

**Avebury World Heritage Site
Archaeological and Historical Research Group
DRAFT Notes of meeting 7th September 2012**

Present: Gill Swanton(Chair), Brian Edwards, Sarah Simmonds, Melanie Pomeroy Kellinger , Jim Gunter, Colin Shell, Sian Williams, Rachel Foster, Dan Miles, Heather Sebire, Nikki Cook, Andrew David, Paul Cripps, David Dawson, David Vaughan, Ros Cleal, Kate Fielden, Julie Scott-Jackson

1. Apologies and Introductions

Martyn Barber, Susan Greaney, Nick Snashall, Jan Tomlin, Nick Baxter, Mark Bowden, Katie Hinds, Bruce Eagles, Nicola Hembrey, Vicky Crosby, Abby George, David Field, Mike Allen, Amanda Chadburn, Josh Pollard

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1

3.1 CS sent out requests to contributors to the Research Framework to estimate time given in kind to the project. 40% responded. Results indicate c. £30,000 in voluntary contributions.

Action: All requested to send estimates of funds invested in WHS projects during the life of the last plan

4.2 SG has added Avebury to Clive Ruggles archaeoastronomy report brief.

3. Monitoring of the Resource Agenda

3.1 Update on WHS Research Framework

The Research Framework and Management Plan should underline that researchers should identify arrangements for storage of finds at the project design stge. Plans for dissemination and wider education work should also be identified. Researchers should contact museums in advance of planned projects. DD and RC agreed that museums need to know about plans for depositing finds from large scale excavations. Lack of space is a major practical consideration in Salisbury, Devizes and Avebury. KF suggested that storage should be identified before any work is begun.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a fund made up of required contributions from developers replacing section 106 arrangements, should help to pay for storage facilities for archaeological artefacts. Developers should pay a box fee for finds and grants from research councils should also include provision for storage.

Another reason for discussion in advance of excavation is to ensure that opportunities for site visits, education and community involvement can be exploited. MPK added that the county archaeologist is often not sent research designs. This minimises the opportunity for offering advice and help

including encouraging researchers to contact museums. A project design and report should be sent to relevant curators. MPK underlined that this is identified in the code of practice for IFA members. The IFA guidelines should apply across the WHS and researchers should be strongly encouraged to present their project designs to AAHRG.

3.2 Update on Progress WHS Research Framework

NC reported that the consultation on the resource assessment and research agenda is currently open. Changes will be possible until the end of the consultation. The consultation has been promoted to the public through banners at the Devizes and Salisbury Museum, Avebury Management Plan drop-in sessions, leaflets, posters, Facebook, Twitter and global emails including one to AAHRG.

There are a few outstanding sections: Palaeoenvironmental; Iron Age and Roman British. EH would like the work completed by January. Nicola Hembrey could be approached to cover the Roman having covered the only major project focussed on this period since the publication of the original Research Agenda. Paul Robinson would be another possibility. He or Andrew Fitzpatrick could cover the Iron Age if required.

The project board will need to meet to decide on the form of the Framework for publication. An option would be a single volume Avebury resource assessment and a joint agenda and strategy.

Action: GS to speak to Matt Conti re the Palaeoenvironmental and Mark Corney re the Romano British section

4. Current archaeological & historical research

4.1 Between the Monuments and Stones of Stonehenge

JP sent his apologies but kindly provided reports for circulation prior to the meeting. The proposal for the next season is being worked up for the Archaeology Panel in December. The proposal can be brought to AAHRG in January.

The resistivity results are not well defined. AD enquired why no magnetic survey was done on the West Kennet Avenue. This might have been a more appropriate technique. Some work on the unrestored part of the Avenue was published in *Avebury Reconsidered* (1991). Further work could still be undertaken.

Action: SS to invite JP to present the project design for next stage of the BTM project in January.

All to send any comments or suggestions related to the two reports to JP.

Manton Barrow

This is in a poor condition. CS pointed out that it was suffering ploughing encroachment. FOAM or Conservation Volunteers (TCV) could be asked to address issues. MPK suggested it could be looked at under the Monument Management Programme. A three year management plan could be produced.

4.2 Draft Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) – Sarah Simmonds

SS presented an early draft of the attributes of OUV for Avebury based on those developed for Stonehenge.

KF was concerned that focussing on attributes would deflect from the concept of OUV being related to the whole WHS and thereby diminish its protection. She queried where the requirement to produce attributes came from. SS reported that UNESCO now required individual WHSs to outline attributes of OUV to assist in focussing the management of the Site on protecting its OUV.

