

PRESENT:

Les Sparks OBE – Chair

Anna Brennan – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

Russell Rowley, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT)

Mike Vout – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Cllr Chris Turley – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Cllr Nicola Lowery – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Sarah Bird – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Charlotte Cain – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Heidie Coombs – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Phoebe Farrell – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Adam Harris – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Dominic Proud – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

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

Cllr Alan Mackenzie – Madeley Town council (MTC)

Heather Oldershaw – Gorge Parish Council (GPC)

Cllr Ian Pickles – Broseley Town Council (BTC)

Cllr Jean Jones – Shropshire Council (SC)

Andy Wigley – Shropshire Council (SC)

Peter Boland – Historic England (HE)

Timothy Slator – English Heritage (EH)

Chris Hogarth – Natural England (NE)

Barbara Taylor – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

APOLOGIES: **Sir Neil Cossons, Michael Barker** – Telford & Wrekin Council, **Mandy Thorn**, Marches Care, **Ann Towers** – English Heritage, **Stella Jamieson** – Telford & Wrekin Council, **Karen Price** – Environment Agency, **Henry Owen-John** – Historic England

- 1. Intro:** Les Sparks opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Heather Oldershaw, Gorge Parish Council, Sarah Bird, Charlotte Cain, Phoebe Farrell, Heidie Coombs, Adam Harris and Dominic Proud from Telford & Wrekin Council.
- 2. Minutes of the last meeting:** The minutes from the last meeting on 17 July 2015 were approved by all present:
- 3. Matters Arising :**

Page 2, item 5 – AM asked if the World Heritage Site Management Plan would go to all the Parish Councils for consultation. LS confirmed that he and AB would be visiting all the represented Parish Councils.

Page 3, item 6 – TS highlighted the English Heritage Briefing Note – the Iron Bridge – Structural Stabilisation Project, sent out as an additional paper with the meeting notification. English Heritage will prepare a programme of works to be presented at the next Steering Group meeting on 1 February 2016.

Page 3, item 7 – MV reported that Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC) are still pursuing the Iron Bridge HLF/ERDF Bid and requested this be added as an agenda item at the Steering Group meeting on 1 February 2016.

Page 3, item 8 – No further information is available from EON.

Page 3, item 9 – AB reported that the planning application has been submitted for the Bedlam Furnaces.

ACTION: TS - EH to prepare a programme of repairs to the Iron Bridge and report back at the next Steering Group meeting

4. Stabilisation Update

JACKFIELD PROJECT.

NR reported that there has been major progression in the project over the last few months. All piling is now complete and the final carriageway is under construction with traffic now using this route. Landscaping has started and the project is on course to be concluded in March 2016. NR notified the Steering Group that, depending on budget, further road works are likely along Church Road from the rear entrance to Jackfield Tile Museum and St Mary's Church, these works will be carried out after the project completion. Further discussion with the Government regarding the stability of the Ironbridge Gorge will continue to take place following the completion of the project.

Night time ground penetrating radar survey work has been carried out on the Wharfage and Madeley Bank. Interpretation is being considered. The mining surveys to date have not indicated any major problems.

Work on the partially collapsed mine shaft on Lodge Field, off Hodge Bower is causing some concern. TWC are in discussion with the Coal Board regarding legal issues.

On behalf of the Steering Group LS congratulated NR and the team of engineers for the successful project to date.

5. World Heritage Site Management Plan (WHSMP)

AB thanked the Working Group and all Steering Group members for their input to the World Heritage Site Management Plan, and although not finalised, the draft plan is nearing a stage where public consultation will be sought. Discussions are on-going and AB is happy to meet with any Steering Group members who wish to make additional comments. AB thanked HO and NL for their comments prior to today's meeting. AB will make some amendments to the plan to take more account of resident's views and then LS will consult with the Parish Councils and TWC to arrange meetings or possibly public drop-in sessions and an on-line questionnaire. MV offered to draft a suggested timeline for the consultation, all agreed.

