

GLASTONBURY WORLD HERITAGE STATUS WORKING GROUP

FINAL REPORT

Issue

Recommendations to Glastonbury Town Council relating to the exploration of the potential of World Heritage Status (WHS) for Glastonbury, and any emerging, related issues.

Summary

Our research and discussions have led us to the conclusion that Glastonbury could have a reasonable chance of achieving WHS should Glastonbury Town Council decide to pursue this objective. Working Group (WG) opinion was somewhat divided on whether this would be a good thing for the town, taking into account the factors listed under key findings and risks and issues below. Most WG members are clear, though, that should the town decide to pursue WHS, there are some key actions and considerations that should be taken into account. These are set out in the 'Route Map' under key findings below. Of the 9 members of the WG (discounting Councillors) 6 Members felt that WHS would be of benefit and should be pursued further (with or without other options), 1 member felt that while WHS would be of benefit, the difficulty, costs and time needed would probably not justify the journey and 2 members felt that WHS should not be pursued further.

Introduction

1. The Glastonbury World Heritage Status Working Group (WG) was established by Glastonbury Town Council in March 2025, to explore the potential of WHS for Glastonbury and any emerging issues. WG Members were drawn from the Glastonbury community to ensure a community perspective. The Terms of Reference of the Glastonbury WHS WG are included at Annex A. The WG has noted the WHS related work being undertaken in parallel by consultants for the Town Council. The WG has maintained a level of separation from this work, in order to ensure that it delivers a separate, independent, view from that of the consultants.

Method

2. The WG has completed the following research, activities and investigations in order to provide the best possible advice to the Town Council.
 - a. Discussions with expert and interested parties, who were invited to join our WG meetings (Annex B). These included:
 - i. The National Trust

- ii. South West Heritage Trust
 - iii. Glastonbury Antiquarian Society
 - iv. Somerset Councillor supporting other options analysis.
 - v. Presentations on Avebury and Stonehenge lived experience (as part of Town Council led event).
 - vi. Local School Teacher
 - vii. The WHS Consultants engaged by the Town Council
- b. A “Vision of Glastonbury” (Annex C) was produced as a common view of what WG Members would wish Glastonbury to be like in 2035 and beyond, to assist in assessing whether the impacts of WHS would be of benefit to the town. This document should provide useful guidance on the development of a WHS (or non-WHS) management plan for Glastonbury.
 - c. A Sub-Group was established to produce an analysis of Glastonbury’s “Intangible Heritage” (Annex D), to assist the WG in coming to a view on whether Glastonbury has sufficient Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to make a credible case to achieve WHS.
 - d. A Sub-Group was established to produce a review of other options (Annex E) which may be followed as alternatives, or together with, WHS, in order to provide appropriate protection for Glastonbury’s OUV.
 - e. A visit to the Bath World Heritage Site on 5 January 2026 (Annex F).
 - f. Conclusions on the likely impacts of WHS for Glastonbury (Annex G).
 - g. Research provided by a WG Member into Wellbeing and community pride benefits observed in WHS sites (Annex H), protection of access to Glastonbury Tor (Annex J) and UN Agenda 2030 (Annex K).
 - h. Community engagement events on 24 May, 30 August and 25 October 2025.
 - i. Assessment of Management Plans from existing WHS sites and other WHS related documents including credible research found on-line.
 - j. Advice via a Teams call between the WG Chair and Secretary, and staff of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on 15 January 2026. This call explored outstanding questions relating to likely costs, resources and what assistance may be made available.

Key Findings

3. **WHS Viability:** On the basis of our research, including the basis of other successfully Inscribed sites and the OUV outlined by the Intangible Heritage WG (Annex D), it is concluded that Glastonbury has potential to secure WHS should it decide to pursue this. DCMS cautioned, however, that the process is quite competitive with 12 applications and 5 bids on the UK Tentative list at present.
4. **Community Experience.** The WG has found a generally positive view of WHS during our discussions with the interested parties invited to join our meetings, and in presentations/discussions with those involved with the WH sites of Stonehenge, Avebury and Bath. These WH site representatives have reported that WHS has provided additional protection against future unsympathetic/inappropriate developments which might impact the stated OUV of the sites. They also reported a generally positive view amongst local communities, including an increased sense of pride in the WHS sites. WG members did, however, experience vociferous opposition to WHS from some individuals at the Glastonbury community events.
5. **Tourism.** One of the key questions we have considered, is whether WHS would bring a damaging surge of additional tourism to Glastonbury. This concern has been expressed by some individuals at our consultation events, and the group has received some historic reports of negative experiences in other parts of the world. The WHS consultants have advised that WHS does not necessarily lead to increased tourism, as this will depend largely on the provisions of the WHS management plan. Despite this view, WG Members believe that a modest increase in tourism would likely occur, purely as a result of Glastonbury being added to the international list of Inscribed WHS sites. DCMS advice agreed with this, saying that they have noticed that Chinese and Japanese tourists in particular, do seem to respond to WHS listings, but often this is a short-lived increase shortly after initial listing.
6. Whether a modest increase in tourism would be a benefit or a disadvantage, depends purely on individual perspective. The WG therefore only raises this as a likely outcome.
7. **WHS Boundary.** The work of the Intangible Heritage sub group (Annex D) suggests that Glastonbury's OUV is concentrated in the town itself, plus its immediately surrounding 'Isle of Avalon' setting. The other options sub group report emphasises also the vital importance of protecting the wider setting; essentially the views from the Tor and towards the Tor from the surrounding landscape. Bringing these points together, the WG suggests a core boundary encompassing the town itself and immediately surrounding landscape including the Tor, with a wider buffer zone/setting encompassing the views to and from the Tor. It should be noted, however, that such a buffer zone/setting could encompass the city of Wells, which would raise the essential need for close engagement with the City of Wells.
8. **Property Value.** Like tourism, higher property value has been expressed by some individuals as a likely concern. The WG has not been able to find any credible evidence of this, with most people involved with WHS sites explaining that property values are driven by many factors, but there seems to be no direct

linkage to WHS (see also Annex F). DCMS confirmed that across all their UK sites they have seen no specific impact on property values which could be attributed to WHS.

9. **Impact on Development.** WG Members detected some difference between the 'light touch' UNESCO engagement described by the consultants, and the relatively firm scrutiny of major development plans described by the Bath WH Site Manager (see Annex F). This may be a reflection of Bath's high profile as a double-Inscribed WHS site, but WG Members recommend that more work would be needed to assess this, and the associated resources that would be needed to sustain WHS in Glastonbury.
10. DCMS advice aligned with that of the Bath WH Site Manager, explaining that the Town would have an ongoing duty to advise UNESCO of any proposed development that threatens the OUV presented in the WHS bid. They advised that this is a serious commitment, which could have a significant impact on any major infrastructure projects. That said, representatives of both Bath and Stonehenge/Avebury felt that on balance WHS has provided useful protection against unsympathetic development.
11. **Costs, Resources and Management Arrangements.** The 15 January 2026 discussions with DCMS were very helpful, following on from the information gained from the Bath visit. DCMS advised that, ideally, every WH site should have a coordinator or site manager, and it is normal that the coordinator or manager should be a full-time role. This resource would be the principal ongoing cost of sustaining WHS.
12. On bid costs, DCMS advised that much depends on the scope of the Management Plan, and to what extent the site chooses to outsource the work. DCMS provided a study from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP which provided more detail on this. This report identified potential for significant costs, depending on the route taken, and this would require further work before any decision to launch a WHS bid.
13. **Antisocial Behaviour.** As reported in the meeting minutes and the evidence log, WG Members were subjected to antisocial behaviour during WG sessions, to the extent that one meeting had to be abandoned. Antisocial behaviour is an ongoing problem in Glastonbury, with the potential to undermine any WHS bid, so the WG recommends that this should be addressed prior to any WHS bid.
14. **Other Options.** The Other Options WG identified 2 specific options; National Parks and National landscapes, which could be considered, either together with WHS, or instead of WHS, to provide additional protection to Glastonbury against unsympathetic development. Annex E sets out these options which, like WHS, could provide protection to a wide expanse of the views to and from the Tor.
15. **Management Plan.** Whether WHS is pursued or not, the WG concluded that there would be great value in the production of a Management Plan for Glastonbury. This could also form the bedrock of any credible bid for Glastonbury WHS. It should be clear on the objectives to be achieved, what should be valued

and protected, the protections necessary, the timeline and the associated resources to secure and sustain WHS. It would also analyse and recommend the necessary broad stakeholder group which would be needed to ensure alignment and success. WG Members have reviewed a number of very good existing WHS management plans which have clearly provided great clarity, focus and benefit.

