

# UNITED KINGDOM

## Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites

### Brief description

Stonehenge and Avebury, in Wiltshire, are among the most famous groups of megaliths in the world. The two sanctuaries consist of circles of menhirs arranged in a pattern whose astronomical significance is still being explored. These holy places and the nearby Neolithic sites are an incomparable testimony to prehistoric times.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1986

#### Agency responsible for site management

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### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (i) (ii) (iii)

#### Justification as provided by the State Party

Stonehenge and Avebury are the two most important and characteristic prehistoric monuments in Britain. They represent the henge monument par excellence, as the largest, most evolved and best preserved pre-historic temples of a type unique to Britain. Together with the associated sites and monuments they provide a landscape without parallel in Britain or elsewhere and provide an unrivalled demonstration of human achievement in prehistoric times.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

This nomination for the inclusion of the Wiltshire megalithic sites, which has been expected for several years now, concerns one of the most obvious potential choices for inclusion on the World Heritage List and cannot help but meet with the enthusiastic approval of ICOMOS, which recommends the inclusion of the cultural property

thus defined on the basis of criteria I and III and ultimately criterion II. In this connection ICOMOS would like to recall that already in the 12th century Stonehenge was considered as one of the wonders of the world by the chroniclers Henry de Huntington and Geoffrey de Monmouth and that in the 17th century, Stonehenge was the focus of a study by the great architect Inigo Jones.

The early and unwavering interest for this megalithic ensemble which serves as a benchmark, has left its mark upon historiography, the evolution of architectural theories and the progress of prehistoric sciences.

#### Committee Decision

Bureau (1986): The Bureau requested the United Kingdom authorities to study possible solution to the problem of the A 344 main road crossing the avenue at Stonehenge (detour, digging of a tunnel, etc.). It would be desirable for the Committee to be informed of the progress of these studies at its next meeting.

Committee (1986): The Committee noted with satisfaction the assurances provided by the authorities of the United Kingdom that the closure of the road which crosses the avenue at Stonehenge was receiving serious consideration as part of the overall plans for the future management of the site.

- A joint Statement of Significance for Stonehenge and Avebury will be produced in 2006 on the basis of the World Heritage values identified in the management plans. The State Party will discuss and agree a revised Statement of outstanding universal value which will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee in due course
- No change required to UNESCO's official description of the site

#### Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: inadequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined
- State Party says that further work is needed to define the buffer zone

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- A grass restoration scheme has started since 2002 in Stonehenge and Avebury to stop plough damage to prehistoric monuments and enhance their setting

- The Stonehenge Project seeks to restore the integrity of the site by removing the roads and moving current visitor facilities

### 3. Protection

#### Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Specific local planning policies to protect against adverse development: (Salisbury Local Plan, Kennet Local Plan 2004, HH3). The Stonehenge WHS management plan was adopted as supplementary planning guidance. Statutory designations for conservation of the historic environment, nature conservation and landscape: scheduled monuments, listed buildings and other designations
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

#### Actions taken/proposed:

- Implementation of actions set out in the management plans: recommendations in the management plans e.g. more funding, regular monitoring of monument condition. On a national level, PPG15 does not give statutory protection to cultural World Heritage sites, which seem less well protected than ecological sites. A review of heritage protection (HPR) is also being undertaken
- National, regional and local levels of action. Timeframe: various

### 4. Management

#### Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, religious use, rural landscape
- Military camp residential quarters in Stonehenge WHS. Access to Avebury is free, charge for the museum only. Religious use is new age and pagan

#### Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group formally set up: There are two steering groups, one for the Stonehenge part of the World Heritage site and one for the Avebury part. Stonehenge and Avebury are 40 km apart and have different stakeholders. Steering Groups set up as follows:  
STONEHENGE - November 1998  
AVEBURY – 1989  
Their role is to oversee the preparation, implementation and review of the WHS management plan
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Management by the State Party; management under protective legislation; management under

contractual agreement between the State Party and a third party; consensual management

- Dept.for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (defra) grants to farmers for grass restoration; National Trust looks after Avebury on behalf of State Party; ownership by the National Trust of large parts of the WHS, including some inalienable land
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; local
- Other levels: English Heritage, National Trust, Highways Agency, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, English Nature, RSPB, Ministry of Defence  
Wiltshire County Council, Salisbury District Council and Kennet District Council (planning authorities) and the parish councils
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

