Stonehenge & Avebury WHS
Expert & Stakeholder Group

Minutes

Monday 29 June 2026, 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Durrington Village Hall

Minutes agreed: 07.08.26

Chair: Andy Miller (WHS Expert & Stakeholder Group Chair).

Present in-person: Claire Selman **CS** (WHS Coordination Unit), Cllr V Hemery **VH** (Kennet Valley Parish Council), Cllr Angela Norman **AN** (Avebury Parish Council), Laura Corbett **LC** (Avebury WHS Farmers), Richard Crook **RC** (National Farmers Union), Mel Barge **MB** (Historic England), Rachel Hosier **RH** (Stonehenge WHS Farmers), Cllr Ron Lock **RL** (Shrewton Parish Council), Stephanie Payne **SP** (Natural England), David Dawson **DD** (Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society), Nick Snashall **NS** (National Trust), Win Scutt **WS** (English Heritage Trust), Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger **MPK** (Wiltshire Council), Cllr Karene Johnson **KJ** (Durrington Town Council), Jo Tudor **JT** (Durrington Town Council), Sarah Tucker **ST** (Amesbury Town Council), Chris Farr **CF** (Country Land & Business Association).

Minutes: George Downs **GD** (WHS Coordination Unit)**.**

Apologies: Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council, Avebury & Stonehenge Archaeological & Historical Research Group (ASAHRG), Cllr Jane Davies (Marlborough Area Board), Cllr Alice Macaire (Avebury Parish Council), Rachel Webb (Natural England), Patrick Cashman (RSPB), Rebecca Davies (North Wessex Downs National Landscape), Alison Hems (ICOMOS-UK), Georgia Butters (English Heritage Trust), David Andrews (VisitWiltshire), Sarah Nichols (WHS Executive Board Chair).

Abbreviations: United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation **UNESCO**, Coordination Unit **CU**, World Heritage Site **WHS**, Outstanding Universal Value **OUV,** Management Plan **MP,** Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England **HBMCE**, Avebury & Stonehenge Archaeological & Historical Research Group **ASAHRG**, North Wessex Downs **NWD**, Executive Board **EB**, Expert & Stakeholder Group **ESG,** Terms of Reference **ToR,** International Council on Monuments & Sites **ICOMOS**, Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group **LHFIG,** Royal Society for the Protection of Birds **RSPB**, Supplementary Planning Document **SPD**, Management Plan Review Steering Group **MPRSG**.

Item	Action log	Lead	Completion / notes
3.0	Request Wiltshire Council meets with all relevant partners regarding byways.	**CU**	**Requested**
3.0	Identify bus services which use the B4003.	**CU**	**Completed**
4.3	Convene partners to advise defining Farmed Landscape & Agriculture, Rural Economy, and Sustainable Tourism & Visitor Economy (Values of WHS).	**MPRSG**	**Underway**
5.2	Request point of contact regarding “no camping” signs for WHS byways.	**CU**	**Requested**

1.0	**Housekeeping and Introductions**
1.1	The Chair welcomed members and apologies were noted (above).
1.2	The meeting was recorded as quorate. No conflicts of interest were declared.
1.3	The ESG minutes of 03.03.26 were agreed without amendment or comment. No matters arising were raised and actions were reviewed at agenda item 3.0 (below). Members supported agreeing ESG minutes via email up to 6 weeks after a meeting, with the final version circulated once agreed.

