

**MINUTES OF THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD ON MICROSOFT TEAMS - TUESDAY 19TH OCTOBER 2021**

PRESENT:

Marion Blockley (MB) – Chair
Brandi Hall-Crossgrove (BHC) – WHS Coordinator
Russell Rowley (RR) – Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (SGCT), and Vice Chair
Rory Hunter (RH) – Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT)
Peter Boland (PB) – Historic England (HE)
Helen Allen (HA) – English Heritage (EH)
Cllr Caroline Bagnall (CB) – Shropshire Council (SC)
Cllr Carolyn Healy (CH) – TWC
Cllr Rae Evans (RE) - TWC
Cllr Eileen Callear (EC) - TWC
Alison Hinks (AH) – Madeley Parish Council (MPC)
Ian West (IW) – Broseley Town Council (BTC)
Andy Wigley (AW) – SC
Joy Tetsill (JT) – SC
Valerie Hulme (VH) – TWC
Psyche Hudson (PH) – TWC
Patrick Mottershead (PM) – TWC
Kieren Western (KW) – TWC, and secretary

APOLOGIES:

Penny McKnight (TWC) - **Nick Ralls** (IGMT) - **Debra Harris** (Ironbridge Business Consortium) - **Psyche Hudson** (TWC – joined later)

1. Introduction:

Marion Blockley (MB) welcomed everyone and gave a warm welcome to our new World Heritage Site Coordinator Brandi Hall-Crossgrove (BHC). (MB) The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising:

(MB) stated that we're all delighted to have appointed Brandi as the new World Heritage Site Coordinator. We have struggled without a dedicated WHS Coordinator to coordinate delivery of management plan actions for several years.

(CH) Carolyn Healy informed the group some of the existing WHS Welcome signage would be reinstated but that some of the new branded signage will be installed in similar locations to the existing ones but with slight repositioning to avoid becoming obscured by vegetation.

- (MB) asked whether the locations of the new signage would reflect the recommendations in the PLB Interpretation Strategy and in the original Gateway concepts.
- (BHC) stated that she is currently liaising with Highways regarding signage locations.

(MB) asked if the new gateway signage would include the parts of Madeley that are included within the WHS.

- (BHC) confirmed that Madeley will be included within the new signage.
- (MB) commented that the signs define gateways to various communities within the WHS, and that people assume that the WHS is just the Iron bridge, or the Iron bridge plus the Wharfage.

(MB) stated that the works funded by the Environment Agency (EA) to the surface of the Wharfage to facilitate temporary flood barriers were all finished and have been completed to a high standard. She asked why the flood protection works couldn't extend to Dale End due to an objection by the (EA).

- (CH) said that this is an entirely different project funded scheme by TWC in Dale End to increase the size of the culvert at the lower part of Dale End.
- The EA will not issue a permit on the work until next year (June 2022) because the Coalbrooke may potentially have salmon. The EA will not put in flood protection in Dale End as it doesn't meet their financial criteria.

(IW) raised his concerns about the development site at Stoneleigh Road, Calcutts Road, circulated to the last Steering Group Meeting held on the 20th July 2021.

- The density, scale and design details of the development are not in keeping with the location within the WHS Conservation Area and do not meet the requirements of Objective 1 of the WHS Management Plan. The scale and the design details of unit 8 (the large house replacing the existing bungalow) in particular are inappropriate for this location, and display no references to local vernacular styles.

(MB) asked if the Steering Group have concerns about the impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS.

Action. (MB) to post a letter of objection on the SCC planning portal raising concerns about the impact on OUV.

3. Development Sites: Power Station & AGA.

(VH) stated the Harworth Masterplan for the former Power Station site was approved by Shropshire Council in September. TWC planning committee already

approved this in May 2021, and T&WC are now working with Shropshire Council to create a Memorandum of Understanding and a Section 106 agreement.

(VH) Commented on the AGA development site. There have been a number of changes to the original scheme in response to feedback. These changes are out for re-consultation at the moment, and this is due to expire around 26th October. The changes will then be addressed at planning committee in November, subject consultation and the comments received from both external parties and stakeholders. The Planning Committee is scheduled to meet at the end of November.

- (CH) has organised a public consultation event with Shropshire Homes which is due to be held on Monday 25th October, this is a question and answer session before the planning officer drafts the report for the Planning Committee. Promotion of this event has taken place with distribution of leaflets to the immediate Coalbrookdale area and via social media.
- (MB) asked if the Steering Group were satisfied that the concerns raised by Network Rail were fully addressed. She also raised concerns around traffic during construction.
- (MB) asked the wider Steering Group if they had any comments to raise with regards to the impact on OUV for the former Power Station or the AGA site.
- (VH) stated that the Power Station, is dealt with, but with regards to AGA, it's more important if you have a view as the Steering Group to make any comments.