16. **Critical Risks:** The WG has considered a number of concerns about possible very negative impacts of WHS. Although WHS would likely bring a modest increase in tourism, and this will not be welcomed by all in the community, the WG has not identified any critical risks associated with WHS. In this regard, there are no definitive emergent issues for the Town Council to consider.

Risks and Issues

17. The following summarises perceived risks and issues, and their suggested mitigations, relating to a WHS bid:
- a. Under-resourcing: The resources to acquire and then to maintain WHS should be ascertained and their provision assured in advance of any decision to proceed.
 - b. Risk of mis-management or unintended consequences: A robust and funded management plan should be created in advance of any decision to proceed with WHS.
 - c. Risk of lack of Community engagement and support: A significant community engagement and information campaign will be needed as a **'Preparation Phase'** before any WHS bid is launched. A carefully planned programme of raising community awareness and addressing any concerns will be a vital part of any WHS plan.
 - d. Risk that WHS management plan does not address local issues: Avoid outsourcing as far as possible.

CONCLUSIONS

18. Overall, the majority of WG members felt that WHS would be of value to Glastonbury, but many felt also that the considerable time, cost and work to achieve WHS may not be worthwhile for the benefit gained. We recommend that Council should weigh carefully the likely costs and effort against the potential benefits of WHS. Those closely involved with the WH sites of Stonehenge, Avebury and Bath, have reported that WHS has provided additional protection against future unsympathetic/inappropriate developments which might impact the stated OUV of the sites. They have also reported overall community support for WHS, with a sense of community pride and wellbeing, our own research supports this (Annex H). It should be noted that WHS protects, but does not stop

development.

19. The WHS WG Members have enjoyed this interesting assignment and are grateful to the Town Council for the opportunity to research and advise upon this important matter for Glastonbury.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. Recommendations for further actions:

21. **Route Map:** The WHS process is complex by any standards, and it is vital that, should Glastonbury decide to proceed with a WHS bid, many things are put in place to facilitate the journey. Thus, it is recommended that a WHS 'Route Map' should be put in place as follows. The individual elements are expanded in greater detail under the other parts of this report:

- a. A '**Preparation Phase**' comprising a community information and engagement programme and production of a town management plan including resources to both acquire and sustain WHS status. This should also include an impact assessment and a public consultation.
- b. A programme to address antisocial behaviour in the town, and to address areas of the town in need of attention, including some of the points noted in the Vision document (Annex C).
- c. A WHS bid plan, including liaison with wider stakeholders (eg DCMS, Nation Trust, Security services, local businesses), as well as a sustained community engagement. The WG recommends that the management plan and the bid plan should, as far as possible, be produced from within the local community rather than being outsourced.
- d. It is recommended that the Town Council should consider carefully the alternative means of protection outlined at Para 14 and Annex E, before any decision to pursue a WHS only bid.

22. That a management plan for Glastonbury should be considered, regardless of any decision to proceed with a WHS bid.

Annexes

Annex A Terms of Reference.

Annex B - Evidence Log

Annex C – Vision of Glastonbury

Annex D - Report of Intangible Heritage Sub-Group, including Outstanding Universal Value proposition.

Annex E – Report of Other Options Sub-Group.

Annex F – Reports of Bath visit of 5 January 2026.

Annex G – Likely Impacts of WHS

Annex H – Summary of Academic Research into WHS – wellbeing
and tourism.

Annex I - Costs and Management Arrangements

Annex J – Protections of Public Access to Glastonbury Tor.

Annex K – Relationship between WHS and UN Agenda 2030.

Annex A Terms of Reference



GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Terms of Reference

World Heritage Status Working Group January 2025

May 2026

Town Hall Magdalene Street Glastonbury Somerset BA6 9EL

www.glastonbury.gov.uk

Committee Name
Date Written or Updated
Date Adopted
Review Due

1. Powers

This working group is an advisory committee, and it can consider matters and make recommendations associated with its functions described below.

2. Functions

This working group will support the Town Council's engagement with Glastonbury's community – and make recommendations to Full Council – relating to the exploration of the potential of World Heritage Status for Glastonbury, and any emerging, related issues.

The working group's tasks must be completed no later than September 2025.

On completion of its tasks, the working group will make a final report and recommendations to Full Council.

3. Membership

The working group shall be formed from current Town Councillors and members of the community. It will consist of no more than sixteen members, of which there will be four councillors and twelve non-councillors.

Town Councillors should indicate their wish to serve on this group at the January meeting of the Full Council in 2025. Elected member's membership will remain until the working group's tasks have been completed.

As a working group with a remit relating to the promotion of tourism, as per s.144 of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the community may be voting members of the working group.

1

Members of the community will be selected to serve on the working group through an open recruitment process.

The Town Clerk or a representative from the Town Council office, can be present in ex-officio, non- voting capacity at all meetings.

A person living outside the town but running an established local business may be invited to join, subject to there being no conflict of interest.

A person living outside of the town who, through the merit of their application, is considered by the Town Council to be a beneficial addition to the working group may be invited to join subject to there being no conflict of interest.

Somerset Council officers or elected members, as well as other agencies appointed by the Town Council to support the process cannot be voting members of the working group but are able to attend meetings and contribute to the discussions as required.

From time to time, specialists and other experts may be invited to speak at meetings at the discretion of the working group.

The working group shall elect a Chair and Deputy Chair at its first meeting.

Failure to comply with the Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct and / or the Nolan Principles may result in removal from the working group. The final decision on removal from the working group will be delegated to the Town Clerk, in their capacity as Proper Officer of the Council.

4. Meetings

This advisory committee shall meet as often as required.

5. Quorum

The working group will be quorate when there is a minimum of six members present, of which two must be Town Councillors.

6. Principles

In addition to the Council's adopted Code of Conduct, the Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder, this includes members of the community.

1. Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work.

2

They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

3. Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

7. Administrative Support

A Committee Clerk is the dedicated administrative support for this committee and is responsible for summonses, agendas, reports, minutes, and actions with the ability to delegate to and collaborate with the Town Council's team of officers and councillors where appropriate.

Annex B - Evidence Log

17 March 2025, WG1.

All WG Members checked for Conflicts of Interest, no significant interests declared. Chair and deputy Chair selected. Public access to observe agreed.

14 April 2025, WG2.

Presentation on WHS provided by Town Council appointed consultants, followed by questions and answers. A very useful session.

19 May 2025, WG3.

Received advice from representatives of the National Trust (Joel), and the South West Heritage Trust (Steve Membury).

Saturday 24 May 2025, first public consultation day.

Useful discussions with local community. Some unfounded concerns expressed, for example fencing off of Tor for paid access only (this had been clarified with National Trust at the 19 May WG).

16 June 2025, WG4.

Discussion with Louise Brook of Millfield School, on how local schools enjoy and value Glastonbury, and what they may look to WHS to provide.

'Intangible Heritage' sub group established.

Consultants' pros and cons document reviewed and noted.

