

**AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**A POLICY STATEMENT ON COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE**

**Context**

About 15 years ago it was noted that “Avebury attracts around 350,000 annual visitors.”<sup>1</sup> There has been no reduction since. For many the chief attractions of the place are its many world-class Neolithic monuments in a superb natural landscape. The low-key, rural authenticity of Avebury village is an important part of this setting and contrasts with the commercialism of many other tourist destinations. There is nowhere else quite like it.

The village of Avebury is small and, given the numbers visiting it, its character is fragile. Accordingly there are World Heritage Site management plans aiming amongst other objectives to conserve the unspoilt essence of Avebury. They were endorsed by all stakeholders and published in 1998, 2005, and 2015.

Action 34 of the 2015 plan asserts that implementation requires: “work with planners and parish/town councils to reduce advertisements, banners and signage within the WHS both through the planning process and where formal planning permission is not required.”<sup>2</sup> An accompanying justification for this action observes: “street furniture, signage and advertisements are all part of normal daily life but ill thought out street furniture, banners and signage can be intrusive. Modern clutter should be kept to a minimum and location and design should be carefully considered.”<sup>3</sup>

**Current situation**

There are eight buildings in or just off Green Street and the High Street with trading businesses of one kind or another serving visitors and residents alike. These are: Elements of Avebury, the Red Lion public house, the Coach House Café, the Lodge B & B, the Community Shop, Cobblestones, the National Trust’s shop and farmyard, and the Henge Shop. Most of

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<sup>1</sup> Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, ‘Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan 2005,’ English Heritage, August 2005, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Simmonds and Beth Thomas, ‘Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site Management Plan 2015 Part Two: Key management issues and opportunities,’ p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> loc. cit.

these entities trade daily throughout the year and advertise their presence through signage. Their signs are either permanent, being fixed to buildings, or temporary (for example using A-boards or vertical bunting or banners). Temporary signage is placed either on private land or on public footpaths and/or the highway itself.

Other buildings in Green Street and the High Street are used by organisations either occasionally or constantly. They are: the Chapel, the Circle Nursery, St James Church, and the Social Centre. Avebury Sports and Social Club stands on Beckhampton Road. All of these advertise their presence through permanent signage and some use temporary banners, posters, and A-boards from time to time to raise money for local projects and causes. ‘Teas For Tourists’ are particularly popular on certain weekends in the summer months in the High Street.

Trading organisations need good signage to guide customers to their properties. That is entirely reasonable and, in any case (to use the words of the 2015 WHS management plan), “street furniture, signage and advertisements are all part of normal daily life.” However there is minimal competition between establishments and consequently little need for advertising that is overtly competitive or attention-seeking. The way these organisations advertise must be consistent with the overall obligation placed on all of us “to reduce advertisements, banners and signage within the WHS” with “modern clutter [being] kept to a minimum [and with] location and design [being] carefully considered.”<sup>4</sup>

In practical terms, more than one A-board for a single trading outlet adds unnecessarily to visual clutter. Multiple boards seem unlikely to generate significant extra business and poorly designed or tacky signage can damage Avebury’s reputation. Bad signage can also be counter-productive if customers are put off and takings reduced. Large A-boards on pathways and the public highway detract from Avebury’s authenticity. They can inconvenience pedestrians and those who use public bus services. They present a hazard for sight impaired and physically restricted visitors and residents. Voluntary organisations can

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<sup>4</sup> loc. cit.

also play their role by limiting signage for their one-off events and following the general guidance below.

The WHS Plan seeks to protect the night sky from light pollution. There is no competition at night-time between most traders and the number and brightness of illuminated signs should be minimised in the Parish.

Trusloe, Beckhampton, and West Kennett lie in the WHS and the spirit of this note applies to them in their different ways.

### **Operational guidance**

Avebury Parish Council wants to play its part with other stakeholders in implementing the WHS management plan. To that end it invites traders and organisations in the village to respect the following guidance, which has been designed with their commercial and voluntary activities in mind:

- Where it is necessary to use an A-board, it should be small, sited on private land, and visible only during trading hours
- There should be no more than one A-board or similar for each trading outlet
- Vertical banners and bunting should not be used unless they are temporary and intrinsic to a one-off event and only one banner or strip of bunting should be used
- Signs advertising specific products should not be visible in public places
- The amount and brightness of external lighting should be kept to a minimum at dusk and during the hours of darkness.

Together we can preserve the authenticity of Avebury for future generations.

Avebury Parish Council  
June 2019