



Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Panel Meeting

MINUTES

Agreed at Partnership Panel meeting 20.02.23

Microsoft Teams

13.00pm – 15.00pm, Friday 29th April 2022

Present: Emma Sayer (Chair), Anne Carney, Sarah Askham (Notes), Lynn Trigwell, Nabil Najjar, Henry Oliver, Hugh Morrison, Colin Shell, Andrew Burn, Jan Tomlin, Nichola Tasker

| Item | |
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| 1.0 | <p>Apologies/Introductions</p> <p>Andrew Burn is Standing in for Ross Simmonds (Historic England).</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Section 6 of the Governance Report - matters concerning the WHCU.</p> <p>ES welcomed the proposal as it stands.</p> <p>LT – from A Wiltshire Council perspective we are not precious about how this works. The main objective is that the World Heritage Site is well managed, the right people are in the right posts, and that we have the tight structure to deliver this. Sam’s proposal is logical, but it would involve increased funding, and nothing is possible without securing that funding. Happy to look at what that could be should opportunities come forward at later stage.</p> <p>ES asked for comments on the role description of the Iron Bridge WHS Officer. No members had anything to add to this.</p> <p>NT – The future development and operation of the unit needs to be strengthened. We know we need extra funding to support the development and we have committed to seeking it within our organisations. For me, we are going about this the wrong way round; we need to know what the additional outputs are, what the new funding would provide and then decide what the structure of the team and their job descriptions should be to achieve the outputs. I would like to have a</p> |

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| | <p>definition of what the opportunities for fundraising are. Given an increase in funding there then could be an overlap of what the Unit does and what we expect a charity to do e.g., a point of contact for press and a joint up approach to communications.</p> <p>ES – A value added list of outputs is required and will be done.</p> <p>Action: Members agreed for AC and ES to set up a working group to identify a list of value-added output to help NT and JT frame the business case to their organisations.</p> <p>HO – thank you to the National Trust and English Heritage for looking at additional funding. I have been working with the coordination unit for 12.5 years and I particularly welcome this element of the proposal. A constant recurring theme, which has been a frustration for the unit, is of lack of seniority, a lack of direct access to key people and lack of control over budgets. This will make unit and by extension partnership more effective.</p> <p>LT - amount of funding involved and achieved would be a consideration on what the structure looks like at moment, as there are a lot of extra people in there. We are interested and open to discussion to see how we can make this work and what it would involve. We need to define is going to come out of this and the benefits are. We are Open to have discussions to make sure the unit can achieve what we are aiming for it to achieve.</p> <p>Partners discussed the use of a further funded post/ consultant. ES stated that this would have to be checked with the Lottery Fund along with the expiry date as the project has already overrun and we may not be able to get someone in post by the deadline – we are already on out first extension.</p> <p>LT – waned to add that I cannot see any structure being changed ahead of any input as Wiltshire Council has just changed its own structure. This is not closing the door to this matter; it is just too early to look at this in isolation.</p> <p>CS – I support HO’s perspective; higher status for the unit is important as it is not recognised, in present circumstances, as being very independent in its role. It should have the responsibility for ensuring the World Heritage Site is properly represented. This is something that was not in the Iron Bridge role description. The unit should seek to correct any misrepresentation - no one else is responsible for this.</p> |
| 2.0 | <p>Minutes of last meeting</p> <p>Adopted and approved</p> |
| 3.0 | <p>UNESCO/ICOMOS Mission</p> |

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| | <p>AC gave brief outline of the UNESCO mission and it's advisors.</p> <p>Action: AC to send CS names of mission advisors.</p> <p>AB – we have had positive feedback at Historic England. The advisors seemed engaged, but we have not had our full briefing as of yet.</p> <p>JT – I was on leave for the week and so Nick Droy, Nick Simms and DR Nick Snashall stood in. informal feedback is that it was a positive few days.</p> <p>NT – I missed the session because of covid, and I would reiterate all of what has been said so far from the feedback heard. It was interesting to hear that there was a more friendly atmosphere and there seemed to be a wide range of familiarity with the site and the issues around it, as one of the advisors had been before. This is a good thing as everyone should be fully informed. I think none of us know yet what happened in any closed session, and we are waiting to hear from DCMS as they were leading them.</p> <p>HM – advisors took opportunity to meet farmers within the WHS and had explained to them the challenges the scheme provides to them and the situation that they are in. Individual situations are quite diverse and some more effected than others. We welcomed the opportunity to explain this to them more fully.</p> <p>ES - advisors made a point of wanting to get back out on the ground which is good and engaging.</p> <p>CS – in terms of next steps, their response is effectively a report to the next World Heritage Committee meeting. Does this go do DCMS for comments before being published?</p> <p>ES – no straight to committee, but this has now been put on hold as it was due to be held in Russia.</p> |
| 4.0 | <p>Trust Transition Project</p> <p>ES – on reflection this was a challenging meeting to chair. Afterwards I had a conversation with Sam, and I have a fair understanding of his responses to the questions raised. We had to park something that we needed to decide on – the composition of the executive board. Several members mentioned that they wished to make additional comments - we can't keep extending deadlines for comments. This element of the project is well overdue, and it is now embarrassing to go back to the funder saying that we haven't reached a view when the original bid agreed was agreed in 2018. The final deadline for any additional is the 6th of May and will not be extended. When we next reconvene, we will be taking a different approach; a list of decisions we must make will be given and any questions of anything on the agenda will need to be raised in advanced so we can have a proper discussion. Do we think it useful for this meeting to be facilitated, Like the EWHS meeting which</p> |

