

MINUTES OF THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING GROUP MEETING

HELD AT IGMT Coalbrookdale on 14th October 2013

PRESENT:

Les Sparks OBE – Chair

Anna Brennand – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

Rachel Taylor – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Cllr Chris Turley – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Russell Rowley, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT)

John Harrison - Shropshire Council (SC)

Cllr. Alan Mackenzie – Madeley Town Council (MTC)

Rev'd. Keith Osmund-Smith - The Gorge Parish Council (GPC)

Michael Barker – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Neal Rushton – Structures & Geotechnics Team Leader Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Barbara Taylor – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

Cllr Jean Jones – Shropshire Council (SC)

Sue Cole – English Heritage (EH)

Bill Klemperer English Heritage (EH)

Morgan Cowles English Heritage (EH)

Alison MacDonald English Heritage (EH)

James Miller (Ramboll)

APOLOGIES: **David Davies** – Telford & Wrekin Council, **Heather Sebire** – English Heritage, **Mandy Thorn** LEP Board Member, **Katherine Kynaston** – Telford & Wrekin Council, **Ian Edwards** - Environment Agency, **Chris Hogarth** – Natural England, **Katie Foster** – Shropshire & Telford Tourism Strategy Board (STTSB), **Peter Boland** – English Heritage

Intro: Les Sparks welcomed everyone to the meeting and included a welcome to Alison MacDonald and Morgan Cowles from English Heritage and James Miller from Ramboll. Apologies were as above.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes from the last meeting on 8 July 2013 were approved by all present.

Stabilisation update:

The project has now gone out to tender and evaluations will be finalised by the end of November to appoint a contractor. It is hoped that the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) contribution will be finalised shortly.

World Heritage Festival:

The excellent weather helped bring in over 6,000 visitors throughout the day despite the shorter programme of events. Feedback so far has been very positive from visitors and traders who themselves got behind the event by organising a trail. Several traders have reported having their best day's takings to date this year

which supports one of the World Heritage Site Management Plan objectives in supporting local business. The Park and Ride scheme was very well used and the car parks coped well with the visitor numbers. The heritage based theme worked well and evaluation is still taking place.

World Heritage Site Management Plan:

It is Government Policy (1994) that all UK World Heritage Sites have a Management Plan. The original vision statements of safeguarding assets, strengthening the local community and making interpretation accessible to all, still apply. Key issues include: the preservation of the special character of the Ironbridge Gorge, access and visitor management and land instability and research. The next step is to set up a small working group led by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust which will include consultation with local residents, businesses and visitors. The target date for the plan is October 2014.

Iron Bridge HLF Bid:

A full engineering report on the laser scanning of the Iron Bridge was presented to the Steering Group. The report concluded that the Iron Bridge can bear a weight of 3kN/m² (3000 kg per square metre), and that although there was some damage to the Iron Bridge the overall condition was good. The biggest risk to the Iron Bridge is damage from debris in the river striking the bridge when the river is in full flood, but this is very unlikely to cause the Iron Bridge to collapse. Recommendations made included replacing the cracked deck plates and the replacement of load packers and conducting a feasibility study in conjunction with the Environment Agency to establish a debris collection system. Morgan Cowles from English Heritage is to prepare an interim report on recommendations for the next Steering Group meeting on 27 January 2014.

POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE IS BARBARA TAYLOR
E. worldheritagesite@ironbridge.org.uk T.01952 435929