUTES

Present: Lady Elizabeth Gass (Chair), Beth Thomas (Stonehenge WHS Coordinator), Loraine Knowles (EH Stonehenge Director); Richard Crook (NFU), Roger Fisher (Amesbury TC), Jan Tomlin (NT), Nick Snashall (NT); Richard Osgood (MoD); Fred Westmoreland (Community Area Board); Philip Miles (CLA); Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger (Wiltshire Council); Spencer Drinkwater (Wiltshire Council); Simon Ramsden (EH), Phil McMahon (EH); John Mills (Durrington Town Council), Richard Ormerod (Highways Agency)

		ACTION
1.0	<p>Introductions: John Mills from Durrington Town Council, who replaces Dave Healing, was welcomed to the Committee.</p> <p>Apologies received from: Kate Davies (EH) General Manager, Stonehenge; Christopher Young (EH), Head of International Advice; Stephanie Payne (Natural England); Patrick Cashman (RSPB); Ariane Crampton (Wiltshire Council); David Dawson (Wiltshire Museum); Sarah Simmonds (Avebury WHS Officer)</p>	
2.0	<p>Agree minutes of last meeting & matters arising Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>All actions either completed or included in agenda items.</p>	
3.	Governance Review – Beth Thomas	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership of Committee BT summarised the recommendations developed by her with the Working Group which has been working for the past 11 months on various aspects of the Governance Review. These recommendations follow discussion at our last meeting and arising from the paper “Local Steering Committee Membership & Selection of Chairs”. The paper has now been revised to show the changes made after recommendations from the Committee. <p>BT was asked to change the wording under “Other” at the end of the Report to Stonehenge WHS Committee on Membership of the Stonehenge WHS Committee” to say that we would continue to invite both DCMS and ICOMOS UK to the meetings not just share minutes with them.</p> <p>The recommendations were accepted by the Committee and BT will contact new organisations and invite them to join the WHS Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: BT to contact ICOMOS UK to see if they are able to allocate a named representative for our meetings.</p> <p>ACTION: BT to make contact with groups/organisations according to the recommendations of the membership report</p>	<p>BT</p> <p>BT</p>
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stonehenge Committee Chair The process for this is that we will open up nominations for the Stonehenge 	

	<p>WHS Committee chair following the March 2014 meeting when we have welcomed new members to the WHS Committee. We should have a new chair-elect by July 2014.</p>	
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from members of Partnership Panel <p>No meetings have been held recently. The applications for the voluntary post of Chair of the Partnership Panel closed at the end of October. Interviews are to be held on 2 December. The Committee will be informed of the result once the recruitment process is complete. Roger Fisher will represent the Stonehenge WHS Committee at the interview.</p> <p>The post of Stonehenge WHS Coordinator is to be seconded from English Heritage to Wiltshire Council early in 2014 and the role will be based at Trowbridge with the Avebury WHS Officer.</p>	
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Avebury Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group (ASAHRG) <p>The Avebury Archaeological and Historical Research Group agreed at their meeting in October to become the Avebury & Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group. Their first meeting will be February 2014.</p> <p>There are some concerns that Stonehenge could dominate the agenda of future meetings but measures have been placed to avoid this and there is a probationary period of two years after which the new arrangements will be reviewed. This development meets one of the recommendations of Egeria Heritage Consulting Report.</p>	
4.0	<p>Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan – Beth Thomas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Management Plan Review process is now underway and began with a Stakeholder Workshop held on 23rd September with around 30 people attending and some very good discussion coming out of the session. • Five drop-in public consultation sessions were held at the end of October: Durrington Library; Bowman Centre, Amesbury; Amesbury Library; Shrewton Recreational Hall and Salisbury Library. Around 50 people attended to talk about a number of issues and general enquiries on the new visitor centre. • Three professional focus groups have been held: Conservation; visitor management and access and interpretation, education and community engagement. A further three are planned before the end of the year: Archaeology and research; planning policy and transport and travel. • The Project Board for the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan will meet in January and the main issues will be presented to them together with draft of the over-arching sections that cover both parts of the WHS. • Draft sections will be presented to the Committee at the next meeting in March 2014. 	
5.0	<p>World Heritage Site Coordinator's update – Beth Thomas</p> <p>A written report is attached with these minutes. BT drew the attention of the Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 8 on the boundary review. This has been put on hold until next year due to a number of outstanding issues and the management plan taking priority currently. • Action 67 The Stonehenge and Avebury WHS map has now been printed and goes on sale on 2 December. David Dawson from the Wiltshire Museum has kindly agreed to let us launch the map at the Wiltshire Museum reception on 25 November and the map will be on sale at a special price. Partners who were actively involved in the development of the map will be sent a complimentary copy. The map will be on sale in the new Stonehenge Visitor Centre shop and at the Avebury NT shop, online and at local bookshops. <p>ACTION: BT to ask the EH Publications Team if members of the Committee could purchase a map at discounted rate.</p>	BT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 139 - BT was asked about the pedestrian counters and the information that they provide. The information is more useful for trends and to show which areas of the WHS are more visited than others. <p>ACTION: BT to present summary of information from the pedestrian counters at the next meeting</p>	BT
6.0	<p>A303 update – Richard Crook</p> <p>RC said that since the closure of the A344 at Stonehenge Bottom he had noted increased congestion between Countess Road and Stonehenge Cottages and that traffic had only been flowing on only one Saturday afternoon since the closure. He believed that dualling along the line of the current A303 was the only solution. He thought that John Glenn MP and the Minister for Transport should make a site visit to see what the issues were.</p> <p>Other members of the Committee noted that the Countess Road/A303 junction was often blocked by traffic travelling east/west so that vehicles travelling north/south were unable to move forward when the lights were green and the lights were only allowing one or two cars through at a time. This led to congestion particularly in Amesbury town centre at peak times. Even recently, out of peak season, there had been congestion at weekends. Would yellow box junctions on the roundabout to deter drivers from blocking the roundabout be a solution?</p> <p>Richard Ormerod responded from the Highways Agency to say that the Countess Road/A303 junction was controlled by smart signals which are designed to stop queuing on the roundabout. There had been a problem in 2012 when one or more of the sensors were not working correctly which had been resolved.</p> <p>Driver behaviour is often an issue with drivers jumping lights or, where yellow box junctions are in place, ignoring them. The smart signals should work better than relying on good driving behaviour. This smart signal technology is use across the network and in general found to work effectively. RO undertook to keep signals under observation so that any faults can be corrected as soon as possible.</p> <p>It was felt by many that the closure of the A344 and the effectiveness of the A303/Countess Rd were linked as any issue.</p> <p>It appeared that there is currently no direct dialogue between the Highways Agency and Amesbury TC and Roger Fisher and Richard Ormerod agreed to exchange contact details to facilitate this.</p> <p>Other members of the committee commented that people are slowing down to look at Stonehenge on the A303 which can cause slow moving traffic and that satellite navigation systems are also causing confusion as they are encouraging drivers to turn right (when travelling west) along non-existent or inappropriate routes such as byway 12. Highways Agency have installed a no right turn sign and Stonehenge straight ahead sign near byway 12 for drivers travelling west to encourage them to continue along the A303 rather than trying to turn right to improve safety and traffic flow.</p> <p>Spencer Drinkwater, Principal Transport Planner for Wiltshire Council commented that the an economic feasibility study was developed by Somerset Council with support from Local Economic Partnerships, Wiltshire Council and Devon County Council and this was presented to government early 2012. It is now part of the national infrastructure announced in Summer of 2013.</p> <p>The Department of Transport is currently carrying out the scoping for the feasibility study which is due to be completed by the end of 2013. This will</p>	

