

**Avebury World Heritage Site  
Archaeological and Historical Research Group  
DRAFT Notes of meeting 15<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

**Present:** Amanda Chadburn, Bruce Eagles, Colin Shell, Gill Swanton(Chair), Brian Edwards, Paul Cripps, Sarah Simmonds, David Dawson, Jim Gunter, Josh Pollard, Ros Cleal, Martyn Barber, David Vaughan, Nick Baxter, Dave Field, Jude Currivan, Vicky Crosby, Sian Williams, Julie Scott-Jackson, Mike Allen, Kathy Perrin, Rachel Foster.

**1. Apologies and Introductions**

Andrew Lawson, Mike Allen, Nicola Hembrey, Heather Sebire, Kate Fielden, Martin Papworth, Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger, Brian Davison, Andrew Fitzpatrick, Katy Whittaker, Nick Snashall,

**2. Minutes and matters arising**

**2.1 Minutes**

Draft notes from last minutes agreed.

**3. WHS Steering Committee Representative's Report**

CS ran through his report to the Steering Committee in May. He reported on the following items:

- Woodland Strategy
- Research Framework
- DD reported on a proposed bus link between Avebury and Stonehenge
- A presentation was given by Ian Ashby of EH on the proposed repair project at the West Kennet Long Barrow.
- The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the WHS needs to be prepared for UNESCO by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011. This will include in addition to the Statement of Significance agreed in 2008, a statement of integrity, authenticity and management and protection. These additional elements contain references to the possibility of a boundary review at Stonehenge (Avebury's already agreed in 2008). There are also hooks in the document which will encourage the protection of the setting via the planning system. Not only is the documents key to UNESCO, it will also form the key definition of OUV or significance to planners. Comments were invited on the first draft which will be reviewed. Sign off due at the next Steering Committee meeting in November.
- Comments were invited on the final draft of the brief for the governance review.
- The NT general manager, Jan Tomlin, reported that adequate signage was needed to encourage visitor support.

CS reported that the WHS Steering Committees exchange visits to Stonehenge and Avebury which took place in June had been successful with a very good and encouraging turn out from decision makers in Wiltshire Council. There had been general support for the idea of a proscriptive woodland strategy. SS was congratulated on a very professional presentation on the Avebury WHS.

**Action: AC to update group on developments on the West Kennet Long Barrow project and decisions on the method of repair chosen.**

#### **4. Monitoring of the Resource Agenda**

##### **4.1 Research Agenda Update**

SS reported the good news that English Heritage (EH) has agreed fund the new research framework and had met with the project board to discuss the options for how to proceed. KP explained the rationale behind the funding offer. Although EH will not normally fund updates no research framework has ever been produced for the whole World Heritage Site. A new framework covering both halves of the WHS is therefore eligible for funding.

A full update of the Avebury resource assessment will be produced as originally planned. Contributions will be requested from the academic community as previously decided. Those who have already agreed to contribute will remain key to its production. Others not yet approached will be contacted once the contract is let and the coordinator in place. Coordination of the full update of the resource assessment element will be funded for Avebury. A quick update of the Stonehenge resource assessment will take place independently. It is intended that the update will retain the style of the current Stonehenge resource assessment while the Avebury one will be more comprehensive and produced by the wider academic community as agreed.

The production of the agenda and strategy elements of the framework will be undertaken together for both halves of the WHS: Stonehenge and Avebury. Decisions about its content will be made by the academic community.

The work will begin in about 2 months.

AC added that the WHS-wide framework will be for the whole historic environment rather than purely archaeological. This reflects the new planning policy statement 5 (PPS5) for the historic environment. BE suggested this is reflected in the title of the framework. NB underlined that Larkhill had been the first airport base and the wider framework would pick up this important area of significance.

The news was welcomed that funding had been secured at this challenging time.

**Action: SS to inform those who have already agreed to contribute of the funding decision and way forward.**

## **5. Current archaeological & historical research**

### **5.1 Later Silbury**

VC reported that the dig will start on August 9<sup>th</sup> and continue for 5 weeks plus 2 weeks processing. The team will transfer from Marden. The project design is currently being finalised. The work will be targeted based on the geophysics. It will evaluate the Roman settlement investigating its survival and quality. The results will help to inform future management.