With reference to the draft attributes for Avebury, they do encompass the whole WHS but clarify which aspects require protection. The sixth attribute for example relates to the entirety of the landscape as it takes in the disposition, physical remains and settings of the key Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary, ceremonial and other monuments and sites. The components of each attribute are listed only as examples rather than an exhaustive and therefore potentially reductive list. The wording will need to make this clear and also indicate the potential for future discoveries. SS emphasised that the examples or components of the attributes cited should be based on adequate evidence.

DV added that it is the attention to mirror the Stonehenge attributes at Avebury as they are one WHS. Some attributes may be less relevant at Avebury such as the design of monuments in relation to the skies and astronomy.

JSJ requested that the importance of the Palaeolithic is not neglected even if it cannot be included in the attributes of OUV that are limited to the inscription criteria. SS confirmed that the Management Plan would recognise the importance of values beyond those bounded solely by the statement of OUV. It will also be necessary to include the unknown and potential resources in the wording.

The exclusion of Avebury from attribute four was questioned. Some of the examples at Stonehenge appear to be examples of location or alignment rather than design: Mike Parker Pearson believes some of them to be open to debate. MPK suggested that the massive henge banks could have been

designed for looking at the sunrise. SS reported that Clive Ruggles would include Avebury in his upcoming paper and revisit relationships.

RC commented that the barrow groups were clearly intervisible and related to earlier monuments. The vast number of stones, many now missing, that made up the henge, avenues and Sanctuary is in itself astonishing. She added that Paul Nash painted the West Kennet Avenue.

Further examples were discussed. Overton Hill Barrow Cemetery is cited in relation to the river on the watershed. There are also concrete links between the henge and the river. Later generations were clearly influenced by the existing monuments in the citing of their own. The Bronze Age field systems on Fyfield Down are related to the life of the community who produced the monuments. They are as such associated sites.

Action: All to send comments to SS by the end of September.

4.3 Avebury WHS Management Plan Review and Update: Archaeological Research - Sarah Simmonds

Below is a summary of comments on the review and update of the issues, objectives and strategies.

- Integrate data sets. Overhaul of HER at Wiltshire Council provides an opportunity to bring together all disparate resources in the new HBSMR including the WHS related data
- Gain access to relevant data sets as they emerge e.g. Lidar data and integrate in to GIS. Explore arrangements for licenses such a MoU for WHS projects.
- Explore the potential to develop multivariate analysis stacking data
- At Stonehenge there is now almost total geophysics coverage. Aim for this at Avebury.
- Outside scheduled and NT land there is no requirements for excavators to adhere to any code of practice. As a minimum all excavators in the WHS and its setting should be encouraged/required to adhere to IFA guidelines. This should be included in the Management Plan.
- Guidance produced on sustainable excavation should emphasise the use of non-invasive survey required; both geophysics and magnetometry. Consents and licenses for excavation should not be considered without the results of these surveys. In line with the requirement to sustain OUV and in light of the increasing sensitivity of non-invasive technology, excavation should be the last option. The Landscape Survey and Earthwork Survey at Stonehenge are examples of very successful non-invasive projects.

- Project designs should include arrangements or storage of finds and data.
- Findings of new laser survey will have implications for management at Stonehenge. This might possibly be the case at Avebury following any laser survey.
- Viewshed analysis using GIS can be used for assessing impact in planning applications
- Ensure WHSMP continues to reflect the value and importance of the archaeological resource from periods outside the OUV focus: the Neolithic and Bronze Age.
- Concern over retaining farmers in environmental stewardship schemes particularly at the end of the end of their countryside stewardship schemes. Incentives are less under HLS for already reverted land.
- New knowledge and understanding highlights need to carefully manage potential not just known archaeology
- Wider context in the setting should be considered e.g. new understanding of Marlborough Mound and Manton. A single research group might extend to spaces between Stonehenge and Avebury.
- Focus on prioritising use of GIS appropriately and effectively and its development
- New technology provides an opportunity to revisit older data sets to refine understanding

4.4 WHS Governance Review - Colin Shell

In response to a UNESCO aim of developing a coordinated management system for each WHS, a governance review was funded by EH for Stonehenge and Avebury by the consultant Egeria. The recommendations include:

- a small executive board at the top made up of WC/EH and NT plus the chair and possibly two others.
- two separate committees at Stonehenge and Avebury to advise the board
- the TVM would cease and AAHRG would become a standing conference for both Stonehenge and Avebury

The recommendations will be discussed by partners at the next WHS Steering committee meeting on 21st November. The members of AAHRG should consider the impacts of the recommendations. Any thoughts can be communicated by CS at the steering committee meeting. Issues may exist around the makeup of the executive board and the combination of Avebury and Stonehenge research interests.

