

# WORLD HERITAGE UK

## MINUTES of the First Networking Meeting,

**March 16<sup>th</sup> 2015, 10am –16.30 pm**

Liverpool City Library, William Brown Street, L3 8EW

## Theme: Valuing World Heritage

### Participants:

Sam Rose	Chair Shadow Board – Jurassic Coast WHS
Henry Owen-John	Historic England
Deborah Boden	Cornish Mining Landscape WHS
Cllr David Phillips	LGA and Swansea CC, Shadow Board
Nigel Crowe	Canal and River Trust
Anna Brennand	CX Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Shadow Bd.
Rebecca Hartley	Blaenavon WHS
Cath Thomas	Blaenavon WHS
Sarah Parkinson	Studley Royal WHS
Adrian Farmer	Derwent valley Mills WHS
Jane Gibson	Durham WHS , Shadow Board
John Hinchliffe	Consultant
Alice Lyall	HONO, and New Lanark , HES
Alan Eales	Treasurer
Lesley Woodbridge	Liverpool CC
Tony Crouch	City of Bath WHS and Vice-Chair Shadow Board
Lesley Garlick	Devon CC and Shadow Board
Kate Roberts	Cadw
Allen Forrest	Pontycysllte WHS
Howard Sutcliffe	Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
Sandra Robertson	Durham CC
Beth Thomas	Stonehenge – Avebury WHs
Helen Thornton	Saltaire WHS
Ian Wray	Liverpool Steering Group and Shadow Board
John Rodger	Committee member
Jonathan Lloyd	Committee member
Carol Ludwig	Liverpool University
Bill Froggatt	Canal and River Trust (North –West)
Rob Burns	Liverpool CC
Helen Maclagan	UK NC
Cllr Julian Cooper	West Oxon DC
Keith Nichol	DCMS
Gill Clarke	Secretary - Shadow Board

**Apologies** – from: John Hoy, Les Sparks, Andrew Burke, Lesley McInnes, Lorna Davidson, Jenny Bruce, Patricia Weeks, Cllr Wellington, Cllr Allen Jones, Paul Simons, Sarah Simmonds, John Hodgson, John Scott,

### 1. **Welcome and Introduction:** -

Sam Rose welcomed everyone to the first network meeting of WH UK

### 2. **“Liverpool – Mercantile Maritime city – value added” Rob Burns**

The tourism industry in Liverpool supplies a huge economic impact to the city, and the WH Site is central to the brand and is backed by the politicians. New development – the collision between contemporary and historic - is informed by the WH status

### 3. **The Wider Value of UNESCO to the UK: Role of World Heritage**

**Helen MacLagen, Director of Culture, UK National Commission for UNESCO**

Discussion invited around the four key challenges for World Heritage;

- i) As sites are wonderfully diverse, how do you compare them or identify themes that are common to all?
- ii) Many sites were already thriving visitor destinations; is it the place or the inscription that is valued?
- iii) UK has a thriving heritage sector; what is the added value of the UNESCO WH community?
- iv) WH means different things to different Sites; some see it just as a badge, others see it as an active network. What is the value to your Site?

#### **Key Discussion Points:**

Points made during the discussion can be summarised under three headings:

#### **1. Value of WH Status**

- As places like Stonehenge are already highly valued prior to inscription, it is difficult to tease out the benefit of WH itself. Its global fame overshadows the WH badge.
- Recognition that some places already have a place on world stage whereas others eg Blaenavon were not recognised, so WH status has made a huge difference. It is not so much what Sites can get out of WH status but what you can put in to ensure the value of an international designation works to the Site's benefit.
- UK is very parochial and does not value the WH brand as much as other countries. Need to get a wider audience to understand what WH means. The brand and a strapline eg “the best of the world's natural and cultural heritage” needs to be developed.
- Tension between being regarded as the “best” nationally but not having OUV to be the best on the international stage.
- There are also secondary benefits of WH eg the grasslands around Stonehenge protect the setting of the WHS and so enabled Natural England to get the land managed in the right way through Higher Level Stewardship.
- WHS can be a key attractor for inward investment eg Ironbridge and the new town of Telford.
- In the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS, WH status helped protect heritage features within the landscape that had not been listed at the national level.
- WH status can be extremely helpful in accessing funding for heritage led regeneration.
- Visitor research has shown that WH, even if not understood, is still seen as a badge of reassurance and quality so there is a receptive audience to use WH.
- Although heritage sites can have a relevance beyond just being derelict buildings, there needs to be an advocate to get WHS status eg The local University moved on from its initial interest in WH status for the Swansea copper works.
- As the UK WHSs are so widely diverse, there is probably little benefit in trying to compare them; need some key facts related to each.