This year work will be limited to a small evaluation/intervention and remain south of the A4. Resources are limited and it is felt better to focus them on a manageable area. In the arable field 4 or 5 trenches will be dug in the area of the track way and biggest blocks shown up by the geophysics. The nature of activities and varying preservation in relation to the slope of the land will be looked at. The known large stone buildings will be left due to limited resources.

In the water meadow an area of raised land with a stone feature which exhibits high resistivity will be explored. The trench will be extended across the flatter area and flood plain deposit. This will allow for palaeoenvironmental studies and OSL dating. This will allow for a review of John Evan's work on dating.

The area is thought to be Roman but there could be potential for fragile Neolithic deposits. DF's report indicates a possible undated enclosure with a raised bank but no ditch.

There will be information posters on site and at Silbury explaining the work underway to visitors. Posters are available to the AK Museum and Devizes. There is an EH webpage and blog with updates on progress and images. The area will be within a compound and there will be 24-hour security.

GS suggested the Highways Authority is informed. RC and JP suggested tour dates for visitors put up on posters to manage public interest. RC offered NT volunteers to help. JG offered to help with surface collection if required. Finds will be processed in house or if very numerous they will be contracted out post-excavation. Wiltshire council was appointed to respond to urgent need if required at Marden. GS will inform finds liaison officer.

**Action: NH to send excavation plans to DV.**

**NH to organise for AAHRG to visit towards middle of excavation. SS to assist.**

**SS to assist in getting in contact with local community via Parish Councils**

## **5.2 Experimental Archaeology**

GS reported that KW had been basing sarsens together as part of an experiment to review the make up of mauls in Salisbury Museum. The work will be completed in September. She has finished the review of the experimental earthwork which will be assessed by Mike Evans.

The earthwork is due to be re-fenced in the near future.

## **5.3 Approach to Society of Antiquaries: Stukeley's Drawings**

BE suggested that help would be needed with Stukeley's drawings in advance of the Research Framework and requested that the Society of Antiquaries be approached to see if they could sponsor this type of research. JP commented that it would be useful to bring together all Stukeley's drawings. AC commented that the new framework should provide a clear strategy, absent from the first, on progressing such research. KP added they have not only a wishlist but a strategy and 5 year planning period for achieving it to help prioritise and identify resources.

NB added that translation of Medieval Latin in texts at Marlborough College is also required.

**Action: All to send ideas to BE on how to progress work on Stukeley's drawings.**

## **6. Review of Current Opportunities for Dissemination of Research**

### **6.1 Stonehenge and Avebury Research Seminar**

AC reported on the Stonehenge and Avebury seminar held in Devizes in May. It was pitched very well, attracting both professionals and interested amateurs. DD would be prepared to help with a similar event annually. Suggestions were made regarding focussing on other periods and publishing papers. Fewer speakers were suggested as were reports on Marden and Later Silbury next year. AC suggested poster presentations alongside the main sessions. CS wanted more professional discussion. AC suggested this would be provided in the process of working up the research framework.

DD has a tape of the whole day and there is an amateur who has written up the entire proceedings.

Action: SS to add discussion of the next seminar as an item to the next AAHRG agenda.

### **6.2 Publications**

- Bruce Eagles and F K Annable's work on the Blacknall Field cemetery has now been published: F K Annable and B N Eagles, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blacknall Field, Pewsey, Wiltshire*. Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Monograph 4. The group congratulated BEg on the publication.
- MA reported that later this year or early next there would be an issue of the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* including the Early Bronze Age in Stonehenge and Avebury. Research Paper 4 on the Chalcolithic will also be published.
- BE reported that fascicules would be feasible to produce on a print on demand basis. RC said that the research framework was currently taking precedence but that ideas should be sent in for titles that could then be discussed by the group.

**Action: All to send ideas for fascicules to RC. BE/DD and RC to review.**

**Fascicule titles to be discussed as an agenda item at the next AAHRG.**

## **7. Review of Membership**

Nicola Hembrey and Vicky Crosby are now members of AAHRG.

