

**Avebury World Heritage Site  
Archaeological and Historical Research Group  
DRAFT Notes of meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013**

**Present:** Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger (Chair), Gill Swanton, Brian Edwards, Sarah Simmonds, Jim Gunter, Colin Shell, Sian Williams, Rachel Foster, Dan Miles, Heather Sebire, Ros Cleal, Kate Fielden, Martyn Barber, Susan Greaney, Nick Baxter, Nicola Hembrey, David Field, Josh Pollard, Tim Darvill, Steve Marshall, Ian Barnes, Beth Thomas, Oliver Jackson, Phil McMahon

### **1. Apologies and Introductions**

Nikki Cook, Nick Snashall, Jan Tomlin, , Mark Bowden, Katie Hinds, Bruce Eagles, Vicky Crosby, Abby George, Mike Allen, Amanda Chadburn, David Dawson, Julie Scott-Jackson, Paul Cripps, Andrew David, Simon Crutchley

Ian Barnes, the Head of Archaeology for the National Trust, attended AAHRG for the first time.

Paul White has now left Wessex Archaeology and is working in Sheffield. NW will contact him to see if he would like to remain a member of AAHRG.

Following Amanda Chadburn's move to her new role as Senior National Rural & Environmental Adviser Heather Sebire and Martyn Barber were proposed as joint third convenors. The group agreed their appointment.

Brian Davis after many years has decided to stand down from AAHRG. His valuable expert opinion and experience will be very much missed.

**Action: SS to draft a letter to BD on behalf of AAHRG**

**NW to contact PW to see if he would like to remain a member of AAHRG.**

### **2. Minutes and matters arising**

#### **2.1 Minutes**

The minutes were approved with two small amendments:

3.2 Matt Canti not Conti

7.3 Thistles are not on the earthwork itself but on the area around it.

#### **2.2 Matters Arising**

4.2 Draft Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). SS received and included comments from members of AAHRG. KF reported encouraging news regarding the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The majority of comments will be incorporated into the policy wording. She reemphasised the need to protect the whole World Heritage Site and not only its attributes.

4.4 WHS Governance Review. CS received two further comments following the meeting.

5.4 GS reported that the Ridgeway Report will be finished for the Steering Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

9.1 The arable land at West Overton previously belonging to Manor Farm is once more on the market.

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

#### **3.1 Update on WHS Research Framework**

Nikki Cooke was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting but supplied the following update:

All the Resource Assessment papers are now in. They are currently being edited into a consistent format.

The now complete Resource Assessment is being thoroughly reviewed to ensure that the Agenda is suitably structured and that the right questions are being asked. The draft Agenda and Strategy are being prepared based on best practice models from other Research Frameworks.

English Heritage has agreed that Wessex Archaeology will produce the first draft in the latter part of April. The draft Agenda and Strategy will be circulated to the client, stakeholder group and AAHRG for comment.

**Action: Wessex Archaeology to update the group at the next meeting of AAHRG in July.**

#### **3.2 Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan Update and Review**

SS reported that the first stage of the update and review was complete. This included the evaluation of the 2005 Plan and a wide-ranging review of issues and objectives. The Steering Committee reviewed the outcomes at a workshop following their last meeting in November. Their comments have now been incorporated into the final outcomes of stage 1.

Work will begin on stage 2, the preparation of the consultation draft, following decisions on the WHS Governance Review recommendations which will inform the format and content of the new Management Plan.

The Management Plan Review and Update Project Board met in January to finalise stage 1 and discuss options for the format of the updated Management Plan to be produced in stage 2. The Project Board is a small group made up of members of the Steering Committee including English Heritage, National Trust, Avebury Parish Council, NWDAONB and Colin Shell representing AAHRG. The group reflected on recommendations for greater coordination between the two halves of the WHS and were largely supportive of the idea of combining the Avebury and Stonehenge Plans into a single document. This document will need to reflect the overarching elements of the WHS such as its single SOUV and shared issues, objectives and joint projects. It will also need to articulate the individual identities, issues and priorities

of the different halves. The Project Board will discuss a proposed outline structure and timetable for delivery at their next meeting and the outcomes will be presented at the Steering Committee meeting at the end of April. There is already a joint Condition Survey, Research Framework and Woodland Strategy for Stonehenge and Avebury.