21 July 2025, WG5.

Advice received from Glastonbury Antiquarian Society.

'Other Options' sub group established.

Agreed for Chair to write to the Bishop and Dean of Wells to advise them of the WG and to invite any comments/advice. This was subsequently actioned, but no replies received.

Saturday 30 August 2025, second public consultation day.

Advice received from community, including the Goddess Society and the Pilgrim Reception Centre.

15 September 2025, WG6.

Reviewed feedback from 30 August event.

Reviewed initial report from Intangible Heritage sub group.

Reviewed the Vision document.

Noted that no replies had been received from earlier requests for representation from Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

20 October 2025, WG7

Presentation given by Somerset Councillor Henry Hobhouse relating to the work of the Other Options sub group.

Saturday 25 October 2025.

WG Members joined Town Councillors in a public consultation day. There was an excellent presentation from Sarah Simmons who gave her first-hand experience

of managing the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS site, and from Alex Sherman, CE of the Bath Preservation Trust, on his similarly positive experiences of WHS in Bath. Unfortunately, this event was disrupted by repeated discourteous interruptions from a small number of individuals.

17 November 2025, WG8.

Meeting had to be abandoned and Police notified, following severe and abusive public disorder in the Council Chamber.

2 December 2025, WG8 re-run.

This meeting was run with no public access. For the protection of WG Members, it was agreed that all future meetings will be held without public access.

A useful report was received on legal protections for public access to the Tor (Annex J).

A further presentation clarified the relationship between WHS and UN Agenda 2030 (Annex K).

8 December 2025, WG9.

A presentation was received (Annex H) on WHS related research work regarding wellbeing and tourism.

5 January 2026, WG Visit to Bath (Annex F).

15 January 2026, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Teams call. WG Chair and Secretary pose outstanding questions relating to initial (bid phase) and ongoing costs of WHS, including management overhead. To be briefed at 19 January WG.

19 January 2026, WG10.

Review of draft final report, and agreement of specific changes.

16 February 2026, WG11 (final meeting).

Annex C – Vision of Glastonbury

GLASTONBURY VISION 2035 AND BEYOND Version 4 20.10.2025

INTRODUCTION

1. To support the development of recommendations to determine if Glastonbury should apply for World Heritage Status (WHS), this paper presents the vision of the WHS Working Group on what they would wish Glastonbury to be like in the year 2035 and beyond. The objective is to enable the readers to assess whether the attributes below would be enhanced or diminished by the acquisition of WHS.

BACKGROUND

2. This paper was drafted by a small sub-group of the WHS WG, and then developed in committee.

THE GLASTONBURY VISION

Glastonbury has done well in recent years when compared to many other towns. It enjoys one of the most attractive and successful high streets in the UK and is famous for its particular mix of local businesses and local events. This should be protected and developed, including:

3. A Prosperous, diverse and vibrant town centre.

- 3.1. An interesting and diverse range of shops covering artistic, mystical and craft themes, as well as good quality food and provisions.
- 3.2. Good quality restaurants to appeal to both visitors and local residents.
- 3.3. Good amenities in and within easy reach of the Town Centre. This should include free out of town parking to welcome visitors, and good traffic management within the town to create a safe and enjoyable space for both visitors and residents to enjoy our unique Glastonbury Experience

4. Effective preservation of historic buildings, sites, gardens and architecture

- 4.1. Historic sites, buildings, gardens and architecture should be reasonably protected from loss through unsympathetic business and private development.

5. Restoration and Protection of Glastonbury's natural beauty, wildlife and green spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy

- 5.1. Development and implementation of a multi-agency policy to recover and protect rural areas and wildlife, including riverside walks and lanes in line with agreed protection policies and applicable legislation.
- 5.2. Restoration and protection of recreational and conservation areas from the impact of unlawful dwellings.

5.3. Restoration focus on nature conservation and health of the area over usage and increased footfall.

5.4 The natural beauty of the landscape around Glastonbury Tor preserved for future generations.

6. Enhanced Education Opportunities for all ages

6.1. Increased sense of aspiration and pride in their town for the nine hundred children in education in Glastonbury. (St. John's St. Benedict's St. Dunstan's and home schooling.)

6.2. Life-long education provision with enhanced opportunities for personal and professional development for all ages, ranging from apprenticeships, through crafts to University of the Third Age.

7. Social Capital Improvement – Healthcare, Social Services, Youth Services

7.1. Recognising the aspiration for sustainability and an improved quality of life for all, there is a holistic integration of shared values and resources that supports all individuals to work and live together healthily and in harmony.

7.2. Excellent provision for youth, parents and retirees in which the agencies concerned with health and social services work together to support all.

7.3. Local options provided for temporary and short-term residents and Pilgrims at a sustainable cost. Provision of either accommodation or option to provide own accommodation with use of sanitary provisions.

7.4. Provision of permanent long-term housing with a focus on equity to meet the proposed needs of Glastonbury residents now and in the future.

8. Preservation and Enablement of diverse spiritual/religious practices

8.1. Protection of Glastonbury's unique, internationally recognized spiritual and religious heritage and its continuing function as a safe haven and place of devotion and learning for locals and visiting pilgrims.

8.2. Recognition of Glastonbury's living heritage, constantly co-created by both those living here and visitors, recognising the "spirit of place".

8.3. Visitors and locals continue to enjoy free, peaceful, unrestricted access to the many sacred sites in and around Glastonbury, with site boundaries and admission charges only being charged sensitively in accordance with local site guardians.

8.4. Preservation and sensitive expansion of Glastonbury's spiritual/religious heritage and tourist economy.

Glastonbury's Intangible Cultural Heritage

'Intangible cultural heritage includes the practices, knowledge, and expressions that communities recognize as part of their cultural identity, along with associated objects and spaces. Transmitted through generations, this heritage adapts over time, reinforcing identity and respect for cultural diversity. The [2003 UNESCO Convention](#) emphasizes the need to safeguard these cultural expressions for future generations.' Source: <https://www.unesco.org/en/intangible-cultural-heritage>

Glastonbury's topography, the 'Isle of Avalon', consists of a peninsular of land, set amid the Somerset Levels. Comprising hills, meadows, trees and springs, the archaeology and history of the abbey and town which lies at its heart are complex, stretching from prehistory to the present day. Arising from this environment and its millennia of human habitation, Glastonbury's *genius loci* - its spirit of place - is strong, almost tangible. This mythologisation of the landscape is most obviously epitomised by the Glastonbury 'traditions', an apparently disparate group of stories which includes a number of well-known tales: That the first church in England was founded here, that Joseph of Arimathea's staff grew into a thorn tree that blooms at Christmas, that Arthur and Guinevere are buried here, that the worship of the Goddess is centred here and that a vast ancient landscape zodiac can be traced in the surrounding countryside. There are many more such tales.

But Glastonbury's Intangible Heritage is far greater than this. It forms a 'mythic complex', an intricate structure composed of many, sometimes contradictory parts, but which retains an overall cohesion. Incorporating not just stories, but events, personalities, literature, physical objects, oral tradition and vernacular religion, it encompasses yet transcends Glastonbury's more mundane history. It continues to develop and to exert a hold over all those who encounter it. Not only does the 'mythic complex' inform and enrich, but it can also be tracked through deep time, its development traced through material and literary cultures, providing a rich heritage upon which Glastonbury's contemporary culture draws.

Just as Glastonbury's many and diverse 'traditions' are inextricably linked to the spiritual origins and life of the nation, so too are they bound to personal spirituality and are therefore of immediate relevance to every generation. Glastonbury is a national shrine standing for the creative reconciliation of provinces and races, religions and spiritualities, philosophies and ideologies. It is this conjunction of personal spirituality (the individual's quest for the eternal and search for meaning) with the national (the origins and identity of the tribe, and its spiritual authority) that consistently elicits reactions in people, sometimes immediate, sometimes more gradual, but always profound. In this way Glastonbury transcends all other such sites in England, becoming a mirror for the nation, its intangible cultural heritage providing meaning for the spiritual and non-spiritual alike.

