

A possible consultation scheme for Avebury: for discussion

[This is a personal note because the Parish Council hasn't adopted it.]

In any community, changes are proposed from time to time. Changes that are sudden or apparently unilateral can cause public distress. In turn, public reactions can be vehement, and can cause distress.

Avebury has to cope with extra pressures, being at the centre an internationally important World Heritage Site. At present, the burden of coping with these pressures is largely informal, and is being carried by individuals or by small groups, in organisations or as residents.

We don't have a pro-active system in place to take the strain.

A possible scheme

I suggest we all agree to introduce a proper consultation system. It would be optional, and it could be used by any person or any organisation proposing significant changes locally.

To consult properly, an idea needs to be put on the table together with sufficient supporting information for any fair-minded person to take an informed decision. The two parties meet to consider the idea, agree any obvious points, probably go away to consult internally or take further soundings, and come back for a second meeting to agree a final position.

The main benefits are that:

- The proposed project could be revised and improved for everyone's benefit during the discussion process
- The party seeking change can show that the proposal, or elements of it, has the endorsement of the democratic process
- The process maximises areas of agreement, and spreads the burden of dealing with negative or outlying views.

If the consultation process is not used, we're all no worse off than we are at present.

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