## Planning and Management

- The value of WH and its setting is not always recognised in the planning system eg Durham draft Local Plan fully considered impacts on the WHS in proposing where economic growth should take place but the Inspector was very critical.
- Decision-takers need to be well informed and to take the value of WH into account in coming to planning decisions. UNESCO would expect WH to be given considerable weight in the planning process and the values of WH to be understood in planning at the local level.
- Need to think more deeply about how WH is managed and should adopt a bottom up approach in working with local communities within a WHS such as Saltaire where the status is understood and valued.
- Engaging with local communities can be very resource intensive in terms of staff time.

## Advocacy

- The LGA advises that WH:UK should focus on a few key asks
  - How to activate wider political outcomes linked to regeneration, education, culture etc, to help raise profile and image of Sites;
  - Should be recognised in the planning system that historic environment and WH can make a significant contribution to the economy
  - Need to clarify the use of Section 172 notifications and the tension between UNESCO guidelines and locally based planning decisions.
- There is a need for advocacy on the importance of WH within the Planning Inspectorate and some parts of Government.
- DCMS advised that the challenge around political advocacy is enormous. The UK is seen as a world leader for culture and arts but is third tier in terms of heritage. Need to emphasise the value that WH does bring in the global context but also the challenges for the future.
- It was noted that in the last Stage One UKNC report, that although WHSs provided two-thirds of the value of all the UNESCO designations, this was not reflected in the profile that WH had within the report. WH:UK is advocating for a higher and proportionate profile in the Stage 2 report and UKNC agreed to take this on board.

## 4. Soapbox

- (a) Blaenavon will be hosting the 2015 UNESCO Youth Summit in October.
- (b) “Revisiting Intangible heritage and the Social and Economic Impacts of World Heritage”. Report on workshop held at Durham 12 March. Details are available from Jane Gibson.
- (c) Location of Future meetings: The point was made and accepted that we have to ensure that members can travel to meetings and that a variety of venues across the UK should be planned.

## 5. Management planning – lessons and learning: Henry Owen-John

Using the past for the benefit of future generations

Vectors:

- a. management plans
- b. Systems
- c. Teams
- d. co-ordinators

Sources:

- e. UNESCO Operational Guidelines paragraphs 97/108/109/111
- f. UK Governmental guidance – Circular 07/2009 on the Protection of WHSs

- g. English Heritage Guidance on the protection and management of World Heritage Sites 2009
- h. Management Guidelines on Cultural Works – Fielden & Jokilehto
- i. [www.urbact.eu/hero](http://www.urbact.eu/hero)
- j. **Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and Their Landscapes for Conservation** by **Kate Clark**
- k. Management of World Heritage Sites by Thomas Hardy Karpati, focuses on:
  - i. Consultation
  - ii. Steering group representing joint interests
  - iii. Clear vision
  - iv. Recognition of intangible heritage
  - v. Emphasis on education and awareness-raising

Approaches to WHS management have evolved over the 43years since inception of programme:

- l. Originally plans written by “experts” for “experts” (*my quote marks!*)
- m. Now shifted to community engagement/stakeholder participation
- n. Focus shifted from the visitor to also include local communities
- o. The retrospective introduction of SOUVs has seen an increased emphasis on:
  - i. attributes (tangible and intangible)
  - ii. Authenticity (evidence-base)
  - iii. Integrity (how much exists)

#### **Saltire - lessons learned: Helen Thornton**

- p. Start early, consultative model takes time to complete (17 months)
- q. Make-up of Steering Group vital – need to work as a team and may need to include new stakeholders as plan evolves
- r. Need to balance the big picture and the detail
- s. The approval is only the start, the real reason for the plan is the delivery

#### **Stonehenge & Avebury: Beth Thomas**

- t. Took 2 years to complete
- u. Focus on engaging with partners
- v. Ownership of the action plan is vital
- w. Need to get buy-in from stakeholders at development stage
- x. Action Plan has 178 actions, but many are to be delivered working in partnership – good opportunity to broker new partnerships
- y. Question: Management Plan is written to cover 6 years and also have 2 years development – plans/aspirations/circumstances may change over time – Plan needs to be flexible/reviewed regularly
- z. Especially as Plan needs to be aspirational – not just going for the easy wins.

New thinking “Declaration on the Historic Urban Landscape” requires additional emphasis on the wider planning environment, looking from the outside, into the WHS

Have seen a trend towards increasingly complex and bulky plans:

- aa. how do we make them simple to use, or they won’t get used!
- bb. Break down into main/core plan focussed on key issues/priorities that benefit/affect stakeholders
- cc. A strategic-level document, underpinned by detailed, specific plans (eg learning/visitor management/conservation)
- dd. use appendices for raw data and evidence

## 6. Implications of Austerity: -

-How are WHS coping with austerity?  
What approaches are being taken to cope?

Do we...

- Do less?
- Seek sponsorship?
- Delegate more responsibility to partners?
- Squeeze more out of consultants?
- Take in more work in-house?
- Ask stakeholders to do more?