#### Actions proposed:

- Long-term funding for WHS management is needed  
A more hands-on approach to management of the monuments is needed. Timeframe: not known

### 5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- There are two management plans for this World Heritage site.  
Implementation date: Stonehenge April 2000. Avebury August 2005.  
Revised: Stonehenge none yet, planned in 2005-06; Avebury- first revision completed August 2005.  
When was current version completed - Stonehenge 2005; Avebury August 2005.
- Effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Stonehenge: WHS steering committee and coordinator. Avebury: WHS steering committee and coordinator

### 6. Financial Resources

#### Financial situation

- English Heritage, National Trust, DEFRA grants to farmers for grass restoration, UK government funds A303 road scheme, Heritage Lottery Fund, fundraising campaigns, local authorities (English Heritage (curators, visitor operations,

grass management, security), National Trust staff (including property manager, museum curator in Avebury), Salisbury District Council (planners), Wiltshire County Council (archaeologists), Kennet District Council

- Funding drawn in through World Heritage Fund
- National and/or regional projects of UNDP, the World Bank or other agencies; Bi-lateral cooperation; Other assistance: DEFRA's grants are part funded by EU
- Insufficient
- Need for long-term funding for the WHS coordinators posts.

### 7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 2
- Access to other staff: Grass management and paint removal experts at English Heritage

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, management, promotion, visitor management
- Average: interpretation, education
- Staff resources are adequate
- Volunteers: STONEHENGE - 2 NT archaeological wardens monitoring the prehistoric monuments and 3 long term volunteers helping with access, media, local community  
AVEBURY - Seasonal NT volunteers

### 8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Archaeological advice from EH, NT and EH training programmes, GIS training, attendance at conferences by WHS coordinators
- Training on site management for stakeholders

### 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 1,100,000 visitors in 2004
- Visitor facilities:

STONEHENGE: Stonehenge: car park, ticket kiosk, membership office, shop, takeaway, picnic tables, underground pedestrian access, toilets, audio tour, mural with reconstruction, staff answering questions, guided tours on request, free leaflet, guidebook and books in shop. Information panels at Woodhenge and on National Trust estate. WHS leaflet and website.

National Trust estate: paths and information boards.

AVEBURY: museum and interpretation centre, tourist shops, restaurant, toilets, car parks, pub, site interpretation boards, website.

- Visitor facilities are inadequate
- Visitor needs:

STONEHENGE: larger car and coach park, information/exhibition space, more information on monuments in the landscape, room for school groups, larger ticketing area, larger shop, more toilets, indoor café with comfortable seating.

AVEBURY: more toilet facilities, public transport links and car parking.

- There is a tourism/visitor management plan for the site (covered in the WHS management plan)

### 10. Scientific Studies

- There is an agreed research framework/strategy for the site
- Monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, visitor management, transportation studies, interpretation
- STONEHENGE & AVEBURY: Monument Condition Survey (Avebury 1999, Stonehenge 2002), aerial and field walking surveys of areas to be reverted to pasture since 2002, WHS monitoring indicators 2003

STONEHENGE: Visitor survey – every year Stonehenge in its landscape, 20th century excavations, 1995; landscape and planning study 1995; traffic survey for A303 road scheme 2002; research strategy 2005

AVEBURY: visitor & traffic study 1997, landscape assessment 1997, interpretation plan 2000

- Studies used for management of site: these surveys were used to identify priorities for action and funding. They also provided a better understanding of the site, its significance and key problems. The publication of all 20th century excavations at Stonehenge led to a reinterpretation of the phases of the monument.