2.0	**Report from WHS Executive Board**
2.1	**CS** noted that current priorities of the Executive Board include: • Progressing Strategic Goals 2, 3 & 6, namely: governance, shared leadership and collaboration; long-term sustainability of the WHS and partnership, and the delivery of practical outcomes with measurable improvements. • Preparing a Strategic Action Plan, which will be circulated to the ESG once drafted. • Reflecting on the first year of the partnership's revised governance structure, with a focus on enhancing communication between the EB and the ESG. • Clarifying the relationship in the draft Management Plan between the partnership's Strategic Goals (agreed) and the Management Objectives (to be drafted).
2.2	**GD** noted that the Executive Board had considered previous ESG recommendations including: • Agreement of the recommended delivery plan for the WHS Management Plan Review. • Discussion on how to progress the recommendations related to highways and byways – this was reflected at agenda item 3.0 (below).
3.0	**Local Highways & Countryside Access**
ACTION	Regarding the Stonehenge landscape, Wiltshire Council gave an update on the byways: • *The usual closures were implemented over the period of Summer Solstice, all have been removed and byways are all open.* • *In the short-term, options are being explored to discourage illegal activity on the byways, this includes the possibility of a Public Spaces Protection Order. This is very early in the stages of consideration, and it is possible that this may not be adjudged as appropriate once the matter has been fully explored.* • *A survey is being commissioned to assess the damage to archaeology that can be attributed to use of the byways.* Concerns were raised regarding persistent fly-tipping, antisocial behaviour, illegal camping and other inappropriate activity that farmers and other partners experience. **RH** urged that more reassurance is needed, including a commitment from Wiltshire Council that a stakeholder meeting will take place promptly. Members strongly supported requesting a prompt dedicated byways meeting, which should include representatives of all relevant partners, including landowners, land managers and farmers. **CF** noted past and recent instances in other local authority areas where Traffic Regulation Orders had been overturned. **CF** reflected that local authorities are concerned with taking proportionate action. **RH** proposed that proactive enforcement with existing powers would visibly demonstrate that the WHS is properly cared for.
ACTION	Regarding the Avebury landscape, members noted significant heritage protection and road safety issues of the B4003 and reflected on legal requirements, potential funding opportunities, and previous consultation. **WS** suggested an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order could offer an 18-month period of trialling restrictions and gathering evidence. Members discussed the need for following legal requirements, ensuring appropriate consultation, and gathering evidence of collisions and damage to upstanding and buried archaeology. Members suggested engaging local farmers and passenger transport providers. Members requested information of the bus services which use the B4003. **AN** noted that Avebury Parish Council has recently established a road safety subcommittee, and that Marlborough LHFIG is supporting a reduction from 30mph to 20mph on the A4361 in Avebury village. Members noted that speed surveys and traffic assessments remain necessary components of the decision-making process for Wiltshire Council's new Speed Limit Policy 2026. Members noted the recent review of the A4 speed limit with future updates to follow.

4.0	**WHS Management Plan Review**
4.1	**CS** thanked members for their written comments, which have been encompassed by track changes to the first four chapters of the previously circulated draft. **CS** noted that the fifth and sixth chapters (Current Factors and Management Vision & Objectives) will be drafted alongside collaborative partnership workshops. The first four chapters were presented to members for general agreement on the text. Introductory diagrams, including on key World Heritage concepts, will be enhanced ahead of the public consultation. It was agreed that the Related Plans section should instead be described as Related Documents, with local development plans mentioned as an example.
4.2	In the Boundaries & Setting chapter, it was agreed to: • Make a minor change to language in the Boundaries section. • Acknowledge in the Setting section that Robin Hood's Ball Causewayed Enclosure was referenced in the original nomination document. Members raised if Marlborough Mound was relevant in the Setting section. It was noted that the monument is outside of the visual envelope and is not referenced in the WHS Setting Study SPD.
4.3 ***ACTION***	In the Values of the WHS section, it was agreed to: • Make a minor change to introductory language and remove the word Value from each paragraph heading. • Include the research agenda's range of periods for Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage. • Include geology in Landscape Character. • Include key habitats and species in Biodiversity. • Convene partners to work with the MPRSG on defining Farmed Landscape & Agriculture, Rural Economy, and Sustainable Tourism & Visitor Economy. **RC** reflected on changes in farming practices and food production in recent decades. In the Designated Assets section, it was also agreed to include further details of Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas. In the Legislative & Planning System section, it was agreed to: • Update the status of the Local Plan at the time of final drafting. • Include further details of Environmental Impact Assessment Sensitive Areas. • Reference the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025.
4.4	In the Current Management chapter, it was agreed to: • Rename one of its sections to Ownership, Guardianship and Management, with minor corrections throughout the text. • Remove a reference to the 2015 WHS Management Plan regarding land acquisition history. • Clarify the management arrangements for the Normanton Down reserve. • Reference the role of tenant farmers in land management. • Reference the recent partnership governance review. • Move the HBMCE description to accompany the Historic England description. • Update the partner descriptions for Natural England and Farming (agreed via email).