Adopting a joint approach will mean extending the timescale for production of the new Plan at Avebury and bringing it forward at Stonehenge. Work on drafting the overarching and Avebury specific elements could begin following the Steering Committee meeting. Sections could be presented for comment at relevant stages during this process to maintain momentum and engagement. Evaluation and review of issues and objectives would start at Stonehenge in late spring. The final Plan would be ready for submission to UNESCO towards the end of next year.

**Action: SS to report on agreed approach at the next AAHRG meeting**

### **3.3 Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) Update**

MPK reported that the update of the HER is progressing well. A part time assistant, Emma Whitcombe, has recently joined the team based at the History Centre. Please contact Faye Glover if you would like further information on the HER ([faye.glover@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:faye.glover@wiltshire.gov.uk)).

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

### **4.1 Does Wiltshire have Rock Art? – Jim Gunter**

JG explored the definition of rock art and its significance in Wiltshire. He presented a range of examples under three categories: graffiti; abstract art; panels. JG discussed their relationship to monuments both through incorporation and as possible symbolic markers in the wider landscape. He concluded that rock art in Wiltshire could be described as landscape art. In addition, due to the uniquely large number of polissoirs identified on the Marlborough Downs as well as their placement, they could be described as a distinct cultural phenomenon. JG's presentation is attached as a PDF.

KF commented that the assembly of rocks in monuments could be seen as a further category of rock art. JP added that naturally produced marks might also have been attributed significance. This might also have been the case for polissoirs that predate the long barrows they may refer to. RF requested a record of the identified examples for inclusion in the HER.

TD added that there are many examples of rock art in southern England that have often been overlooked by professionals as they have been recorded by amateurs. The prevalence is greater in the south although cup marks can be found in every county.

JG is developing the rock art in Wiltshire website and requesting reports from the wider public. He has photographs of all verified examples and also known misleading ones to assist in testing reports. The grid references of know examples will be kept inexact to avoid theft and trespass.

Reporting forms and other information can be found at [www.rockartwiltshire.org](http://www.rockartwiltshire.org). You can contact JG or send information to [rockartwiltshire@btopenworld.com](mailto:rockartwiltshire@btopenworld.com)

**Action: SS to ask NW to consider rock art for inclusion in the Research Framework.**

#### **4.2 Between the Monuments Fieldwork Plans 2013 – Josh Pollard**

The Between the Monuments project will continue to explore the relationship of landscape occupation and monument building. JP presented fieldwork plans for the spring/summer 2013. Work is planned at two potential occupation sites from the later fourth/early third millennia BC prefiguring late Neolithic monumental enterprises. The sites are the foot of Avebury Down and West Kennet Avenue near the foot of Waden Hill where Keiller has previously excavated.

JP also presented some geophysical results from last summer's work on the Stones of Stonehenge project. In the area of the Palisade Enclosures distinct and peculiar pits possibly related to stone extraction have been found. Enhanced magnetometry in the area has also revealed possible further radial palisade lines adding to our understanding of the complexity of the Enclosures. JP's complete presentation is attached as a PDF.

CS suggested that flint work from Avebury held in Cambridge would be worth reviewing. It might be a suitable post-doc project.

SS highlighted the public engagement and education opportunities and the possibility of linking the fieldwork with the Avenue to Learning project. RC reported that the National Trust will be working with volunteers to offer tours aimed at individuals and family groups. They will build on the popular ad hoc henge tours currently given by volunteers. These reach around 3,000 individuals a year. The NT is currently looking to recruit further volunteers to assist. DM may be able to assist with recruitment through his work with volunteers at Yatesbury. CS reported that three schools have plans to follow the Avenue to Learning programme this year.

**Action: RC to contact DM regarding recruitment of volunteers  
CS to coordinate Avenue to Learning visits with JP and RC**

#### **4.3 Avebury Underground – Tim Darvill**

TD presented results of his work with Fritz Lüth during the summer of 2012. The work was related to the Between the Monuments project. They surveyed 71 hectares with a multisensor gradiometer produced by the German company Sensys. This has produced a huge amount of data and results at this stage are preliminary. The areas surveyed include part of Windmill Hill and the West Kennet Avenue, the southern area of Waden Hill and the southeast section of the Henge. Extensive work has also been carried out at Stonehenge and also just outside Cirencester.