(MB) asked the wider Steering Group to make any comments on the impact on OUV of the AGA development and to raise any concerns. – No further comments were raised at this point within the meeting.

4. SPD Presentation, by Patrick Mottershead (Senior Planning Policy Officer TWC).

(PM) is currently involved in the preparation of the Ironbridge Gorge WHS, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) alongside Built Heritage Specialist Rosie Burton (RB).

TWC are seeking to engage with the Steering Group and all the local communities to achieve a positive coherent planning document to protect the WHS. The key aim for the council is to continue to preserve and maintain the OUV of the site, to ensure its continued protection is key within the area. The aim is to create a planning framework to ensure the future protection of the WHS and to draw upon existing and future documents to create a coherent and consistent structure for development.

He stated that by creating a coherent and consistent system through the planning framework, the council are able to contribute to reach the right conclusions in the planning decision process to achieve the best possible outcome for development.

- An SPD allows councils to give more detail but help local plan policies (interpreted or applied in practice) and provide further information to guide planning decisions on submitted applications and is a supplementary to the policies within the local plan.
- An important process when creating an SPD includes public consultation and allows members of the public to submit their comments in how the document can be approved or altered.
- An SPD will give guidance for protecting and enhancing the OUV of the WHS, whilst preventing loss of the historic environment through deterioration.
- Further meetings will be held with both town and parish councils, before proceeding to a consultation period, for consultation on the draft version of the WHS SPD. This is expected to take place between winters 2021 into the new year of 2022. Following consultation responses the final version of the WHS SPD is expected by spring 2022.

Comments Raised:

- (JT) – Various Attempts have been made to produce an SPD as you're aware that a 3rd of WHS is in Shropshire. How would you propose to deal with the Shropshire side of the WHS Site and how would it work as a document, and also how would this document be approached with two councils (SC & TWC) in regards to working together on this document to cover all aspects including the Shropshire side of the WHS Site?

Answer: (PM) – Its part of the consultation process to consult with town and parish councils as well as Shropshire Council in arranging meetings to hold discussions to ensure that all bases are covered within the SPD.

- (RH) – Commented on timescale for response in regards the wider steering group's response, in the consultation between now and when it is proposed to be launched.
- (VH) – If we can work together as a whole to cover all bases, we will ensure that those discussions are made so it covers the Shropshire areas within the WHS site. If we can't cover it as a whole, then we will need to refine it and produce it in terms of TWC's boundary and making sure that it covers all those bases before it goes out to consultation and that's the informed approach in bringing the documentation all together.
- (RR) – What national guidance is used to determine the SPD?

Answer: (PM) – The supporting documents given as guidance are through the NPPF and the local plan with the WHS management plan, conservation management plan, conservation area appraisal and for more specific guidance we consult with our internal officers. These guidance documents will state what we should cover and what we shouldn't cover.

- (AW) – We would be very happy to make a joint approach on this, it would certainly be an opportunity missed if we didn't work on this together to cover all areas within the SPD documentation. Meetings will be arranged in due course for both councils as well as consulting with town and parish to jointly work on this together.

Reports from the WHS Coordinator.

Communication Strategy:

- (BHC) presented to the new communications strategy that she will be taking forward. The new WHS Ironbridge Gorge Website is now being driven with the firm favourite of the contemporary Modern Destination design concept, the decision made by the last steering group meeting.
- The new proposed website site map was addressed and where we're looking to move forward in terms of the new website. The steering group members have been approached by Brandi in collating information that can then feed into the topics and pages that are going to be showcased on the website.
- Thoughts were proposed by Brandi on a Steering Group newsletter that could be distributed twice annually or once annually to distribute news and events to local communities across the Gorge.

Social Media:

- BHC has already liaised with the TWC communications team, and moving forward, having our own social media platforms is definitely the way to go. Proposed areas of social media were raised such as, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok. We would be the very first WHS to do TikTok.
- Focused groups for each platform are as follows;
 - TikTok: 10 yrs +
 - Instagram: 15 yrs +
 - Facebook: 25 yrs +
 - Twitter: Academics and WH Sector professionals

This is to ensure we're hitting and focusing on all demographics and why the 4 social media platforms were proposed.

