

Update from the National Trust – March 2022

Visitor operations, opening times and programming

- Avebury Manor re-opened 19 Feb, Thursday - Sunday (from 27 March Thursday - Tuesday).
- Summer opening hours start on 27 March. High Street toilets will be re-opened then.

Programming:

- Tom Lawton art installation 'Wonder' from 5 March – 3 April, preview for community, staff and volunteers on Friday 4 March, 5-6pm
- Living with Monuments, lecture by Prof Josh Pollard for local community, NT staff and volunteers, Tuesday 15 March, 6.30pm, Manor tearoom. RSVP: janinka.diverio@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Easter trail in Manor Garden, 9-24 April
- Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Thursday 2 June – Beacon lighting event together with local community and church (from 6pm; beacon lighting at 9.45pm on Waden Hill – details tbc)

For our full offer and opening times please see www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury

Observances

Regular ASOPM (Avebury Solstice Operational Planning Meetings) have been scheduled from 3 March, in parallel to regular ASSF (Avebury Sacred Sites Forum) meetings, to plan Solstice operations. ASOPM are chaired by NT and include Police, Wiltshire Council, Avebury Parish Council, Pagan reps and 'others' such as Red Lion.

Camping dates for 2022 have provisionally been agreed (subject to final confirmation nearer the date) and shared with APC and other key stakeholders.

We will be applying for parking derogations from Natural England to have the option to use the Manor Parkland for additional parking on our busiest weekends and when the overflow car park is used for observance camping.

Avebury Chapel

Heads of Terms have been agreed for a Business Lease between NT and APC, to run Avebury Chapel as an exhibition space for local organisations under the overarching theme of 'The Living Landscape'. A draft lease is currently being considered/approved by both parties.

Projects

Potting Shed - Refurbishment of the Potting Shed in Avebury Manor Garden, for which we raised funds through our property Raffle a few years ago, has been completed.

Garden Wall thatch – Re-thatching of the Garden Wall between the Monks/Church Garden and the churchyard of St James' Church has been completed. Like the above, this project has been part-funded through income from our property Raffle.

Great Barn thatch – Thatch to repair damage caused by Jackdaws on the roof of the Great Barn has nearly been completed. We are trialing a new type of netting to protect the roof from future damage.

Interpretation panels – Installation of interpretation panels on the visitor route from the main car park is currently in process.

Car park maintenance – the main driveway of our visitor car park has been resurfaced using a new method, which will hopefully provide a longer-term solution to potholes and muddy conditions. If successful, other areas might follow.

Planning applications

Following a pre-planning visit by Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer, we will soon be submitting a Listed Building Consent application for the re-instatement of the Manor east porch and some alterations to downpipes in the Manor courtyard.

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Countryside update

Storm Eunice - All NT facilities were closed. The village was very quiet and having all facilities closed throughout the village helped tremendously with keeping everyone safe. Thank you! We managed to close and secure the main car park on Thursday evening.

The local met office monitoring station at Lyneham was not recording wind speeds but Larkhill recorded gusts of 65mph+ and Boscombe Down 76mph.

Tree damage includes a large limb split out of a Sycamore in the SE sector. This has left the rest of the crown unstable, so a significant reduction is required to make this tree safe. Similarly, the twin stemmed Leylandii tree on the east boundary of Carpenters Cottage also split and further works will be undertaken to remove the standing (split) stem. Wiltshire Council has been notified and approval given to undertake this work as soon as possible (Dead, Dying or Dangerous tree Regulations) without the need to make a formal tree work application (conservation area consent).

An old ash pollard was blown over on the outer boundary of the NE sector.

There are Sycamore limbs down on Silbury path blocking one route (with an alternative route in place) and an old Willow pollard has also dismantled itself on Silbury path. We will attend to these as soon as possible.

During the storm Eunice an Ash limb fell on the brow of the hill A4 between West Kennett and Silbury Hill. The road was closed by Wiltshire Police/Wiltshire Council. Local tree surgeons working at West Kennett farm quickly cleared it.

Archaeology update

There has been some recent metal detecting activity in the ditch around Silbury Hill. This was reported directly to Historic England, which was followed by a site inspection by the Police's Heritage at Risk Officer.

24/02/2022