Comments:-

**Henry Owen John:-** At English Heritage, the International Team have an overview of how sites are each coping differently to the affects of financial restraints.

Context:

- UNESCO has had no increase in staff despite an annual increase in the number of sites inscribed onto the WHS list
- DCMS has seen a 50% reduction in its staffing levels since 2010
- EH has had 40% cut since 2010
- Local government cuts
- Not just public sector, private sector (eg Blenheim) has been affected by the financial situation.

This has led to creativity in looking at new ways to do things more smartly. For example the Jurassic Coast team has been exploring the independent trust route. Whereas conversely, Hadrian's Wall Trust have found that this route was not sustainable for them following the end of the RDA funding stream. They have returned to the local authority. Cornish Mining has also been exploring creative measures to access funding to implement their management plan.

Successful sites are those that have enough core resources to be able to look for alternative funding streams and innovative ideas.

**David Phillips (LGA):-** LGA believe that by 2020 there will be a £12bn deficit in English local authorities.

The LGA is campaigning for devolution of power from central government to the LEPs. This means it is critical for WHS to engage with local government and LEPs in order to ensure that WHSs are at the heart of political strategy and heritage is at the right point on the agenda to access the available funds.

**Keith Nicol, DCMS:-**

Pressure on public expenditure will continue whatever the makeup of the next government.

WHS have to look at other areas for funding: e.g. corporate sponsorship. The Cultural sector in general does not exploit the available sources of funding.

DCMS needs to evangelise about the value of heritage and that message needs to be heard in a variety of areas and very soon after the election e.g. WHS should be in touch with their new MPs to press the message home post election.

DCMS is a champion of WHS and it is the State Party to the WH Convention and this won't be delegated so needs ammunition for what the WH committee does to carry out that role of champion. DCMS needs to

work more closely with the Treasury, Foreign Office, DFED, etc to help them understand the value of world heritage to the UK and engage with private partners.

WH:UK should develop with DCMS a summary to help pitch the story to key ambassadors such as local MPs.

**John Rodger:-** “Heritage” can be seen as a barrier. At Blaenavon the WHS is all about regeneration, tourism, jobs, community involvement and the economic impacts are key.

**Sam Rose, Jurassic Coast:-** WHUK will work to help DCMS champion WH throughout government.

The Jurassic Coast Trust has been in existence for around 10 years but it is only in the last 3 years that they have begun to use it effectively. This has involved a change in trustees and more active use of the Trust. They are exploring the option of transferring the WHS unit to the Trust but only with a 5 year service level agreement with the local authority. This would give the Jurassic Coast team more freedom. The drivers have been local authority cuts and the opportunity of being a charitable trust.

**Anna Brennand, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust:-** The local authority contract the IGMT to manage the WHS for a fee. There is a 10 year SLA. IGMT has to deliver new Management Plan and an annual WH Festival.

**Helen MacLagen:-** There is a lot of literature with case studies on the development of charitable trusts in the museum sector which WHS should use to understand the pros and cons.

**AONB representative:-** There is an opportunity where AONB and WHS overlap to work together on a number of issues including national ones such as work related to the National Grid and s85 issues.

Agreed that the current austerity measures should not be an excuse for local authorities to forget about WHS or avoid their responsibilities.

**Henry Owen John:-** In conclusion, WHS should keep Historic England informed of changes and developments in structures, ways of working etc so that they can share best practice across the UK. SR suggested that a blog on the new WHUK website would enable people to update all on what actions they are taking to cope with loss of structural funding.

For some examples of good practice elsewhere in the world see: [www.urbact.eu/hero](http://www.urbact.eu/hero) and [www.heritprot.com](http://www.heritprot.com)

7. **Para 172 Submissions** – A Case study from Cornwall. Deborah Boden noted the time taken by the planning process for this major development in the WHS at Hayle Harbour, and the importance of seeking Unesco’s views early in that process. Definition and understanding of OUV is crucial to the process, and the correct use of an HIA is also important.

## 8. Updates from Agencies

DCMS – The forthcoming Spending Review will set budgets for 2016-19, there will be an opportunity (May to October) for views to be expressed. DCMS are keen to support WH UK, together with the UKNC. It would be a good idea for WH UK to engage more fully with Visit Britain and ALVA.

Historic England (HE) –

- Nomination for Gibraltar has been accepted for evaluation by the WH Centre, and is expected to be considered at the 2016 Committee.
- Corporate plan – final version is expected very soon.

LGA - The Association is interested in best practice examples for the newsletter.

Historic Scotland (HS). The merger with The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland is in progress to become Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

Cadw – Historic environment bill is now under scrutiny, expected to reach final stages this summer. It includes a supplementary guidance document on WH in Wales. The new legislation is expected in 2016. There will be a period of public consultation. It offers good new protection for WHS; supportive letters would be welcomed.