

Update from the National Trust – September 2022

Visitor operations

- There are no changes to our standard opening times in September. For daily opening times visit our [website](#).

Programming

- Our headline event during September is the **Sculpture exhibition in the Manor Garden**, now in its fifth year. The exhibition runs from Sat 3 September – Sun 9 October, with a preview event for the local community, staff and volunteers on Friday 2 September, 5-6pm. For the first time this year, we are able to offer the opportunity to talk to some of the artists, each Thursday 11am-3pm for the duration of the exhibition. Access to the exhibition is free for members of the local community.
- We are taking part in **Heritage Open Day Week**, which runs from Fri 9 - Sun 18 September. During this time, we are offering daily free henge tours (subject to volunteer availability) plus free access to the whole site on Thu 15 September.
- Other events during September include a Landscape Walk on Sat 10 September, Harvest displays from Sat 24 September and Trust10 on Sun 25 September.

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

Commercial/business group proposal

- In a diverse community like Avebury, there are many events going on, organised by different businesses or groups. It might be helpful for all businesses to be aware of what events are planned across the village. A suggestion to address this would be to set up a Commercial/Business group, consisting of local businesses (similar to what was established during the re-opening phase of the pandemic), as a forum to discuss upcoming events and anything that impacts local businesses. We'd welcome this proposal to be considered by APC.

Observance management

- We have made some changes to the way the NT team will work with partners to manage Observances at Avebury. The lead role for co-ordinating our work over Observances will move from Peter Oliver, Countryside Manager, to Hazel Barry-Scott, our Experience & Visitor Programming Manager. Peter is currently working through a comprehensive handover with Hazel to ensure a smooth transition. They will attend ASSF together on 8 September and will share the change in responsibilities at the meeting. Hazel already takes a strong proactive lead across the Wiltshire Landscape portfolio to deliver visitor and events management throughout the year. Taking on the management of Solstice and other Observances sits comfortably in her remit.

Avebury Chapel

- The terms of the lease for Avebury Chapel to APC have been finalised and the draft lease is awaiting sign-off by APC. The lease is expected to commence on 1 October 2022, on a 3-year term, for the use of the building as an exhibition space for local organisations under the overarching theme of 'The Living Landscape'.
- Ceiling repairs have been completed.

Access Improvements

- **Resurfacing works car park, farmyard, kitchen garden**
The Trust has an ambition to make its places more accessible for everyone. In this context we have received some funding for access improvements in the form of resurfacing works in our main visitor car park, farmyard and kitchen garden. We will be submitting the necessary consents for these works in due course and would like to share our plans with APC in more detail at the next meeting on 4 October.
- **Bench along visitor route**
We will be installing a wooden bench along the visitor route from the visitor car park, so people have an opportunity to rest on the walk from the car park to the village. The bench will be installed in September or October next to the recently installed interpretation panels.
- **Free NT Wi-Fi**
We are working with Cisco to improve connectivity across the site. As an initial step there is now free NT Wi-Fi coverage in certain areas of the site. Details of areas covered by this service will be confirmed.

Experience Design

- We are planning to carry out a process called 'Experience Design' at Avebury. Experience Design is a NT process which helps properties to develop long-term plans for the visitor experience and visitor business, whilst protecting what makes a place special. Engaging and working in partnership with the local communities will be crucial for the success of this and we look forward to working with the local communities from the early stages of this project. More info will follow in due course.

Archaeology update

- Some archaeological fieldwork in various locations across the WHS has been carried out by our university partners during July and August. Another exciting project is in the pipeline, with NT, with details to be confirmed.

Staffing news

We're pleased to welcome / welcome back the following members to our Wiltshire Landscape team:

- Jack Menzies; Assistant Ranger, supporting the Countryside team, predominantly at Avebury.
- Alexia Lemon; Gardener, replacing Mike Brewer, who's moving to a Senior Gardener role at Lacock.
- Abbey Willcocks; returning from maternity leave as Welcome Manager, taking back the reins from Grant Hutchinson.
- Grant Hutchinson; having finished his maternity cover, will be supporting the Facilities team as Facilities & Support Services Manager and will be the first port of call for visitors to the Estate Office.

We hope you meet the new team members over the coming weeks and months.

Road safety concerns

- We are receiving regular concerns and complaints from visitors about increased footfall on the A4361. The key issue raised is about the safety of pedestrians walking from the Sports & Social Club car park, east on the grass verge or along the edge of the A4361 to access the Henge. As this is a critical safety issue, we are raising our concerns formally through the APC and ask for the issue to be addressed with the relevant stakeholders; we are happy to provide support if and where we can.

02/09/2022