	<p>define what the feasibility will cover and who is consulted. The feasibility study is due to be completed by the end of 2014.</p> <p>RO noted that the planning process for national infrastructure has changed recently with the introduction of Development Consent Orders run by the Planning Inspectorate</p> <p>ACTION: RO to ensure traffic signals on Countess Rd roundabout are working correctly RO to contact Amesbury TC to establish dialogue.</p> <p>Fred Westmoreland noted that there is no safe crossing for pedestrians travelling from Amesbury to Stonehenge. BT responded that there is a draft Stonehenge Landscape Access Strategy which is being developed with the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way team which includes the issue of pedestrians crossing the A303. Sustrans are keen that pedestrian/cycling access is considered as part of the A303 feasibility study taking place next year. There is currently an underpass under the A303 but this is on private land and does not connect with the rights of way network. Cycling and walking to Stonehenge was a common topic of concern to those that spoke to BT at the drop-in consultations. This issue will be considered in the forthcoming Stonehenge & Avebury WHS Management Plan. At the current time the only safe crossing of the A303 is the underpass at the Countess Rd roundabout.</p>	RO RO/RF
7.0	<p>Update on Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project No update available Site opens on 18 December 2013.</p>	
8.0	<p>English Heritage update</p>	
9.0	<p>National Trust update – Nick Snashall Written report attached</p> <p>NS drew the Committee’s attention in particular to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the felling work at the east end of the Cursus which is currently underway • Action 66 – new visitor paths and areas of hard standing are being created in Fargo Plantation at the location of the visitor drop off point there. There will be a view point on the east side of Fargo Plantation. • New gateways are being installed on the western side of the NT estate which will allow visitors to access the area now under grass at the western end of the Cursus and also around the Lesser Cursus. • Interpretation scheme for the landscape developed with EH will be installed early December. <p>Fred Westmoreland said that there is currently a community project to improve the “Apple Track” along the route of the old military railway which is the only living memorial to the Great War in the area. The plan is to take cuttings from the existing apple trees which are beginning to fail and graft these onto new root stock. Sparsholt College have agreed to take the cuttings and a local resident has generously donated the root stock. The Amesbury Carnival aims to raise funds to install interpretation panels on the apple track and at other military features. The land concerned is owned by the National Trust. FW has been in correspondence with the NT regarding permissions to do this work. He was concerned that although he had been given permission to take the cuttings he has not been given permission to plant the new root stock. Jan Tomlin agreed to find out more about this issue.</p> <p>ACTION: JT & FW to discuss this issue after the meeting.</p>	JT/FW
10.0	<p>Wiltshire Council update – Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger Written update attached. Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger noted in particular the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy - Some issues raised at the examination in public which ended in July 2013 are now currently under consultation to the end of 	

