

## **NOTE OF A MEETING ABOUT THE COACH HOUSE TOILETS AT THE RED LION, HIGH STREET, AVEBURY ON 24 NOVEMBER 2016**

Following the Parish Council's decision at its November meeting, a meeting was held in the Red Lion for those living or working within the Henge to discuss a future for the Coach House toilets.

The following attended: Alicia Booth (Assistant Surveyor, The National Trust), Judy Farthing, Andrew Jack (Community Engagement Officer, Wiltshire Council), Maggie Lewis, Stephen Stacey, Helen Vickers, John Wilding (also for the Henge Shop), Charlotte Powell, Karyn Pearson (also on behalf of Ryan Ryal of the Red Lion) and Andrew Williamson (also reporting on behalf of Michele Lomas as Chair of the Community Shop, Tina May of the Post Office and Andrew and Susan Blackall of The Lodge B&B).

Apologies had been received from Catherine Hosie, Lyn Bennett-Nutt and Lynda Saunders of the Community Shop, Andrew and Susan Blackall, Ryan Ryal and Tina May.

Those present noted that:

1. The nearest toilets to the centre of the Henge were over a quarter of a mile away behind the Great Barn, and these were only open from about 10.00am to 5.00pm.
2. Over 250,000 people visit Avebury a year, and the provision of toilets in a World Heritage Site was important. Many others also come to the village - such as truck drivers, builders, children, people with disabilities and bus and coach passengers.
3. There was concern at the number of people asking for directions to toilets, or asking for the use of private toilets, or relieving themselves in open areas in and around the Henge.

It was agreed that:

1. Based on evidence from those present, there was a very significant demand for toilets from visitors to the village and the Henge, at all times of the day and every day of the week, and this should be met.
2. The toilets should be of a standard appropriate to Avebury's status as a component of a leading World Heritage Site and this required them to be available to meet reasonable levels of demand when that demand was present.
3. Hence they should be open all year round, at least during the hours of daylight and ideally between 09h00 and 21h00.
4. While the National Trust owns the Coach House, others could support the Trust in practical ways to help provide a service. These could be local traders, Wiltshire Council, the Parish Council, bus companies, individuals and others who could help with finance and/or staff or volunteer time.

Furthermore:

1. Alicia reported preliminary figures for the annual costs for maintaining the Coach House toilets. These were of the order of £10,000 of which about £7,800 was for cleaning. She kindly undertook to see whether it might be possible to break these figures down further, and whether the costs of the toilets in the Trust's 'farmyard' were included in these totals.

2. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have more information about capital and running costs, and the level and incidence of vandalism in the Coach House toilets.
3. Andrew Jack said that the toilets in George Lane in Marlborough, currently being refurbished, had cost about £20,000/year to run. He gave the name of the Marlborough Town Clerk, Shelley Parker, as a contact for further information. He added that his understanding was that public toilets in Aldbourne and Ramsbury were self-sustaining. He explained that Wiltshire Council has a contract with Churchill to maintain many of its facilities.
4. The meeting considered that a charge of 20p/visit might be appropriate and that this could raise +/- £7,000/year given the level of usage expected. Those present were aware that National Trust members might expect the free use of toilets as part of their membership benefits. It was felt that this could continue in the 'farmyard' where access to the toilets was over Trust owned land, but need not apply to the High Street where access to the Coach House was from the public highway. A higher proportion of those using the Coach House would not be Trust members, and please also see point 7 below.
5. Andrew Jack indicated that the Marlborough Area Board was concerned to support the provision of toilets in local settlements. It might consider an application for up to £5,000 towards the capital cost of repairs to the Coach House toilets, and a grant of £1,000 to the Parish Council towards running costs which could be spread over two or three years. It was agreed that, if so decided at the next Parish Council meeting, Avebury PC email MAB to request that these sums be made available.
6. Subject to formal confirmation by the organisations' committees, councils or employers concerned, it was suggested that offers of funding for two years might be made by Avebury Parish Council (£250/year), the Henge Shop (£250/year), the Community Shop (£250/year) and the Red Lion (an informal fund raising initiative). It was agreed that APC's letter to the WHS committee should inform it of these prospects and ask for the support of its other stakeholders.
7. It was suggested that notices could be put up in the toilets acknowledging that the Trust was providing the toilets in a partnership arrangement with these local organisations. This could also help justify a 20p charge.
8. It was agreed that coach operators should be approached since many of their customers need toilets; at the moment they use the Red Lion in particular, which imposes significant additional costs on the public house.
9. Karyn said that staff from the Red Lion would be willing to open the toilets at 9.00am, and close them at 18.00ish in winter and 21.00 or 22.00ish in summer.
10. It was hoped that the National Trust would welcome the offers of support, financial and otherwise, aiming to provide WHS-appropriate toilets meeting visitor needs.

Next steps:

- Alicia to email Andrew Williamson with additional analysis and data if available.
- Avebury Parish Council to discuss the issue at its next meeting with a view to confirming the availability of funding, contacting MAB and writing to the WHS Committee (point 6 above).
- Those other organisations mentioned in points 6 and 9 above to confirm the figures against their names, if at all possible before the Council meeting on 6 December.

30 November 2016