ACTION: AB and LS to contact the Gorge Parish Council, Broseley Town council and Madeley Town Council

Comments from the Steering Group included:

- AW - With reference to section 1.7.3 Policy Framework, Shropshire Council (SC) are in the final stages of agreeing a Policy Framework and after discussions with TWC will submit a paragraph for the Management Plan
- AW suggested a SC member attend the next Working Group meeting
- CC - The Destination Tourism Team will discuss their comments with MV and report back to AB
- HO - Emphasised the need to address the resident's needs within the document
- NL – The Management Plan needs to address the perspectives and concerns of residents and our aspirations for the economy of Ironbridge
- IP – With reference to section 2.3b Boundaries and Buffer Zone, would the Steering Group consider the need of a Buffer zone for Barrow?
- MV – The scope of the Boundaries and Buffer Zones will be considered as part of the supplementary planning documents in the TWC Local Plan
- AM – The Madeley Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted by TWC
- LS – Reference to the Madeley Plan will be added to the Management Plan after discussions with Andy Rose at Madeley Town Council

ACTION – AW and MV to discuss the Shropshire Council Policy Framework

ACTION: - LS and AB to meet with Andy Rose, Madeley Town Council

6. Lighting Potential for the Iron Bridge

Heidie Coombs (HC), Telford & Wrekin Council Street Lighting Technician, gave a powerpoint presentation on the lighting the Iron Bridge. HC has undertaken some extensive personal research into the lighting potential of the Iron Bridge which has coincided with the Night of Heritage Light event which took place on 1 October. The Society of Light and Lighting in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE), undertook ambitious plans to illuminate several of the UK's World Heritage Sites to celebrate the UNESCO International Year of Light. HC further demonstrated the tourism potential of a new lighting system and the ability to change the colour scheme to celebrate specific anniversaries if deemed appropriate. The existing lighting plinths would be utilised with a further 2 points added to enable the arches to be illuminated.

Comments from the Steering Group included:

- SB - emphasised the potential to boost the night time tourism economy and reduce the seasonality of Ironbridge
- NL – A lighting scheme would support the creation of a more diverse night time economy to support local businesses
- IP - highlighted the safety aspects and the need to illuminate the Bridge deck and the need to include this project in any funding bid with the Iron Bridge HLF/ERDF bid
- TS - will report back to the English Heritage team responsible for the Iron Bridge

7. Wharfage Footway Proposal

Gareth Pegg and Adam Harris, Highways Department, Telford & Wrekin Council gave a powerpoint presentation on the condition of the footways along High Street and the Wharfage in Ironbridge. The present York Stone surfacing requires extensive repair and therefore an alternative solution has been investigated. There is funding available in The Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for the 2015/6 budget year. Following a programme of research by TWC Highways Department, the following re-surfacing options have been considered:

- 1) Leave the York Stone down and carry out major repairs
- 2) Re-surface with a flexible material – Tarmac
- 3) Re-surface with block pavements

Suggestion 1 is deemed too costly and unsustainable; suggestion 2 is deemed not in keeping with the World Heritage Site, leaving suggestion 3 which is considered cost effective, in keeping with other historic sites and sustainable. The cast-iron kerbing will be kept and replaced where necessary. The Committee discussed the issue of 'authenticity' and agreed that York Stone offered no advantage over brick pavements in this regard, and that brick paving was often found in conjunction with industrial sites.

Whilst the Committee would have wished the project to form part of an overall masterplan for the public realm, including the paving of the Square and resurfacing of the Iron Bridge, it accepted the case for advancing this work while the funds are available and in view of the deteriorating condition of the York Stone. It was discussed by DP and NL that the discussions on the footway had only further highlighted the requirement for a Master Plan to address some of the wider Highways issues in the Gorge.

Examples of block pavements were brought along to the meeting and discussed. A public consultation event is being planned and will be made known to Steering Group members.

8. WH:UK Conference

This agenda item will be covered at the next meeting on Monday 1 February 2016

9. Partner Updates – papers attached for information and in addition:

RR reported on the damage to pathways and banks created by mountain bikers along Benthall Edge. The police have been involved but are restricted in their ability to enforce convictions due to the complexity of Trespass laws. Public meetings have taken place with a number of biking groups and walkers, but the problem is on-going and further solutions are being discussed.

10. AOB – Nothing reported.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 1 February 2016 at 10.30am-12.30pm in the Board Room, Main Offices
IGMT Coalbrookdale Telford TF8 7DQ**

Meeting Dates for 2016 are as follows:

**Monday 1 February 2016
Monday 18 April 2016
Monday 11 July 2016
Monday 17 October 2016**

POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE IS BARBARA TAYLOR