Comment Raised By (RH) – If you want to make that claim and to make it boldly, you want to find the resource to get that TikTok account up and running now. We would welcome working together at IGMT on social media content and creative TikTok content moving forward.

Semi Annual Forums:

- Moving forward, BHC would like to introduce Semi-annual forums for community engagement, to ensure engagement and communication is coherent throughout the WHS and could be one of the ways going forward.

Interpretation:

- Another project BHC liaising on with a third party, Beth Thomas, which is a strategy for the WHS, and some objectives were proposed and shown to the steering group of what's been currently being unfolded and currently being worked on.

WHS Branding – Trademarked Logos:

- Presented to the steering group, 4 of the newly updated traded marked WHS logos a more simplified logo which is too be used throughout produced materials ensuring it is coherently used through the WHS starting now to be implemented when materials are produced or updated. The branding guidelines have been distributed to the steering group prior to the meeting.

Management Plan Updates:

- Presented to the steering group that the current WHS management plan ends in February 2022. BHC will be updating the current action plan with completed tasks and requests that each partner to start thinking ahead strategically about the actions and direction of the new management plan. This is a process that will take some time to properly engage with the community and the various partners before completion.

Structure and Steering Group Responsibilities:

- BHC reiterated the responsibilities of a steering group
 1. To monitor management plan implementation.
 2. To coordinate WHS working groups

BHC stated in her findings the Steering Group has deterred from the two above responsibilities and is looking forward to changing up the governance and structure to accommodate the return of focus on these two main responsibilities.

WHS Governance Structure Types in the UK:

- BHC walked the steering group through the different structures found in other UK WHS and specifically through 3 other WHS; Stonehenge, Lake District, and Bath.

Suggested Working Structure:

- BHC proposed a new structure with a partnership group on top, a steering group that feeds into the partnership group and then several other groups that feed into the steering group (ex. Business working group, Academic working group, Marketing group).
- AW confirms that this structure has its challenges but does work well with the other Shropshire Council WHS the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

WHS MP Steering Group Structure:

- BHC presented the prior approved steering group structure and that several seats are not being filled currently. BHC is working to fill these missing positions to have more rounded and inclusive working group for the overall benefit of the WHS.
- IW said Barrow council is willing to be kept updated but currently does not feel the need to attend the steering group.

Partner Updates:

- **SGCT:** (RR) has had conversations with IGMT in working together more closely for targeted tourism. Had a successful bid to create more wildlife corridors. Clearly woodland hedges back to create a better habitat as well as to accommodate signs. Putting new trees on Jiggers bank. Ash dieback is causing issues and confusion currently as well a funding difficulties. Joining TWC in the work to close roads a minimally as possible. Difficulty in preserving wall made of pipes currently. Some trees coming to the end of their life on the Sabbath walk and trying to solve this solution.
- **IGMT:** (RH) asked to collaborate on an issue with SGCT. Museum of the Gorge is finishing its first phase of improvements. Phase 2 has applications in for funding currently (some has come in but not all, especially with Historic England). Phase 2 is set to take places the summer of 2022. Will be consulting with steering group on the long term use of the space for Phase 3 to make use of the space for the community and for everything going on in the WHS. IGMT has received the report on the Quinquennial Inspection. Rebranding is almost completed and he will be reaching out how these brands will talk to each other going forward.

- **Shropshire Council:** Power Station has already been updated. Our local plan was submitted in September for updating and now undergoing outside inspection. Hearings will start around February and March which could mean that the plan could be approved in a year's times.
- **Historic England:** As an organization we are still working through the implications of covid. Birmingham office is open but not as business as usual with a lot more working from home. They are currently relaxing their approval to visit sites in person. We are changing our management structure currently and then changing again in November.
- **English Heritage:** Expanding our volunteers currently and working on plans for next year and what we can deliver.
- **Events Team:** We had a hiatus around festival time and we are planning in general about events and how we doing things as we have a lot on next year. PH has already been in talks with BHC on celebrating WH Day in April next year and the heritage in the gorge itself.
- **TWC:** Enforcement decisions have been coming through around use of pvc in the Gorge.
- **Broseley Town Council:** Very excited about TWC and SC coming together for the SPD.

AOB:

- Impact Assessment for the WHS and the cost benefit for tourism in the area. IGMT is doing a similar evaluation currently. BHC to look into what if anything has been accomplished and moving forward while collaborating with IGMT.

The next IGWHS Steering Group meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams on 19th January, 2022 from 2-4pm.