Annex E – Report of Other Options Sub-Group

Glastonbury WHS working group Report from other options sub group

The other options sub group presented to the WHS working group on 20th October 2025.

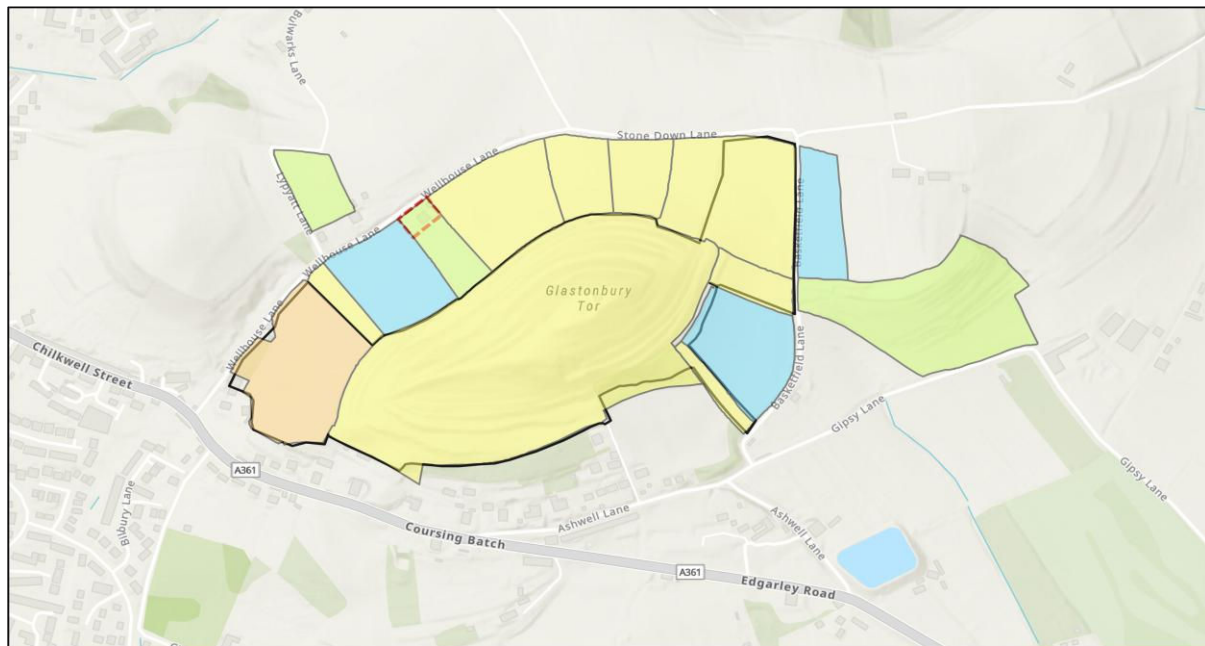
The purpose of the presentation was to highlight other options for the protection and preservation of Glastonbury and the Tor and the wider landscape.

A key message from the presentation was that Glastonbury and the Tor is within a landscape and not detached or isolated from the landscape. Therefore, the preservation of the landscape around Glastonbury and the Tor should not be overlooked.

There is some protection already in place for Glastonbury and the Tor.

National Trust

The map below shows the land owned and managed by NT, the Tor and some fields around it. The town does not currently financially contribute to the work of the NT regarding the Tor.



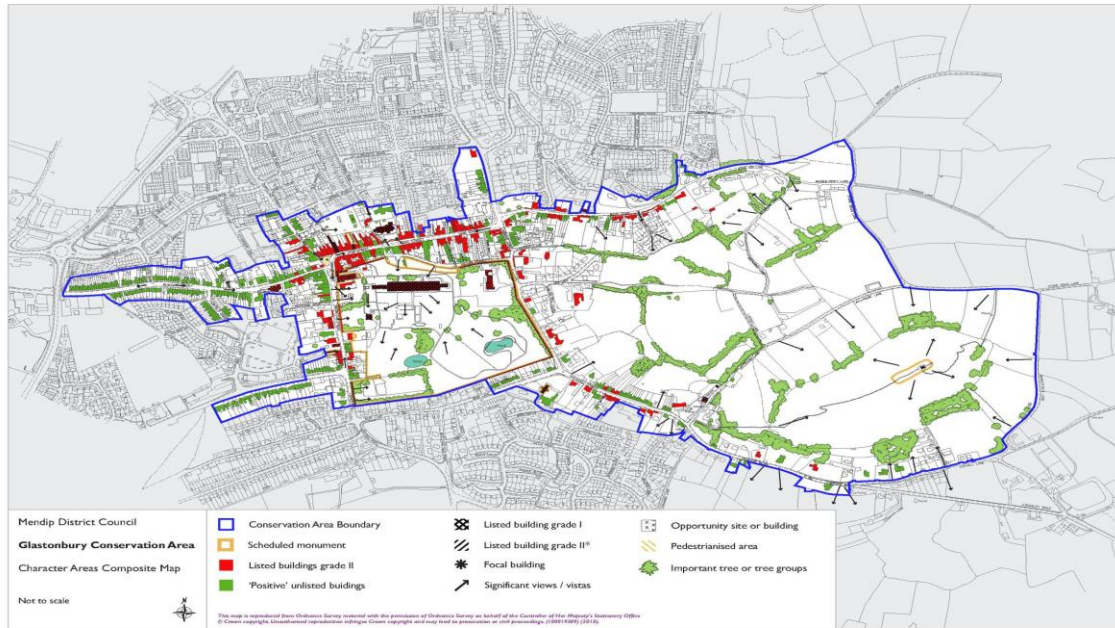
19/10/2025, 09:13:17
Our Land History
1915 - 1934
1935 - 1954
1955 - 1974
1975 - 1994
Disposals
Land: Always Open

1:9,028
0 0.05 0.1 0.19 mi
0 0.07 0.15 0.3 km
Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

NT GIS Browser
© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100023974 (For National Trust Data)

Glastonbury Conservation area and society

The conservation area map below covers the old part of the town, the Tor and other land. Conservation areas are defined under legislation as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” and are designated by Local Planning Authorities



Local Planning Authorities will need detailed plans and drawings of proposed works in the conservation area. A description of how the conservation area will be affected is also required. The planning authority consults Glastonbury conservation society on all applications for building or alterations within the Conservation Area.

The existing protections do not reach out into the wider landscape

The Glastonbury town and Tor are part of a wider landscape, we can see this from the photo below, many people will walk up the Tor to appreciate the landscape.



If the landscape view from the Tor is ruined then arguably the Tor is also spoilt, and if the views of the Tor from the surrounding landscape is ruined then arguably again the Tor is spoilt, the Tor and the surrounding landscape are combined, they are not isolated from each other.

The option, or options, for protecting and preservation needs to be right for the area chosen to be protected and preserved. If we agreed the area to be protected and preserved then the right option or options for protecting and preserving it would become clearer.

WHS can cover a large area or more than one area, we see this with the Jurassic Coast and Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS, both are large areas. Or WHS can cover a smaller area like Bath city.

There are also other potential options for protection and preservation of an area that extends beyond Glastonbury and the Tor

National Parks

National Parks are areas of countryside that include villages and towns. They have an authority to help look after them, including planning controls. National Parks are governed by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB)

National Landscapes are areas of countryside that include villages and towns. They have the same legal protection for their landscapes as national parks, but don't have their own authorities for planning control and other services like national parks do. Instead they are looked after by partnerships between local communities and local authorities.

