

MINUTES OF THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING GROUP MEETING

HELD AT IGMT Coalbrookdale on 31 October 2017

PRESENT:

Les Sparks (LS)

Sir Neil Cossons (NC)

Anna Brennand (AB) – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)

Russell Rowley (RR) - Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT)

Cllr Nicola Lowery (NL) – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Phoebe Farrell (PF) – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Penny McKnight (PM) – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Andy Wigley (AW) – Shropshire Council (SC)

Cllr Chris Turley (CT) – Telford & Wrekin Council (TWC)

Cllr Alan Mackenzie (AM) – Madeley Town Council (MPC)

Cllr Heather Oldershaw (HO) – Gorge Parish Council (GPC)

Cllr Simon Harris (SH) – Shropshire Council (SC)

Cllr Alan Taylor (AT) – Broseley Town Council (BTC)

Peter Boland (PB) – Historic England (HE)

Tim Slator (TS) – English Heritage (EH)

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

APOLOGIES: **Katherine Kynaston** – Telford & Wrekin Council, **Ann Towers** – English Heritage, **Val Hulme** – Telford & Wrekin Council, **Elizabeth Page** – English Heritage, **Joy Tetsill** – Shropshire Council, **Alex Nicoll** – Ironbridge Consortium

Intro: Les Sparks welcomed everyone to the meeting.

World Heritage Site Management Plan

The Management plan has been sent to and received by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). There will not be any feedback from DCMS unless a problem is identified. The Management Plan will be put on to the agenda of the next Shropshire Council (SC) Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 November, the agenda for the meeting in October was, unfortunately, too full. This is a matter of protocol and Shropshire Council do not envisage any changes.

Once the Management Plan has been formally ratified by UNESCO printed copies will be circulated to all Steering Group members and sent to public places such as libraries and community centres and an electronic copy will be added to member websites.

Action Plan Monitoring

The Action Plan will be treated as a live document. Updates will be added and reviewed at the meeting by all members. This process will be continued for the lifetime of the Management Plan.

Iron Bridge Conservation Project

Taziker Industrial Limited are now 8 weeks into the 12 month contract and the scaffold is almost complete. Telford & Wrekin Council were thanked for their co-operation with a road closure on 2 October to enable a large crane to put into place several 950kg scaffolding beams spanning the River Severn alongside the Bridge. The scaffold will now be encapsulated which is due to be completed by the end of November. Work on removing the existing road surface is also due to start in the next few weeks. A public engagement session held at Number 9 the Wharfage in Ironbridge on 8 August was very well attended. The Project has attracted a large amount of positive national and international media interest already. Interpretation boards will be placed at intervals on haras fencing around the Bridge site. 'Hard Hat' site tours will begin in January 2018 and the volunteer programme will be implemented Easter 2018. All updates on the Project are being placed on the English Heritage website and an update on funding will be announced shortly. CCTV is in operation on the Project site when the construction staff have left for the day.

Power Station

PR Agency MacbethLancaster are working with Uniper to communicate to the local community and businesses any developments on the site. Representatives Suzanne Bennett and Alex Ellis are issuing regular email updates. The latest permissions to be granted, and for commencement this autumn, is to dismantle conveyors 6 and 7 and the accompanying conveyor tower between the National Grid substation and the main power station building. There has been no further progression with a potential buyer for the site. Shropshire Council continue to conduct a full site recording. No formal decision about the conservation of, or use of, the A Station building and the bridges on the site boundary have been made to date.

Development Sites

AGA

The AGA works will close at the end of November. Telford & Wrekin Council have held informal talks with the current owners of the site and expressed the Council's view of retaining the site as an industrial going concern and the resistance of using the site for housing. Telford & Wrekin Council have also offered to create a brief for preferred site usage for any potential buyers which the current owners are considering.

Riverside Maintenance

The Steering Group discussed issues regarding riverside maintenance and the work of local volunteer groups in the Gorge. Whilst the volunteer groups are doing a valued job it is felt that some monitoring and guidelines need to be put in place to safeguard the volunteers and protect the fragile landscape of the Gorge. Riverside Maintenance will be added to the Steering Group agenda going forward and with co-operation from the Environment Agency, a set of guidelines and a monitoring system will be drawn up for volunteer groups.

Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group Chair

Les Sparks is to step down as Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group Chairman. Telford & Wrekin Council are to advertise on the Council website and will forward any expressions of interest to the Steering Group. Les Sparks has agreed to chair the first Steering Group meeting of 2018 the date of which is to be confirmed.

Partner Updates

Updates from Telford & Wrekin Council, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and Severn Gorge Countryside Trust were received and discussed by the Group.

POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE IS BARBARA TAYLOR

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