## **8. Review of content of report to WHS Steering Committee**

CS will report up to the next Steering Committee in November:

- Later Silbury evaluation excavation
- Follow up on Stonehenge and Avebury Seminar
- Success of exchange visits
- Fascicules

## **9. Date of next meeting**

10.30AM on Friday October 22<sup>nd</sup> in Avebury Study Centre

## **10. Other research opportunities (i.e. utilities, development control issues)**

### **10.1 Overton Hill Undergrounding**

NS sent in the following report. The works were progressing well on-site. From an archaeological perspective the main point of interest so far is the discovery of two sherds of Peterborough Ware pottery in association with flint working waste and a quantity of cattle bones in what appears to be the remains of a tree root hole. The find comes from a test pit dug in advance of

deep moleing on the fence line between Seven Barrows barrow cemetery and the Ridgeway.

In the last 24 hours they have since hit a solid layer of coral which the mole cannot penetrate. They are currently looking at ways though the technical difficulties. Suggestions will be provided on Monday.

**Action: SS, RC and AC to discuss and respond to the Scottish and Southern.**

### **10.2 Bridgemead and the Beckhampton Avenue**

JP reported that at the end of August/early September a week of work will begin. There will be a dig on the southern boundary. AC hopes it might be an opportunity to untangle the question of the route of the Avenue.

### **10.3 Underground electricity supply to Avebury Trusloe**

DV reported that in the northern part of the Longstones Field a 30cm wide trench will be dug for a new underground electricity supply. He has advised a watching brief. This is across the projected line of the Beckhampton Avenue. JP offered to do an informal watching brief.

**Action: DV to ask Robin Butler the land owner to get in contact with JP and send maps.**

**JP to provide a watching brief**

## **11. Review of Monitoring**

### **11.1 Condition Survey**

RF reported that Wessex Archaeology has been contracted to undertake the condition survey. A review meeting is scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> July look at the project design.

### **11.2 Woodland Strategy**

An initial meeting to discuss potential funding streams for financing a joint Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Woodland Strategy is scheduled for on 27 July.

AC and SS have commented on the replanting of the avenue of limes. SS had advised that a strategy will be produced to offer advice on the appropriate approach to replanting.

CS enquired about the national policy for consultation and replanting. He queried the level of local freedom to define rules. He underlined the importance of establishing whether replanting is desirable. It is now possible to see the sun set at Solstice over Windmill Hill from the northern entrance to the stone circle without the chestnut avenue in place. AC pointed out that

some planting might be appropriate to screen the Bonds Garage development. SS added that the strategy should help to identify the significance of views and the possible impacts of woodland, trees and hedgerows so informing comment and decisions.

MA added that Forestry Commission research on the results of grubbing shows that roots can sometimes be beneficial. Roots may stop areas from falling in and destroying deposits. However where they are left to rot in soft deposits sites are destroyed. There should be a periodic monitoring of badgers and rabbits entering these areas to help prevent them entering the resulting ready made burrows.

GS reminded the group that all landowners should be consulted on the strategy. CS suggested that Wiltshire Council is involved.

## **12. Final Review of the Report to WHS Steering Committee**

Report up:

- Woodland strategy

## **13. AOB**

### **13.1 WHS Bus link**

DD reported that he is seeking funding for the link from Plain Action a local action group (LAG). He hopes to run a pilot in August-September. It could run as an hourly service for 23 days. He will include a 3-day entry to WAHNS. Advertising will be online and in B&B's. There will be a commentary on the bus.

### **13.2 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Prehistoric Society**

JP reported that there will be a trip recreating the Piggott's 'Thunder Run' between Avebury and Norwich on 4-5 September. GS offered to provide parking.

### **13.3 Fundraising for Stonehenge**

BE reported on a pub quiz and skittles event with archaeologists from Marden that raised £36 towards the new visitor centre. AC suggested setting up a WHS trust. SS added that they had done this successfully at Bath. It is probably better to link it to WHS projects and not the visitor centre.

### **13.4 Full time archaeologist at Avebury**

RC reported that NS is now full time as the NT archaeologist for Avebury.

### **13.5 Route of the West Kennet Avenue**

CS suggested marking this out as part of the Archaeology Festival for 2011 as an educational event. He has mentioned this to NS and KW.