A National Landscape is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

To designate a National Landscape area Natural England must issue an order under section 82 of the CROW Act for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of that area. Under the CROW Act, the relevant local authority, must make sure that all decisions seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB

National Parks and National Landscapes are designated by Natural England after their assessment.

Annual management plans are funded by the public sector-government-other authorities, availability of public funds could be a hindrance to designation.

A WHS could be within a National Park or National Landscape.

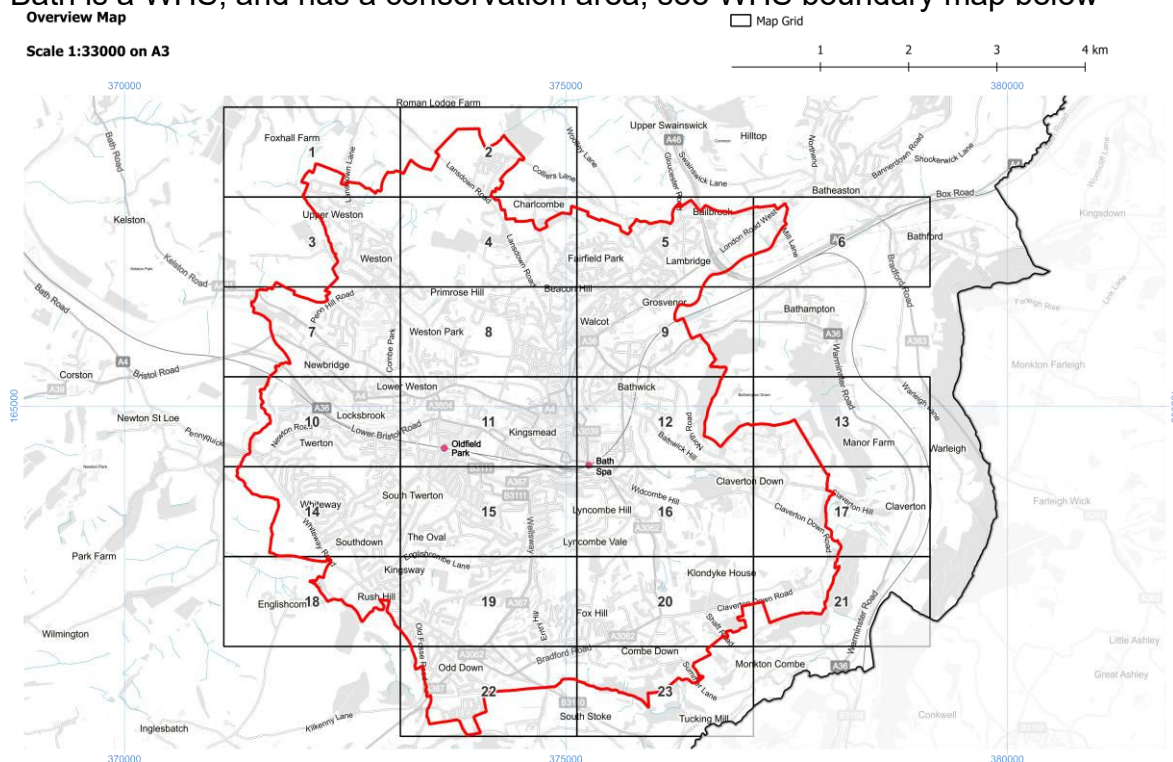
This table below highlights some important differences between a National Landscape and a National Park.

A National Park must provide opportunities for public open air recreation, while a National Landscape does not have to do this. A National Landscape must only meet the natural beauty test; National Parks must also meet the recreation test. The bar is higher for National Park status, the test for desirability is different, with National Parks requiring the standard of 'especially' desirable.

	National Landscape	National Park
Technical criteria	Natural beauty	Natural beauty Opportunities for open-air recreation
Desirability	Desirable to designate ... for the purposes of... (defined below)	Especially desirable to designate ... for the purposes of... (defined below)
Designation	AONB (normally with AONB Partnership or exceptionally a Conservation Board)	National Park (with National Park Authority)
Purposes	Conserving and enhancing its natural beauty	Conserving and enhancing its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage Promoting understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities by the public

Recent housing development application at Bath

Bath is a WHS, and has a conservation area, see WHS boundary map below



The Cotswold National Landscape map shows that Odd Down is on the border of the National Landscape. Odd Down is within the WHS but close to the border.

An application for 290 homes next to the park and ride at Odd Down was dismissed at appeal.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c20429zqzd9o>

Reported by the BBC.

Rejecting the appeal, the inspectorate said the development would have an “adverse effect” on the Cotswolds Landscape and that councillors were right to refuse permission. “There would be an adverse effect on the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape”.

It was reported by the BBC that the Land for development sits within the Bath WHS and the Cotswolds National Landscape.

GLASTONBURY WHS WG BATH VISIT – 5 JANUARY 2026

Summary

1. An excellent visit, which enabled the Glastonbury World Heritage Status Working Group (WHS WG) members to gain first hand feedback from the Mayor of Bath and the Bath World Heritage Site Manager, Adrian Neilson, on their lived experience of running a high-profile WH site. WHS WG Members were most grateful to the Mayor and Adrian Neilson for their time and their very open and candid replies to our questions. WG Members also thanked Jacq Cross who made the arrangements.

Attendance

2. The following were in attendance:

The Mayor of Bath, Councillor Professor Bharat Pankhania.

The Bath WH Site Manager, Adrian Neilson (by VTC).

Tim Rowntree, WHS WG Chair.

Joanna Dyer, WHS WG Deputy Chair.

Jacq Cross, Former WHS Member and meeting organiser.

Cllr Jon Cousins, WHS WG Member.

Sidika Petterson, WHS WG Member.

Katie Armstrong, WHS WG Secretary.

Connor Ogilvie-Davidson, Glastonbury Town Clerk.

Questions and Answers

3. Questions a to e had been prepared by the WHS WG Chair in advance, reflecting WG topics of interest, f and g were posed by Sidika Petterson and the Deputy Chair. Questions were primarily answered by Adrian, with occasional concluding remarks from the Mayor:

- a. Q: Some published research indicates that WHS can help engender a sense of pride and wellbeing in local communities. Have you seen evidence of this in Bath?

A: This is to some extent a mixed bag in Bath. Some people love it, while others see it as an encumbrance. On balance, it appears that the public view is largely positive, although some negative remarks have been noted. There does, though, seem to be a general feeling that the Inscriptions bring value, as many of the WH initiatives, for example the 'Bathscape', are more for the benefit of local people than for visitors. Overall, Adrian felt that the majority of people feel that WHS is a benefit and something to be proud of. The Major added that he, personally,

has not heard any negative comments.

- b. Q: Do you believe that WHS has provided additional protection against unsympathetic/inappropriate development in Bath? Do you have any examples?

A: This is the most positive aspect of WHS. Adrian explained how he is closely involved in planning and development, and negotiation with the relevant UNESCO teams based in France. A good example was the new Rugby Stadium, where the UN team were concerned about disruption of historic views caused by the original elevated design. Although negotiations were a little tense at times, it was concluded that the UN interface/challenge resulted in a much better, more appropriate, design and something to be proud of for generations to come. The Mayor added that in his view, the UN contribution had been very helpful.

- c. Q: Have you experienced any disadvantages to WHS in Bath?

A: Generally not, but the indigenous Bath planning system does not always align well with the ideas of the UNESCO teams in France, but we get there in the end, and generally with better solutions as a result of the scrutiny and challenge. It was added that these negotiations sometimes lead to opportunities, such as UNESCO grants which were made available for 'Great Spar Towns of Europe', for example. These grants have opened up opportunities to help the people of Bath. The Mayor added that the UN engagement forces proper engagement on planning issues, which should be the case anyway. In response to a follow-on question it was confirmed that, in the end, if no agreement is reached, the local decision stands. Ultimately the only hard lever that UNESCO has is to withdraw the Inscription if it is felt that the WH site is not being properly managed/protected (as Liverpool). It was stated that across the world, there have been 3 deletions across 1250 inscriptions.