4.5	**CS** noted that consultation with partners will take place in autumn alongside the drafting of the Current Factors chapter and the Management Vision & Objectives chapter, and how they inform WHS Polices and Actions. **CS** noted that appendices will also be considered, including redrafting the Related Documents appendix.
5.0	**Reports from Forums and Partners**
5.1	**Towns & Parishes** **AN** noted that Summer Solstice at Avebury had a generally positive atmosphere and fewer issues than anticipated. Members reflected on measures to protect visitors, monuments and landscape, such as from the increased risk of wildfire, and also on the long-standing issue of inappropriate human waste. **LC** suggested that public transport could be extended throughout the night to alleviate impacts. **VH** noted that solstice visitors may not be aware of livestock in the wider landscape. Avebury Parish Council expressed appreciation to Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Police and other organisations for the improved collaborative approach at Summer Solstice. **RL** noted that the negative impacts of the Summer Solstice at Stonehenge were greatly reduced from previous years and that Shrewton Parish Council welcomed the enhanced consultation with English Heritage at their annual parish meeting and improved multi-agency traffic arrangements. **ST** noted that there had been praise from Amesbury residents for these arrangements.
5.2 ***ACTION***	**Farming** **LC** welcomed the support from Wiltshire Council officers during Summer Solstice at Avebury. **RH** updated in relation to the Stonehenge landscape: • Farmers welcomed the solstice hotline number organised by English Heritage. • Noted that local farmers are the early-warning system for issues in the wider landscape. • Welcomed laminated signs urging visitors to respect the historic landscape. • Noted the importance of ensuring that drug checks and towing enforcement takes place, including at A360 Druid's Lodge. • Welcomed the proposal for a post-solstice wash-up stakeholder meeting. • Urged that a byways meeting takes place promptly with Wiltshire Council to improve partnership working on the issue (action above). • Noted the presence of a byway sign at Longbridge Deverill – *"POLICE: this land forms part of the public highway and any persons found camping may be removed by the Police or the Highway Authority, having regard to all relevant conditions."* • Requested a point of contact for more information about requesting such a sign for the Stonehenge byways. **RC** raised the importance of issues related to the A303. **CS** noted that the Current Factors chapter of the WHS Management Plan Review will consider all major highways in the WHS.
5.3	**Partner Organisations** **NS** updated on behalf of the National Trust: • Welcomed hourly partnership reporting between solstice operations at both Stonehenge and Avebury. • Noted that toilets were open for solstice on Avebury High St and in the farmyard.

	• Reminded members of Festival of Archaeology events at Avebury and in the Stonehenge landscape in late July (What's On: Summer 2026 | Stonehenge & Avebury).
5.4	**ASAHRG (Research Group)** The next ESG meeting will include an update regarding an ASAHRG representative.
6.0	**Celebrating 40 Years of Stonehenge & Avebury WHS**
	An anniversary logo for the seven WHSs has been developed by the UK National Commission for UNESCO and World Heritage UK. Local partners are continuing to explore anniversary-related events. The Avebury Society has scheduled an anniversary celebration in September 2026 (What's On: Summer 2026 | Stonehenge & Avebury). **CS** noted that launch activity is planned for the autumn 2026 with most anniversary activity anticipated to take place during 2027. A task group meeting is scheduled for this summer, and a small amount of funding will be sought to support widening engagement. The WHS Management Plan review public consultation is expected to form part of the anniversary programme.
7.0	**AOB**
	There were the following matters of any other business: • Members gave their best wishes to Sarah Nichols who is at home and recovering well. • Festival of Archaeology events at Salisbury Museum on 18–19 July (What's On: Summer 2026 | Stonehenge & Avebury). • From 16 July: UK's first ancient DNA exhibition opens at the Crick. • Members will have received the Partner Newsletter reflecting on Spring 2026. The draft decision for the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has: • Welcomed the new Stonehenge & Avebury governance arrangements, the WHS Setting Study SPD, Condition Survey, and the design of the new Stonehenge education facilities. • Requested a State of Conservation report for late 2027, to the World Heritage Centre rather than to the World Heritage Committee.
8.0	**Summary of Recommendations for Executive Board**
	None
9.0	**Next Expert & Stakeholder Group Meeting**
	The next ESG meeting will soon be scheduled, taking into account the timeline of the autumn Management Plan discussions. Members will be notified of the date once scheduled.

Meeting ended: 8:25pm