

PRESENT:

Marion Blockley – Chair
Anna Brennan – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Russell Rowley – Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Peter Boland – Historic England
Andy Wigley – Shropshire Council
Penny McKnight – Telford & Wrekin Council
Helen Allen – English Heritage
Gareth Pegg – Telford & Wrekin Council
Rae Evans – Telford & Wrekin Council
Ben Williscroft – Telford & Wrekin Council
Andy Gittins – Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Nicola Lowery – Telford & Wrekin Council
Simon Harris – Shropshire Council
Cllr Heather Oldershaw – Gorge Parish Council
Alan Taylor – Broseley Town Council
Debra Harris – Ironbridge Business Consortium
Barbara Taylor – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

APOLOGIES: **Tim Slator** – English Heritage, **Sir Neil Cossons**, **Joy Tetsill** – Shropshire Council, **Mandy Thorn** – Marches LEP, **Alex Nicoll** – Ironbridge Business Consortium, **Cllr Chris Turley** – Telford & Wrekin Council

Intro: Marion Blockley welcomed everyone to the meeting. A round table introduction was conducted for the benefit of the new members Debra Harris and Ben Williscroft.

Waterloo Road Closure

The project to install a by-pass system and hence repairs to the existing ageing drainage chambers has been a Severn Trent Water proposal for the last five and half years. Severn Trent Water acknowledge the disruption this will cause to residents and businesses in and around Waterloo Street and the town of Ironbridge. The works have been postponed several times, latterly because of the conservation work on the Iron Bridge. There is now a definite plan to start the works in September 2019 which will hopefully see the works finished before the crucial Christmas period. The works may also see a section of the Severn Valley Way closed, this needs confirming.

Development Sites

AGA

There were no further developments on the AGA site.

Power Station

Stakeholder working groups are meeting regularly with Harworth. The need for an independent Heritage Impact Assessment to be carried out to inform detailed proposals was highlighted.

Representatives from the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust accompanied Harworth representatives on a site visit down the Severn Valley Way from the Iron Bridge to the Cooling Towers to show the importance of that as a strategic off

road recreation route into Ironbridge. Harworth agreed and also realised that the Severn Valley Way is too narrow for even a narrow gauge rail.

Iron Bridge Conservation Project

English Heritage have thanked everyone involved in the Iron Bridge re-opening event which took place on Monday 7 January 2019 which featured on the BBC One Show. There have been some small issues with the specification of the new deck surfacing and this is being looked into. The Bridge lighting scheme is progressing through planning.

World Heritage Site Co-ordinator Report

The President of World Heritage UK, Chris Blandford, has completed his review of all the UK World Heritage Sites. The review will be discussed at a World Heritage UK Board meeting on Monday 4 March prior to publication in the spring.

World Heritage UK Learning & Engagement Workshop at Blaenavon

MB reported that she had attended the WH:UK Learning and Engagement, 'from cradle to grave' technical workshop at Big Pit Blaenavon on 19 and 20 February.

Reference was made to article VI of the Unesco World Heritage Convention Operational Guidelines for World Heritage Sites which states the importance of encouraging the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders (including the local community and businesses) and not just planners and experts. It also recommends the use of educational and information programmes to strengthen appreciation and respect for World Heritage.

The UNESCO 17 Sustainable Development Goals help to underpin how culture can be used to help relieve poverty, and enhance well-being and regeneration. Several case studies from other UK World Heritage Sites showed how volunteering in World Heritage Sites supports mental health, well-being and gender-equality.

There was widespread community consultation over the revision of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site Management Plan and real community buy-in as a consequence. The local community are actively involved in the planning and delivery of the annual World Heritage Festival in partnership with the local authority and local business. Blaenavon also launched the first UK World Heritage Youth Ambassador programme which has been very successful. The Heritage Lottery project was run by Blaenavon World Heritage Site and organised by Torfaen County Borough Council in partnership with a local youth charity. They have been able to sustain the programme beyond the HLF funded project by establishing effective public/private sector partnerships with local youth charities and training providers.

Derwent Valley Mills WHS successfully bid for £1.3m of HLF/Arts Council England funding through their Great Places Scheme.

The Great Places outcomes are:

- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by arts, culture and heritage
- The local area and community will be a better place to live or visit
- The local economy will be boosted

AOB

The Steering Group were informed that this is the final meeting before Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Chief Executive Anna Brennan steps down. The Chair thanked Anna Brennan for her hard work, dedication and commitment to the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group and to World Heritage UK as a Board member. Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust interim Consultant Chief Executive, Mark Pemberton, would be interim World Heritage Site coordinator until a new Chief Executive was appointed.

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