- d. Q: Is there any advice that you could offer to Glastonbury in its consideration of a possible WHS application? both generally and specifically in the area of community engagement?

A: We must take the community on the WHS journey with us, focusing on the overriding principles of peace, working together, civic pride and improving a place for both visitors and local residents. Local community engagement was seen as very important.

e. Q: Do you believe that the Bath community supports its WHS status? Is there evidence to support your view?

f. A: Covered in reply to a. above.

g. Q: There have been concerns expressed that WHS has driven house price increases of some 70% in some areas, due in part to housing development being blocked by WHS considerations, with significant property price step changes on the WHS boundary. Has this been seen in Bath?

A: It is very difficult to attribute property price impact to WHS, as the property market has many driving factors. WHS has not stopped any development in Bath, so this should not be a driving factor. On the step change concern, it would make sense to ensure that the inscription covers the whole site, and this should not create problems.

h. Q: How is the need to negotiate developments that might have an impact on WHS being managed in the planning cycle?

A: It is incumbent on the local council to advise UNESCO of any developments that it is felt may impact WHS. This is very much handled on a case-by-case basis.

Reflections/Conclusions

4. All agreed that this visit had been hugely useful to the work of the WG. One thing that stood out as appearing somewhat differently to what had been explained by the Glastonbury WHS consultants, was the degree of involvement by UNESCO, which is clearly quite significant in Bath. It was clear that UNESCO does sometimes expect changes from the site, and for the site to comply. This was acknowledged to cause some tensions in the short-term, but it was felt that these discussions/negotiations resulted in higher quality long-term solutions for the City.
5. It was also interesting to note that the existence of the Bath WHS Site Manager role implies an ongoing WHS related management overhead, albeit that as a significant city, this will be greater for Bath than it would be for Glastonbury. It is nevertheless a point for further consideration.

Tim Rowntree

WHS WG Chair

Annex G – Likely Impacts of WHS Status

On the basis of the WG's research, the likely impacts of achieving WHS status are as follows:

1. A modest increase in tourism, simply based upon the fact that Glastonbury's Inscription would be visible to a worldwide audience.
2. An overall increase in community wellbeing and pride in the town, based upon the experiences of other UK based WH sites.
3. Increased administration costs, including a coordinator or Site Manager, due to the need to manage and sustain the WHS.
4. Possible increased complexity in local planning, due to the need to involve UNESCO in planning applications that may have an impact on preservation of identified OUV sites.
5. Increased future protection against unsympathetic/inappropriate development for the defined Glastonbury OUV, due to the involvement of UNESCO in the planning cycle and the higher profile of Glastonbury at a national/international level.
6. Glastonbury's future development would be better managed through a WHS management plan, although this benefit could also be gained without the formality of WHS status.
7. The ability to bid for UNESCO grants to better sustain and protect artefacts or sites of OUV.

Annex H.

Summary of academic research into Heritage Status – Wellbeing and Tourism

This is a very brief summary of some academic research that has been fully researched, sourced and referenced, not AI generated.

These papers are

Historic England. Research Report Series 18/2024. Heritage Capital and Wellbeing. Examining the relationship between heritage density and life satisfaction. For Department for Culture Media and sport.

Bailey Ashton Adie World Heritage and Tourism. Marketing and Management. Routledge press.

Copies have been provided in PDF form to the shared drive. I would recommend that these are looked at and read by the council etc.

Historic England – Heritage capital and wellbeing.

Written by Thomas Colwill, Senior Economist Historic England. Peer reviewed by Dr Christian Krekel. assistant Professor in Behavioural Science, London School of Economics.

This study investigated the impact of local cultural heritage density on individual wellbeing in England. The findings revealed a statistically significant, positive relationship between the density of local heritage and self-reported life satisfaction. The research did place a monetary value for the average individual benefit of cultural heritage near an individual's residence of £515 and a collective value of £29 billion across England. Please bear in mind that this monetary value is how the Government and the Treasury quantify things in order to develop policies.

The result of the research shows the significance of heritage conservation and its potential to improve quality of life; it highlights the intrinsic value of cultural heritage in contributing to societies wellbeing. It provides a compelling argument for the preservation of our heritage sites and integrating them into well-being strategies, indicating that living close to Historic and cultural sites has a modest but meaningful link to well-being both for the individual and local communities.

This paper was written to help with policy recommendations for the Department for Culture Media and Sport. It recommends that Policy makers aiming to improve social welfare should consider historic and cultural heritage not just for its intrinsic historical value but its ability to enhance community well-being.

This supports the paper from the Town council written in 2022 which outlines its rationale for setting up the committee to explore the possibility of applying for WHS.

World Heritage and Tourism

Researched and written by Dr Ashton Adie Bailey a research fellow at Solent University Southampton. Her PhD is in Management and Development of Cultural. Her MA is in Cultural Heritage and international development. Her research focuses on World Heritage tourism in an international comparative context and sustainable tourism for community development

There is a lot within this paper that looks at other research as well as new data and gives a balanced argument about tourism and World Heritage Status.

There are four main chapters Visitors to World Heritage Sites, Marketing World Heritage for Tourism, Holistic World Heritage Management, Current issues and future directions.

In looking at the type of tourist that go to World heritage sites it finds that there are varied reasons for someone to visit and various types of tourists. Which is something I think we have already established with Glastonbury, and it is therefore the management plan and marketing that will have a significant impact on the type and number of tourists.

There is a critical discussion of the World Heritage brand looking at previous research on the impact of the brand on visitation as well as visitors' awareness of the brand. This includes studies that both support and refute the claim that World Heritage status attracts more tourists. There were however more studies that found it was not an effective brand. It was therefore determined that World Heritage Status may have significantly less power as a tourism brand than generally thought.

It suggests that any increase in visitor/tourist numbers are as a result of the marketing around the site. World Heritage inscription only alters the label attached to the site and therefore the impact of that labelling on tourism depends heavily on the means by which and the degree it is marketed by the destination authority. Which the author states could explain why countries like America, which doesn't overtly market post listing, and Italy, which tends to have a relaxed marking approach, may not see alterations in visitor numbers.

As has been discussed it will be the local management plan and the marketing of Glastonbury by the various stake holders that will have the most impact on tourism numbers, not the inscription itself.

Annex I – Costs and management Arrangements

Bid Costs

Depending on the scope of the management plan and stated OUV, DCMS has advised that costs can be very significant. Should a WHS bid be further pursued, more work will be needed to produce a fully costed plan. It is recommended that the Town Council should read the Price Waterhouse Cooper document provided by DCMS.

Resources:

DCMS advise that a full time Site Manager or Co-ordinator would be required on an ongoing basis. In addition, significant resources would be required to deliver a meaningful public information and engagement campaign. It is understood that WHS sites are often supported by groups of stakeholder organisations such as, for example, Natural England, who may contribute to providing the associated costs and resources. This would be an area for further work.

Planning:

It would be necessary to integrate OUV protection into the planning cycle, to enable proposed developments which threaten OUV to be discussed and resolved with UNESCO.

Annex J - Protections of Public Access to Glastonbury Tor

Protections of Public Access to Glastonbury Tor

This annex has been produced in response to public concerns received by the WG regarding the potential impact of WHS on access to the Tor.

Does World Heritage status change ownership or control of property within a World Heritage site?

1. Article 6 (1) of the World Heritage Convention specifically states that World Heritage status does not confer any change in sovereignty or property rights over any place identified as a World Heritage Site. See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

6 (1) Whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the States on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 is situated, and without prejudice to property right provided by national legislation, the States Parties to this Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate.