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem not used on publications

- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: businesses, local authorities. Inadequate: visitors, local communities
- There is no education strategy for the site
- WHS Exhibition giving information on WHS status and significance of Stonehenge & Avebury, touring local libraries, museums and universities in Wiltshire since July 2003. A pilot WHS education project was put in place in 2004 at Stonehenge and extended to Avebury in 2005. The aim is to raise awareness of the prehistoric monuments and involve the local community
- Website available
- Local participation: local people sit on the WHS steering groups

## 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

### Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 18<sup>th</sup> (1994); 22<sup>nd</sup> (1998); 24<sup>th</sup> (2000); 26<sup>th</sup> (2002)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 25<sup>th</sup> (2001); 27<sup>th</sup> (2003); 28<sup>th</sup> (2004); 29<sup>th</sup> (2005)

### Action(s) taken to implement the Committee's decision(s)

- **STONEHENGE**  
The Stonehenge WHS management plan was produced and published in 2000. The Stonehenge project plans to close the road passing close to the monument and to improve presentation. A full assessment of impacts has been prepared both for the road scheme and the visitor centre. Options for the A303 Road scheme are currently being reviewed while English Heritage continues to seek planning consent for the visitor centre.
- **AVEBURY**  
English Heritage has outlined its preferred option for remedial work to Silbury Hill and planning its implementation.

### Conservation interventions

- **STONEHENGE & AVEBURY**  
Countryside Stewardship Scheme to protect archaeological monuments. Special grants to farmers to revert their fields back to pasture since 2002. At Stonehenge, 25% of the arable land will be back to grass (500 ha) and 60 prehistoric monuments will be protected. At Avebury, reversion of 5% of arable areas to grass and 50 monuments protected.

### STONEHENGE

New grass management regime around the Stones since 1990 to stop erosion and allow 800,000 visitors a year to walk on grass rather than extend the tarmac path.

Free access to Stone circle for Summer solstice since 2000, carefully managed to avoid any damage.

Archaeological investigations for the A303 and the visitor centre since 1990.

Proactive management by the NT following publication of land use plan for the Stonehenge Estate in 2001 and appointment of property manager in 2002.

### AVEBURY

Archaeological excavation and fieldwork 1999-2004 on various monuments leading to confirmation of Beckampton Avenue and Falkner's Circle, and discovery of many more monuments.

Collapse and repair of vertical shaft at Silbury Hill.

Excavation and adjust angle of Cove stones.

Repair and re-use of historic buildings by National Trust e.g. Barn Gallery exhibition, Avebury Manor.

- Present state of conservation: Needs more resources

### Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disaster(s), visitor/tourism pressure, agricultural/forestry regimes
- Specific issues:

### STONEHENGE & AVEBURY

Impact of roads and traffic; inappropriate development (buildings, roads, telephone masts).

Pressure for new visitor facilities; high visitor numbers leading to visitor erosion and overcrowding unless carefully managed; vandalism and graffiti; inappropriate behaviour at Solstice.

Plough damage to earthwork monuments; burrowing animals; tree planning; lack of woodland management and scrub control; gale blown trees

STONEHENGE: Inadequate visitor facilities.

Emergency measures:

### STONEHENGE & AVEBURY

Specific policies in the local plans to protect the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS

Regular monitoring of the site by EH and NT staff

Grant scheme for grass restoration since 2002, put in place by DEFRA following negotiation by the WHS Coordinators

WHS monitoring indicators agreed in 2003  
Monuments condition surveys

Funding sought for ongoing maintenance and capacity studies

WHS Coordinators raising awareness of the importance of the site

STONEHENGE: Stonehenge Project planning a tunnel for the A303, closure of the A344 and a new visitor centre outside the WHS.

No timeframes provided

WHS coordinators to continue work to raise awareness and develop closer links with local community

Proposed new Stonehenge visitor centre  
Proposed tunnel for the A303 and closure of the A344

- No WH Funding is sought. No timeframe provided

### 13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme

### 14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic, management
- Strengths of management: as listed in the above sections
- Weaknesses of management:

#### STONEHENGE & AVEBURY

Multiple ownership

No long-term funding in place for the WHS Coordinators' posts and for conservation projects

Insufficient funding for ongoing maintenance and management (apart from Stonehenge stone circle)

Limited understanding of the prehistoric monuments and of the World Heritage status by the public

Inadequate visitor facilities

Impact of roads, cutting through monuments and landscape, and traffic

#### STONEHENGE

Difficult to access key prehistoric monuments because of the A303 barrier

Conflicts of local interest

Difficulties with decision-making on Stonehenge Project

#### AVEBURY

Difficulty to physically control visitor numbers leading to erosions.

#### Future actions:

- Funding sought for WHS coordinators posts, conservation projects, ongoing maintenance and capacity studies