	<p>December. Wiltshire Council awaits the final recommendation from the Planning Inspector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alistair Cunningham's portfolio now includes Planning as well as Economy and Regeneration. 	
11.0	<p>Natural England Update No update supplied. BT drew the Committee's attention to the current consultation on the new Defra schemes for farmers and the rural community. The deadline is 28 November 2013. This is for schemes starting in 2015. The link to the survey can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/common-agricultural-policy-how-will-it-affect-you</p>	
12.0	<p>Highways Agency Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Highways Agency are about to install 2 additional signs at the east and west bound approaches to Longbarrow Roundabout. The signs are to assist drivers to get into the correct lane at the Roundabout. This will assist with making the full use of the extra lane capacity that has been built and improve traffic flows. Additional lane markings will also be put on the carriageway. The works will take place in the next 4 to 6 weeks. Traffic management will be minimal and delays are not expected. At the last budget a proposal to change the nature of Highways Agency was announced. The change would mean that the HA would be able to manage the national road network more independently and with greater financial certainty as it would have a 5 year budget rather than only being able to plan on an annual basis. However, legislation is required to make these changes particularly as there are also statutory functions as the government highways authority and this role will have to be determined. The regulatory function may be detached from the HA and returned to the Dept of Transport. It is intended that these changes will be in place before the May 2015 election so legislation will have to be completed by April 2015. 	
13.0	<p>RSPB Update Written update attached. Patrick Cashman was unable to attend but BT drew the attention of the Committee to the forthcoming wildlife leaflet which is the result of collaboration between NT and RSPB to help visitors find out more about the natural environment in the WHS and is due to be published in Spring 2014. .</p>	
14.0	Other partner updates	
14.1	<p>Community Area Board – Fred Westmoreland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on the plans for a new building for the Amesbury Heritage Centre and Museum continues. 	
14.2	<p>Amesbury Town Council – Roger Fisher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was some concern that the Local Residents Pass would not be valid on the visitor shuttle from the visitor centre to the Stones. BT confirmed that the Local Residents Pass would allow residents to enjoy the full experience but reminded the Committee that booking from 18 December was recommended. BT also noted that new Resident's Passes have been printed recently and residents are asked now not just to show evidence of living in the relevant area but also their identity and proof that they live at that address. This will be for new passes issued from the current time. Old passes remain valid. 	
14.3	<p>Durrington Town Council – John Mills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JM said that the main concern for Durrington/Larkhill residents was the problems related to congestion on the A303. The WHS was seen as responsible for the problems. There does seem to be more traffic on the Packway and the Town Council will monitor the situation to see how things develop. 	
14.4	<p>MoD – Richard Osgood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of time has been spent on the MoD rebasing of the Armoured 	

	<p>Brigade returning from Germany. Approximately 4,000 troops need to be accommodated plus their families and infrastructure. The MoD is currently looking at options on where this can be accommodated. The WHS status is an important element in the discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently exploring options for the removal of the redundant sewage works on the Cursus. • The MoD has been involved in the conservation and re-location of the Airman's Cross into the new visitor centre grounds. • Commemorations of the Great War will be a focus of activity in the coming months. Currently exploring a possible project on the gunners and horses in the WHS. • RO was pleased to note that one of the wounded soldiers involved in previous Operation Nightingale projects is now employed by Wessex Archaeology and worked on the excavations over The Avenue on the former A344. • RO noted that he would be keen to make contact with the team responsible for the temporary exhibition on WW1 at the visitor centre opening in September 2014. <p>ACTION: BT will supply contact details for the team to RO.</p>	BT
15.0	Information exchange and AOB	
15.1	<p>Research Framework</p> <p>FW noted that the strategy was very scant on post-medieval topics. There seems to be little interest in military history in particular.</p> <p>BT responded that the Research Framework is still in draft form and any suggestions for areas of research should be sent to Wessex Archaeology sarrfcomments@gmail.com. More information can be found at http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/wiltshire/stonehenge-avebury-rf</p> <p>It was noted that Andrew Murrison, MP for Westbury, who has been appointed the Prime Minister's Special Representative for the Great War Centenary Commemorations recently visited the area and is aware of the importance of the Amesbury area in the events of the Great War.</p>	
15.2	<p>Amesbury Heritage Centre & Museum</p> <p>FW noted that there will be a repeat of the Flying Archaeologist TV programme featuring the excavations at Vespasian's Camp on 28 November on BBC4.</p> <p>Filming for a BBC/Discovery Channel project on the Mesolithic era took place at the October dig at Vespasian's camp.</p> <p>It was suggested that perhaps the Committee could make a visit to the Amesbury Heritage Centre & Museum in 2014.</p>	
15.3	BT was asked to explore the possibility of a free pass to Stonehenge for WHS Committee members who didn't hold a resident's pass.	BT
16.0	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 18 March 10 am for 10.30, Antrobus House, Amesbury</p>	