2. World Heritage status does not appear to create an irreversible interest in the properties within the World Heritage site. Liverpool Docklands became a World Heritage site in 2004 but was then de-listed by UNESCO in 2021 (because Liverpool City Council permitted development of a football stadium on the World Heritage Site). Removal of World Heritage Status (de-listing) is the only sanction that UNESCO has. There do not appear to be any contractual consequences for Liverpool Docklands no longer being a World Heritage Site. www.liverpoolworldheritage.com

If Glastonbury Tor were to be included in a World Heritage site, would ownership, control or management of the Tor change?

1. The National Trust bought Glastonbury Tor “for the benefit of the nation” in 1937. The National Trust is a charity, independent of government, but with a special constitutional position that enables it to hold property **inalienably**, this means that the property cannot be sold or otherwise transferred away from the National Trust, and it cannot be requisitioned by the government except by an act of parliament specific to that property, voted in favour by both house of parliament (this has only been done once in 118 years, and only because the National Trust property in question had been identified as being on the route of a proposed new road prior to its investment in the Trust).

The National Trust Act of 1907 reads:

21. (2) Whenever after the passing of this Act any lands or tenements (including buildings) shall become vested in the National Trust the Board of Trustees may by resolution determine that such lands or tenements or such portions thereof as may be specified in such resolution are proper to be held for the benefit of the nation and

*such lands or buildings shall thereupon be held so by the National Trust and shall be **inalienable**.*

Note that not all the properties held by the National Trust are classed as inalienable, and the Trust does not make a distinction on its website between which properties are inalienable and which are not, nor does the Trust keep a public record of which of its properties are inalienable, so I emailed governance@nationaltrust.org.uk for clarification. This is the email I received in reply:

Thank you for your request for additional information. We can confirm that the whole of NT land at Glastonbury Tor has been declared inalienable.

Kind regards, Fiona. Governance Team

2. The criteria to become a World Heritage site includes the creation and implementation of a Management Plan. The Management Plan is a public document written by the organisations responsible for the particular World Heritage site, in consultation with the local community. It is primarily a coordination document - to enable organisations to better coordinate in their policies and practices in relation to the World Heritage site. The Management Plan is NOT written by UNESCO, and it does NOT need to involve UNESCO, and it does not need to belong to UNESCO.

Management Plans are used by many different types of organisations – National Parks have Management Plans, the Mendip Hills National Landscape has a Management Plan <https://mendiphills-nl.org.uk/caring/management-plan/>

Some World Heritage sites involve many organisations and therefore the management plans can be very long and complex, for example the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan is over 300 pages long and involves over 20 organisations at various levels of responsibility.

<https://www.stonehengeandaveburywhs.org/assets/Stonehenge-Avebury-and-Associated-Sites-World-Heritage-Site-Management-Plan-2015.pdf>

By contrast, if Glastonbury Tor were to be the focus of a Glastonbury World Heritage site then the organisations involved would likely be The National Trust, Glastonbury Town Council, and Somerset Council.

A Management Plan in no way changes which organisations are responsible for the properties within a World Heritage site. Even though over 20 organisations are involved in the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site, Stonehenge is still exclusively managed by English Heritage, and Avebury is still exclusively managed by the National Trust. If Glastonbury Tor were to become the focus of a World Heritage site then the National Trust would continue to be responsible for the management of the Tor.



The shaded area identified on the National Trust Land Map as 'Always Open'
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/discover/history/discover-the-national-trust-land-map>

If Glastonbury Tor were to become part of a World Heritage Site, could public access be restricted?

Open public access to the Tor at any time is protected by at least 2 statutes.

1. The Highways Act 1980

The footpath across the Tor from Wellhouse Lane to Stonedown Lane is a **Public Right of Way** as defined by the Highways Act 1980. The footpath is identified as WS 15/11 on Somerset Council records. The earliest record of the footpath as a public right of way held by Somerset Council is 1949 (it is possible that there might be earlier records, but footpath records were consolidated in 1949 and earlier records not kept by Somerset)

This designation means that no one may restrict access or charge a fee for access to the Tor (Except that the National Trust may temporarily restrict access to the footpath for maintenance).

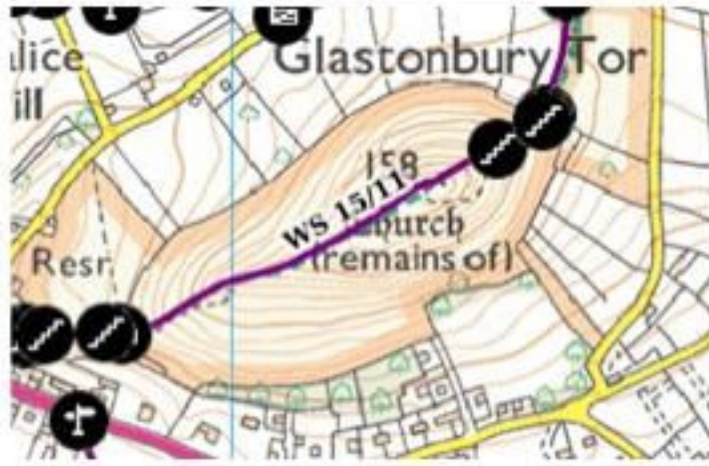
It is the responsibility of Somerset Council and the National Trust to ensure that this footpath remains open to the public.

The recorded path goes directly through the centre of the Tor and across the summit (the concreted path made by National Trust in the 1980s roughly follows the official footpath but winds down the hill rather than going straight along it)

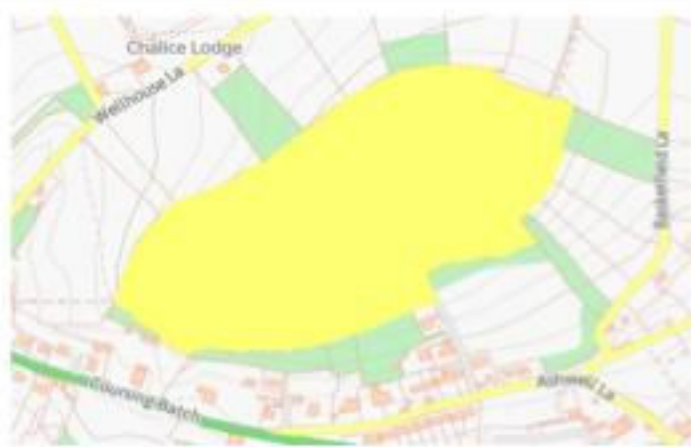
2. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Tor is registered by Natural England (agency within DEFRA) as an **Open Access** area as defined by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

This means that there is a public ‘**Right to Roam**’ anywhere on the Tor, so access is not restricted to the footpath and the National Trust cannot make any restrictions on entry to the Tor. The registration is visible on the ‘Definitive’ public access map at <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>.



Right of Way WS 15/11 from <https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>



From the DEFRA public access map. The Open Access area is everything in yellow.

3. The National Trust Act 1907 and National Trust policy.

Article 30 (2) of the 1907 Act states that the Trust may not charge an admission fee for access to any property to which the public had free access prior to that property being invested in the Trust.

Historical records suggest that public have had access to the Tor since at least the late 1800's.

For the record, other protections applying to the Tor but not conferring public access

Ancient Monuments and Archeological Areas Act 1979

St Michaels Tower and part of the summit of the Tor are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The National Trust's Heritage Records include 11 historical or archeological aspects of the Tor including St Michaels Tower, the site of the church and monastic cells, the sites where archeological digs have found various artifacts identified as 'roman' 'dark age' and medieval, and post-medieval. And the grave of 1741.

Most of these finds are protected by the single scheduled ancient monument area at the summit, with the exceptions of the medieval lynchets (field workings) at the base of the Tor on both the north and south side, and the labyrinth, which is identified as a possible '3-dimensional maze'. The labyrinth has not been archaeologically investigated and so is not specifically protected.