At Waden Hill a Roman villa was located overlooking Silbury Hill although little additional archaeology was found. Metal in the concrete stone sockets caused a problem for geophysics in the Avenue. A ring ditch was however located beside the northern section as well as pits on the occupation site. In the central section a possible enclosure structure was indentified. There was no clear sign of paired stone pits continuing beyond this point. At Windmill Hill a series of entrances and the corner of what appears to be an enclosure were found. The multisensor gradiometer is booked for a further month in July 2013. Work begun at Windmill Hill will be completed. Further surveys will cover the interior of the Henge, Waden Hill north and Avebury Down. The aim is to cover the whole WHS to a comparable level of detail. TD's summary report is attached.

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

### **5.1 Postcards to Friends of the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site - Brian Edwards**

BE explained the aims of the WHS postcards project and presented some example cards. The project was originally conceived to extend to Stonehenge the principal of engagement and ownership represented by the Avebury WHS Residents' Pack. Stukeley himself may have begun the engagement and outreach process through his impromptu exhibition of his own drawings in the Red Lion.

BE sent out a low key invitation via twitter for people to send in postcards with interesting and unusual facts related to Stonehenge or Avebury. This short and accessible format has proved unexpectedly successful with responses from as far away as America and Australia. The project has generated twenty one postcards in only three months from both the public and experts. Many others have been drawn in through Twitter, Facebook and various blogs.

BE suggested further engagement and outreach opportunities such as a Stonehenge and Avebury Friends' and Residents' Pack and a touring exhibition that might culminate at the new Stonehenge Visitor Centre.

SS added that a joint Stonehenge and Avebury WHS website is under preparation and that there will be an official Twitter account linked to this.

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

CS reported back on the last Steering Committee meeting in November. The meeting focussed mainly on the recommendations of the Governance Review report by Egeria.

A working group has been set up to review the recommendations in light of comments from both the Avebury and Stonehenge Steering Committees. The group will present a revised proposal and outline terms of reference to both Steering Committees at the end of April. Work on preparing this is still underway but the general direction is maintaining the two Steering Committees with responsibility for signing off the Management Plan and prioritising work plans. In addition a smaller 'Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Partnership Group' would be set up to focus on championing the WHS, resourcing and overarching concerns. The name for this group has not yet been decided.

AAHRG will be responsible for reviewing the Egeria recommendation for a Stonehenge and Avebury Standing Conference and recommending the most appropriate structure and format for meetings.

AAHRG members appear in general to support the idea of a joint group although there are a number of continued concerns around maintaining adequate focus on Avebury and the possible unwieldy size of the group. It will also be necessary to articulate the relationship of the research group to the Steering Committees and the 'WHS Partnership Group'. Possible solutions might include an Avebury or Stonehenge focus for each meeting with a single annual joint event or whole day meetings with the mornings focussed on Avebury and the afternoons on Stonehenge. Another suggestion was to extend the study area at both Avebury and Stonehenge to join the two halves of the WHS. In addition CS suggested that as any joint group would grow out of AAHRG, it should be called the Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group.

CS proposed a small working group to meet prior to the next AAHRG to review options and draw up recommendations. The group will consist of the AAHRG convenors, the Steering Committee representative, a NT representative and a historian. It will report back to AAHRG in July. Outcomes will be reported to the Steering Committee at their next meeting in the autumn.

CS underlined that it is essential that adequate funding is provided to support any proposed changes to the governance structure and the proposed Coordination Unit. If this cannot be guaranteed, then the changes should not be made.

**Action: SS will contact members of the AAHRG working group to invite them to a meeting**

**All to send comments on the joint research group to SS for discussion by the working group by 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

## **7. AOB**

### **7.1 Scheduling Review**

CS raised concerns over unscheduled attributes of OUV at risk. These have been highlighted through the Arable Reversion Prioritisation project and the Condition Survey. It is even more important to look at scheduling these now that EH prioritises funding for scheduled monuments at risk.

PM confirmed that suggestions for scheduling can be made by the public via the EH website. A list of priorities for scheduling compiled by AAHRG might be a positive and helpful strategy for approaching the Designation Team.

MPK added that the County Archaeologist compiles a list of recommendations for scheduling. She can also promote a list compiled by AAHRG for the WHS.

