

Minutes

A303 Stonehenge – Amesbury to Berwick Down

Title:	Scientific Committee		
Date:	10 May 2018	Time:	09:30 – 16:00
Location:	Holiday Inn, Amesbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7SQ		

Attendees:

Scientific Committee

Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe
Professor Tim Darvill
Dr Andrew Fitzpatrick
Dr David Field
Mike Pitts
Dr Colin Shell
Professor Clive Ruggles
Professor Mike Parker Pearson

HMAG

Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (Wiltshire Council)
Dr Nicola Snashall (National Trust)
Phil McMahon (Historic England)
Dr Heather Sebire (English Heritage)

Andrew Clark (Highways England)
Chris Moore (AmW)
Neil Macnab (AmW)

Apologies

Professor Nicky Milner
Julian Richards
Professor Oliver Craig
Dr Josh Pollard
Professor Vince Gaffney

Chair: Sir Barry Cunliffe

Agenda Item	Action
Welcome and Apologies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">As well as apologies for the meeting, the Chair has received a letter from Julian Richards, retiring from the Committee due to other commitments.	
Minutes and Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Last set of minutes approved, with a small amendment.	AC & MPK
Blick Mead Publication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chair recorded the thanks of the Scientific Committee to David Jacques for his engagement and for the provision of a copy of his publication for the committee's benefit.The chair read out a note from Nicky Milner noting the significance of the Blick Mead site and drawing similarities between it and Star Carr.Further comment was made about the high quality of the publication and the level of clarity and information contained within it.Further discussion was had regarding the evidence presented and the impact that it has in relation to the importance of the site.Information was provided relating to meetings the project team had with David Jacques, with reference to a meeting with Tony Brown and Historic England's Scientific Advisor that made good progress in agreeing a way forward, this includes the tiered assessment in line with Historic England's guidance.A request was made to try and identify and investigate any potential issues caused by the PH of road drainage and if this is having an impact on the site.	AMW

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future monitoring of ground water should provide evidence to compare with assessments undertaken to date. The benefit of longer term monitoring is that it will allow proactive mitigation to be undertaken if de-watering occurs as the result of other impacts on the ground water. 	AMW/HE
Matters Arising	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICOMOS Mission – attended site 5th to 8th March, which compressed the 5-day agenda into 3 days, and made for a very compact visit. The mission will produce their report in advance of the WHC in June, so we anticipate publication of the report in May. Committee members commented on their engagement at the Civil Society day and their part in the process. The chair had reported to the mission on the workings of the Scientific Committee. • Highways England gave a summary of the consultation, including reference to the extended duration because of severe weather impacts. Current evaluation of responses shows fewer replies than the previous consultation; this ties in with many comments of the “just get on with it” nature. The Statutory bodies provided an overview of their responses, and that they were generally in agreement with each other. Highways England confirmed their commitment to the current timescale as it stands with a DCO application being submitted in Autumn 2018. • Update on the Website; there was a request that a link to a report on the road scheme in ‘Salon’ be provided. MPK requested any other ideas to be emailed to her. 	
Progress with Archaeological Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMW provided an overview of the results of the archaeological evaluation along with representation from Wessex Archaeology. • An overview of the current programme was given; Geophysics is almost complete for the entire scheme footprint, including work by Historic England and the Hidden Landscapes Project, and large amounts of the test pitting and trial trenching are underway/complete. • It was noted that contrary to current media articles about the weather conditions, the archaeological evaluation has been undertaken to a high professional standard, with ongoing monitoring by HMAG and WCAS. As a result of the wet weather encountered and in alignment with the Written Scheme of Investigation, the wet weather clause of standing down site works was enacted at least twice, to ensure the sites are protected from damage. WCAS are highly aware of the impact that wet weather can have, and it is high on their priority when monitoring the site works and are confident that no damage was caused during the evaluation. • Site reports continue to be drafted and will be issued out in due course. 	
AOB	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMW noted that they have employed an archeoastronomer, Dr Frank Prendergast, to ensure the HIA undertaken is robust in this regard. Clive Ruggles approved the choice. • Wiltshire are holding their Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference II on Sunday in Devizes. • Attention was drawn to the recent publication by Mike Pitts in British Archaeology with regards to the breadth of findings and archaeological investigation in and around the Stonehenge WHS. MPK highlighted that commercial archaeology has a high curatorial oversight and is required to have research aims, and that these are the focus of the works undertaken. Additionally, the most highly significant archaeological remains are preserved in situ rather than developed, as in the case of the Bulford Double Henges featured in Mike’s article. A request was made to have a link included on the committee website to the article. 	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comment was made about a second visit to the Western Portal and approaches site, so that the trenching phase can be viewed. HE to arrange. | HE |
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