used Jessica Long? We will have to come to some difficult decisions and therefore do we think a facilitator will be easier?

NT – I don't disagree that we need to get better and quicker at making decisions. I agree with the core of what you are saying, but in our defence the papers came on the 14th when a lot of people were on leave and others were involved with the mission. I welcome having more direction of questions in advance and decisions on the day - people didn't know how to give comments this time. We do need more direction.

ES – Helpful feedback and I take the point on papers, unfortunately these were received 10 day late form the consultant. This was largely because of the volume of feedback he had and the fact we have overspent on the project.

All member agreed to raising questions in advance on meetings.

ES – my final point is that we all should move forward in spirit of collaboration and partnership and Sam's view is that you can't do that with an imbalanced board. I have asked people to go back to their organisations and think hard about the options for a balanced board. We cannot rebuild trust in the Steering Committees with an imbalanced board and we currently run the risk of these committess refusing to go with any of the new arrangements we agree upon. This would mean that we would have to revert back to what we have now with Steering Committee's making decisions. The compromise is whether we surrender voting completely, as many are opposed to it, and solely focus on consensus and what to do if we cannot reach it. Do we have a balanced board but abandon voting? Please take this back and seek feedback. I also want a view on if we share the report at its current stage or do we take the view that it is not ready to do so until the next TTB? In my opinion, it is not ready.

NT – what is the timeline? The key response to this lies in Wiltshire Councils position.

NJ – Thank you to NT. We have had initial conversations, but to deviate from the position we set out on Wednesday will require more time and a written response. I can't provide timeline for when that will be. The proposal of removal of voting was given this morning and we can't have a restrictive timeline as we need a collaborative decision.

LT – whilst this is taking time, we have move forward a massive amount since January and we shouldn't ignore that. However, we do need to move forward further, and it is critical to get this right. The whole point of reviewing the governance is that no one felt it worked, so it is imperative that we agree on what works and make sure that the structure would be able to overcome any future hurdles. We need to make sure that any feelings that people are being side-lined or any historical feelings are put to rest. We must do this at a pace we feel confident at. Wiltshire Council consider our position as the host authority and in our own right. We must make sure that we are not agreeing with something that

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| | <p>doesn't work and isn't flawed with the problems the current governance system has.</p> <p>HO – Although I personally feel the idea that we don't vote at board level is viable, I think all partners need to understand if a vote were taken that didn't accord with all internal policies, then this is just something you must accept. e.g., Wiltshire Council in the local plan has proposed things against AONB internal policy and we have thrashed this out at meetings to further the partnership. We do not have to have everything aligned and we need to all understand that.</p> <p>ES set Monday 30th May as the final response date</p> |
| 5.0 | <p>EWHS + B Project</p> <p>AC – Jessica Long has been the facilitator and held 5 official workshops and 2 extra ones. 12 themes and work areas were identified and sent out as a spreadsheet prior to this meeting. A 13th theme has now been put on hold (the transport hub). Looking through themes, there is only one obvious theme that could be funded through the benefits fund – walking and cycling routes. We are seeking approval to send this spreadsheet to our contact at highways to prove the work has been done and then to discuss which projects would meet Highway's requirements.</p> <p>All agreed.</p> |
| 6.0 | <p>WHSCU Work Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting study • Burrowing Animals • Condition survey • WHS Management Plan <p>Written updates were provided prior to the meeting and will be circulated with the minutes.</p> |
| 7.0 | <p>Partner Updates</p> <p>Historic England, National Trust, English Heritage, and representatives from ASAHRG, the Avebury Steering Committee and Stonehenge Steering Committee gave verbal organisation updates. There was nothing outstanding to be noted.</p> |
| 8.0 | <p>New UNESCO logo</p> <p>Partners discussed the new logo. It was noted that this logo is now in use and replaces the old one.</p> |
| 9.0 | <p>Date of next meetings</p> <p>SA to get a date for the next meeting in July.</p> |
| 10.0 | <p>AOB</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p> |