**Actions: All to prepare suggestions for scheduling to discuss at the next AAHRG meeting**

**SS to add scheduling review to next agenda.**

### **7.2 English Heritage Staffing**

PM explained that the Inspector role no longer has a broad remit. It is focussed primarily on development management. The Principal Heritage at Risk Advisor has not yet been appointed and an assistant for the Development Management Team is still awaited.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

10.30 AM on Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2013. Venue to be confirmed.

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

### **9.1 County Archaeology Update**

#### **9.1.1 SSE Undergrounding Gunsite Road**

RF reported that a possible undergrounding project is under discussion with Scottish and Southern Electricity. The WHSO, EH, and County Archaeologist are meeting SSE in May to identify a route that avoids any harm and possibly delivers benefits for our understanding of the WHS. A route beneath the unscheduled area of the Palisade Enclosures or to the south may provide research opportunities.

**Action: Those with a particular research interest in the area to contact RF**

### **9.2 West Kennet Long Barrow Project Update - Heather Sebire**

HB reported that preparatory work is still underway. A conservation statement will be prepared for WKLB.

## **10. Review of Monitoring**

### **10.1 Silbury Hill Trespass**

PM reported that a group of EH staff had visited Silbury to review any damage and discuss a suitable response. The scar that prompted the visit has now greened over. It was the result of superficial erosion and no significant damage was detected. Access to the north side is now cut off due to the water presently surrounding Silbury.

The response to controlling future access needs to be judicious and multifaceted. Overzealous fencing tends to encourage wire cutting. Cut scrub and brush can be placed in strategic positions to discourage access. A hearts and minds approach is also necessary. Travel companies have been identified that advertise climbing the Hill. EH will contact them and explain why this is not appropriate. Signage will also be adapted to make it less authoritarian and more explanatory to appeal to people's sense of responsibility. This is particularly important on the south side where the zigzag path is showing signs of increased erosion. Signs will also appear at appropriate points on the approach to the Hill outside the fenced area. Liz Allison from the Estates Team will be coordinating this work.

BE will forward his pictures to PM. Steve Marshall also offered to send his pictures to assist with the hearts and minds approach.

**Action: BE and SM to send pictures to PM**

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

- Progress on the WHS Research Framework
- Research projects underway in the WHS
- AAHRG working group will consider recommendations for WHS Standing Conference and report back to the Steering Committee in the autumn
- Need for commitment to fund any agreed changes to the governance structure and coordination unit

## **12. AOB**

### **12.1 Later Silbury**

NH informed the group that the final Later Silbury report has just been published. She and Vicky Crosby would like to record their thanks to AAHRG for their support and input. They would be happy to remain members of AAHRG.

### **12.2 Silbury Monograph**

DF reported that the Silbury Monograph will be published in the summer. It will include radiocarbon dating results.

### **12.3 Marlborough Downs Nature Improvement Area**

GS reported that she is involved in work with NIA workshops and their education programme. SS has been approached to contribute an historic environment element to an event on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

**Action: GS and SS to coordinate on 9<sup>th</sup> June event**

#### **12.4 Sources of Stone in Listed Buildings**

CS suggested that research into the source of stones in the vernacular buildings within the WHS could be encouraged possibly through the developing Research Framework. He believes the British Geological Survey may have resources available for such projects following an article in a recent BGS publication.

**Action: SS to pass on the suggested research theme to NC**

#### **12.5 ICOMOS Interpretation Workshop July 2013**

HS reported that ICOMOS want to bring an international group to the WHS for a workshop on interpreting megalithic sites. She would welcome any volunteers to assist with the workshop.

**Action: HS to send details of the workshop for SS to circulate to the group**

#### **12.6 Avebury Society Lecture Nick Snashall in Lockeridge Village Hall 12th April, 7.30 PM**

KF informed the group that NS would be giving the annual Avebury Society lecture *Avebury - The Story So Far*.

#### **12.7 Archaeology Fair Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July and Bradford on Avon Day Seminar on Roman Wiltshire 27<sup>th</sup> April**

MPK announced the Fair which will take place in the History Centre. It is aimed at encouraging participation in archaeology. There will be a range of stalls including universities and the WHS.

Mike Stone will be at the Roman Wiltshire Seminar Day in April. Proceeds will go to the VCH.