<https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/>

The area protected by the Scheduled Ancient Monuments Act is highlighted in red.



Annex K - Relationship Between WHS and UN Agenda 2030

This Annex has been produced in response to concerns received from the public.

Clarification of the relationship between World Heritage status and UN Agenda 2030

Q. What is the relationship between World Heritage Status, Climate Change policy, and UN sustainable development goals (Agenda 2030)?

The Convention was written in 1972 so there's nothing in it about sustainable development or climate change. The context of World Heritage has changed significantly over the last 53 years – perhaps in some part due to the success of the Convention – so the priorities and purpose of the Convention has evolved. Convention has not been revised, but has been supplemented by many policies and resolutions of the World Heritage Committee, and by UN climate change policies and Agenda 2030.

1. The World Heritage Convention (1972) 16 pages

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

No references to 'Sustainable development' or 'Climate Change'.

Official summary of the historical background to the convention is here:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention>

The Convention requires states to create their own national conservation programs and legislation to protect significant sites on their own territory, as well as identifying sites of 'Outstanding Universal Value' for inclusion on the World Heritage list. The Convention also created a World Heritage Fund which states without the economic resources to protect the heritage on their territory can apply to for assistance (usually in the form of grants, not loans).

The Convention is as politically neutral as any UN document can be – there is one reference to UNESCO's broader objectives: "... [to] maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's heritage..." (p.1) otherwise **there are NO extraneous inclusions or references to other treaties or policies of any organisation**; the Convention focuses strictly on conservation and on the creation an international system to identify and protect cultural and natural heritage of 'Outstanding Universal Value'

The Convention has been supplemented by a 1995 but not revised; 'Climate Change' and the UN Agenda 2030 'Sustainable Development goals' didn't exist at the time so these terms do not occur in the Convention at all.

Article 37 provides for the revision of the Convention by the General Conference of UNESCO (voted for in a meeting of the representatives of all the states that are members of the current Convention) but then subject to ratification by each state and any revision is not binding on states that decline to ratify the revision. No revision

has been made, but there are many resolutions, policies, and operating documents which supplement the Convention and appear to be binding.

2. The Criteria for World Heritage Nominations (No date) 15 pages

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/nominations/>

The Criteria are almost entirely related to conservation, the authenticity and integrity of the heritage, the current state of the conservation, legal protections, how the heritage is currently used and integrated into the life of the community, who the stakeholders are and how they are participating in the nomination process and proposed management plane.

There's a question about visitor facilities (but its not a requirement) but there's nothing about tourism and there are no specific criteria related to Climate Change or Sustainable Development or Agenda 2030.

The term Climate Change occurs once in explanatory notes for criteria **4. b. (ii) Environmental pressures, natural disasters and risk preparedness**

There's no criteria such as 'Detail the activities your site is going to undertake to educate visitors about the threat of 'Climate Change'

The term 'sustainable development occurs once: 5.e. *"Sustainable development principles should be integrated into the management system"*

3. Preparing World Heritage Nominations (2011) 130 pages

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/resourcemanuals/>

Guidance manual. The term 'climate change' occurs just twice, once in reference to an example of a World Heritage Site in Greenland which because of it's glaciers, is described as having "*helped to develop our understanding of climate change and icecap glaciology.*"; the other reference is as an example of the type of natural disaster that might threaten a site (ii) *Environmental pressures (e.g. pollution, climate change, desertification)*

4. Managing Cultural World Heritage (2013) 150 pages

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/resourcemanuals/>

Guidance manual for World Heritage site managers. The term 'climate change' occurs 9 times in 150 pages (plus 3 citations) but again none of these are substantial mentions – 6 of these mentions are where 'climate change' is used as an example among others of the types applicable to certain categories eg. climate change is used as an example of a natural disaster. Only one usage puts climate change as a subject in it's own right and then only for a paragraph.

5. Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit v2 (2022)

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/resourcemanuals/>

The term 'climate Change' occurs 6 times in 130 pages, but there's no section devoted to Climate Change, except that one of the model risk assessment criteria is that the site should have a climate change mitigation policy in line with international standards.

The term Agenda 2030 doesn't occur at all. The term "sustainable development goals" occurs once:, beginning a half-page discussion of how to integrate

sustainable development into heritage management, but it is only half a page of 137 pages

The inclusion of heritage as a part of the Sustainable Development Goals (related to target 11.4 'Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage') is a long-overdue acknowledgement of its role within the wider development agenda. (p.32)

So how does Climate Change policy and Agenda 2030 get into World Heritage?

1. Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2012 -2022 (published 2011)

Redefines the purpose of the World Heritage Convention:

Our Vision for 2022

International cooperation and shared responsibility through the World Heritage Convention ensures effective conservation of our common cultural and natural heritage, nurtures respect and understanding among the world's communities and cultures, and contributes to their sustainable development

Our Mission since 1972

To identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage
(p1)

2. Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention (2015) 12 pages of policy text and 6 pages of definitions.
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/138856>

The purpose of the policy document:

1.1. *"[to ensure] policy coherence with the UN sustainable development agenda as enshrined in the document "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"*

The policy requires that state-parties should:

1.1. *"ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of our communities"*

And appears to state that World Heritage sites should be considered a resource for adapting to climate change and promoting climate change polices:

16. In the face of increasing disaster risks and the impact of climate change, States Parties should recognise that World Heritage represents both an asset to be protected and a resource to strengthen the ability of communities and their properties to resist, absorb, and recover from the effects of a hazard.

In line with disaster risks and climate change multilateral agreements, States Parties should:

i. Recognise and promote – within conservation and management strategies - the inherent potential of World Heritage properties for reducing disaster risks and adapting to climate change, through associated ecosystem services, traditional knowledge and practices and strengthened social cohesion;

*ii. Reduce the vulnerability of World Heritage properties and their settings as well as promote the social and economic resilience of local and associated communities to disaster and climate change through structural and non-structural measures, **including public awareness-raising, training and education**. Structural measures,*

in particular, should not adversely affect the OUV of World Heritage properties;

iii. Enhance preparedness for effective response and “building-back-better” in post-disaster recovery strategies within management systems and conservation practice for World Heritage properties.

3. Operational Guidelines (2025) 182 pages

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

‘sustainable development’ occurs x12, climate change x5 (incidental) ‘Agenda 2030’ x1

The Operational Guidelines makes the point that the ‘sustainable development’ goals are voluntary:

States-parties are encouraged to mainstream into their programmes and activities related to the World Heritage Convention the principles of the relevant policies ... such as the Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective ... as well as other related policies and documents, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and international human rights standards (p.13)

But it’s not always voluntary:

While fully respecting the sovereignty of the States on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage is situated, States Parties to the Convention recognize the collective interest of the international community to cooperate in the protection of this heritage. States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, have the responsibility to:....

....(O) contribute to and comply with the sustainable development objectives, including gender equality, in the World Heritage processes and in their heritage conservation and management systems

And the guidelines describe what is required in the management plan, including that:

*Sustainable development principles should be integrated into the management system, for all types of natural, cultural and mixed nominated properties, including their buffer zones **and wider setting** p.43*

Q. So there appears to be a strong connection between World Heritage and Climate Change policy, and UN sustainable development goals. But what is the practical effect of this?

- Are the sustainable development/climate change policies negotiable?
- How would such policies and goals be implemented in a Glastonbury World Heritage site?
- Would a commitment to focus on the heritage rather than the politics achieve more community support?
- To what extent would funding for the nomination process be dependant upon commitments to implement Agenda 2030 goals? To what extent would on-going funding to maintain a Glastonbury World Heritage Site be dependent on achieving climate change and sustainable development outcomes?