

**PRESENT:**

**Prof. Les Sparks** – Chair

**Katherine Kynaston** – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Rachel Taylor** – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Cllr Chris Thurley** – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Cllr. Dave Davies** – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Cllr. Clive Elliot** – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Ian Edwards** – Environment Agency (EA)

**Russell Rowley**, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT)

**Chris Hogarth** – Natural England (NE)

**John Harrison** - Shropshire Council (SC)

**Mandy Thorn** - LEP Board Member and Chair Shropshire Business Board

**Cllr. Alan Mackenzie** – Madeley Town Council (formally Madeley Parish Council)

**Sir Neil Cossons**

**Rev'd. Keith Osmund-Smith** - The Gorge Parish Council

**Cllr. Jean Jones** – Shropshire Council (SC)

**Cllr. Alan Taylor** – Broseley Town Council (BTC)

**Michael Barker** - Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Louisa Moore** – English Heritage (EH)

**Bill Klemperer** – English Heritage (EH)

**Sue Cole** - English Heritage (EH)

**Colin Pitcher** deputising for Neal Rushton – Structures & Geotechnics Team Leader Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

**Barbara Taylor** – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

**Steve Miller** – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

**APOLOGIES:** **Katie Foster** - Shropshire & Telford Tourism Strategy Board, **Heather Sebire** – English Heritage, **MikeVout** – Telford & Wrekin Council

**Les Sparks began the meeting by giving the Steering Group the excellent news that the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site** had been voted the Most Recommended World Heritage Site Destination in Europe and second in the world by TripAdvisor/UNESCO. It was acknowledged that the award was due very much to the partnership of all involved. **Steve Miller introduced Barbara Taylor**, who is to act as the customer-facing World Heritage Site point of contact for partners and the community on World Heritage Site matters, forwarding on queries to the relevant departments within the Museum and those organisations represented around the table at this meeting.

**The Minutes of the last meeting** were approved and a number of actions were agreed upon by the Steering Group. These included the decision to produce a **short report from these meetings which would be added to the World Heritage Site page of the Telford & Wrekin website**. Meanwhile, **Rachel Taylor reported that access improvement works from the Station Car Park to the Iron Bridge** would be completed early in 2013. Further to discussions at recent meetings, **the Museum would take the lead on behalf of Telford & Wrekin Council and the partnership in preparing a Heritage Lottery Fund application** to complete essential conservation work on

the Iron Bridge and improve interpretation, etc. in the centre of the Town. **Mandy Thorn kindly agreed to provide an overview on the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership** at the next meeting, including potential support for the Ironbridge project and wider contribution to Steering Group.

Stabilisation update: **Colin Pitcher gave a helpful overview of the stabilisation work** being undertaken at Jackfield, Jiggers Bank and Church Hill. In terms of the JACKFIELD PROJECT, four conceptual options are to be presented at the second public drop-in session on 12<sup>th</sup> March. Meanwhile, with regard to the landslip at JIGGERS BANK ROCKFACE, Jacobs consultancy have been appointed to look at the whole rock face, not just failed section to ensure a long term fix. Finally, CHURCH HILL has seen construction work delayed due to overhead cables having to be diverted. Work will commence on 28 January and a safe, pedestrian route will be maintained throughout the construction period.

World Heritage Management Update: Following recent discussions, it was confirmed that **the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust will deliver the management function on behalf of Telford & Wrekin Council**, who will fulfil the client role. Finalisation of an Agreement between the two organisations is in progress. Les Sparks confirmed that the Steering Group will play a key role in monitoring delivery and supporting the wider strategy.

Periodic Review and Management Plan: The **deadline for submission of this important piece of statutory work** to English Heritage is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. It was agreed by the Steering Group that discussion regarding any potential change to the World Heritage Site boundary/buffer zone would be dealt with during the forthcoming Management Planning process. Russell Rowley gave a comprehensive report to the Steering Group on the potential threat of **Ash Dieback disease**. Further reports would follow at future meetings.

**In terms of other matters**, Rachel Taylor reported that the new Park & Ride details have been added to the Telford & Wrekin Council website and Russell Rowley reported on Mountain Biking at Benthall Edge, including its potential threat to the Gorge in terms of land instability. Finally, **Les Sparks reporting that he had attended a meeting in Bath with fellow Chairs of UK World Heritage Sites**, which was very valuable and reassuring.

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