MPK suggested a unified approach to the two halves of the WHS would be natural and appropriate in a period of limited resources. The two subgroups beneath the board would help to maintain any necessary Avebury specific focus. RC cautioned against allowing Avebury to become a minor partner in any joint research group and losing the positive benefits of AAHRG. More joint meetings could be arranged but a separate Avebury group maintained to avoid being subsumed by large research projects at Stonehenge.

SW suggested that AAHRG offered a democratic and open format hard to replicate with the involvement of Stonehenge that brings certain political baggage. Stonehenge should create its own group alongside AAHRG. One single group should be avoided. An overarching conference could also be instituted in addition to the two groups.

The WHS should be constituted as an entity that can apply for funding in order to raise money for projects.

Action: All to send comments to CS to enable him to summarise the positions of AAHRG members

5. Review of Current Opportunities for Dissemination of Research

5.1 WHS Seminar

As the November WHS seminar discussed at the last meeting will not be possible to arrange this year, the Wiltshire Society one planned for March 2013 could now include WHS themes. The seminar will be chaired by MPK and Phil Harding. PhD students will be asked to present five minute talks. Booths promoting relevant projects including Richard Osgood's Project Nightingale will be set up.

5.2 CBA Wessex Conference

The conference will take place on 3rd November. The theme is archaeology and education.

5.3 Ridgeway Report

The report is almost complete and could be published as a WHS partnership research report. The earthwork elements can go directly into GIS.

6. Review of content of report to WHS Steering Committee

- Summary of major projects underway in the WHS landscape
- Response to the Governance Review recommendations

7. AOB

7.1 NT Curator and Head of Archaeology

RC reported that the position of assistant curator has been frozen at Avebury. RC is now responsible for line managing the Avebury Manor House manager and involved in research work on the Manor and its environs. The new Head of Archaeology is Ian Barnes who will be in post from November.

7.2 Salisbury Museum

The collections manager job has been deleted.

7.3 Overton Down Experimental Earthwork

The earthwork is covered in thistles.

Action: GS to let Stuart Hales at NE know

7.4 Yatesbury Open Weekends

DM reported that there would be open weekends at Yatesbury on 15/16 and 29/30 September.

7.5 Assistant Archaeologist

Rachel Foster is now in post as assistant county archaeologist. David Vaughan is RF's temporary replacement at EH during the restructure.

8. Date of next meeting

10.30 AM on Friday, January 18th 2013 in the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham.

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

9.1 County Archaeology Update

Relevant planning related issues were discussed under item 9.1. The County Archaeologist had to leave prior to this item.

9.1.1 West Overton Grain Store

SS reported that the grain store had been approved to the south of West Overton outside the WHS but in its setting. The WHS was cited as a factor in not citing the grain store to the east of Overton Hill on the north side of the A4.

9.1.2 Iron Age Enclosure

DV reported that a recently ploughed scheduled monument will be fenced to ensure its future protection.

9.1.3 Planting at West Overton

SS has sent comments to the Forestry Commission on new planting beside the A4 in a location that is recognised as offering key view in the emerging WHS Woodland Strategy. The planting could obscure views from the West Overton road towards the Overton Hill barrow group and the Sanctuary.

9.1.4 Galteemore Farm Track

The track opposite the Silbury Hill car park has been given permission. It will be a limited depth and grasscrete rather than blacktop. There is a condition regarding the movement of lorries to minimise impacts on the setting of Silbury.

9.2 West Kennet Long Barrow Project Update - Heather Sebire

The project is being managed by Morgan Cowles (MC) from EH. It will address the ingress of water and desire lines on top of the monument. A desk based research document has been produced by Julian Richards. Small investigations have revealed that it is not seepage but direct ingress of rainfall. A conservation statement has been commissioned from Cotswold Archaeology.

MC will put together an options appraisal. It will consider options for the roof lights and possible alternative light sources. Health and safety is a factor that needs to be taken into account. RC suggested tubes with fibre optics might work. JL and Alex Gibson have expressed an interest in opportunities for further research which will be considered. There may be potential for additional geophysics.

MC will cost all options but the budget is chiefly designed to address repair works therefore the scope for additional work is limited.

SM consent will be applied for once the preferred option is identified.

Actions: SB to send CDs of report to SS, MPK and RC.

SB will update AAHRG in January.

10. Review of Monitoring

10.1 Condition Survey

The WHS Condition Survey is available for circulation as a pdf on request from SS.

11. Final Review of the Report to WHS Steering Committee

As at item 6 plus repair of WKLB.

12. AOB

N/A