



Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Coalbrookdale

Tuesday 16th September 2025, 13:00 – 15:00

1.	Introductions and apologies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome from KS.
2.	Minutes of last meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minutes will be circulated to the group following the meeting.
3.	World Heritage Site Coordinator Introduction and Update
	Laura Fildes (LF) provided a brief introduction of herself and previous experience. KS extended the groups warmest welcome.
4.	Launch of the Management Plan Projection (presentation to be circulated).
	<p>Presentation given by LF. Outlining the 12 month timeframe to draft a new management plan. The new guidance issued by Historic England was explained as well as risk factors which now tie in with the Periodic reporting and standardise assessment across the sites. LF called for volunteers from the key stake holder's organisations (themselves or another rep) to form a focus group of 6-8 people to advise on the plan. KS pressed that whilst people should think carefully of whether they have the time to commit, a prompt response is required by the end of the week. Next steps were identified as setting up the focus group, with the first workshop to discuss existing data, OUV and research focuses. An update of research findings will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>SB advised in respect of the baseline data, lessons would be taken from the Destination Management Plan – have an external friendly person on the survey side. KS suggested that some Harper Adams Business Students may be able to assist. CCH suggested we capture as many businesses as possible including those in Jackfield, Madeley and areas beyond the Wharfage. JB advised that TWC will be embarking on a similar strategy (the Heritage Strategy) and will ensure they are undertaken in parallel. AW volunteered to be the Shropshire Council representative. KS advised that a similar project in Coventry sought comments from school children (then beneficiaries) and people in the 3rd stage of their life. SB suggested that if it possible for a Youth Forum to come out of the Management Plan process it would be fantastic. KS confirmed that the Coordinator had the support of the Steering Group.</p>
5.	WHS 40th Anniversary 2026 events, tourism and partnership working
	LF highlighted that it is the 40 th anniversary of the world heritage site's Inscription in November next year and that it would be a good opportunity to celebrate the WHS and for additional promotion and co-ordinated events. LF is in discussion with some of the other 6 WHSs which were inscribed on the same date including Stone Henge and Giants Causeway to discuss

	<p>promotion ideas and joint opportunities. LF has asked that steering group members think about any events that could be added to the itinerary across organisations.</p> <p>JPB indicated that they have a plan for next years events and would be able to contribute. SB indicated that its would be nice to do something around how the Gorge has evolved since inscription, and its now very green landscape which is often a surprise for visitors. LF confirmed that a green theme may link well with SS's proposed NHLF project.</p>
6.	<p>Conservation and Heritage along the River Severn. NHFL pre-app update</p> <p>Dr Simon Segar (Harper Adams University) delivered a short update the National Heritage Lottery Fund pre-application advice request for events coinciding with the UNSECO 40th and Harper Adams 125th anniversary and the River Severn followed by Q&A. RH outlined that IGMT's Collections Team may have some information in respect of stories from the past, together with ML from the Coracle Trust. RH's experience of NHLF applications is that a lot of data has to be fed back and it may be beneficial for the bid to include an administrator. ML noted that present-day local reflections may be pursued as the Coracle Trust project was undertaken during the Covid pandemic. CCH, supported by MB, noted that it would be good to gain the views of local people who have lived through decades of flooding.</p>
7.	<p>Partner Updates</p> <p>a. Telford & Wrekin Council</p> <p>i) Coordinator Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WHUK Coordinators Forum 10.09.2025 and Annual Conference 9th and 10th Oct. <p>ii) Other Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CCH) - 1799 Coalport Ferry Disaster – fixed memorable similar to Coracle Man – Thurs 23rd Oct 530-630/7 anniversary • (SB) – Dutch travel trade visit by train and bicycle from 2027 looking at booking in large groups using the 'track-to-trail' infrastructure. Met with Coracle Trust will come out the ground in 2026. • Environmental and Neighborhood Services – (AC) In sending apologies AC provided the group with the following update. We have some mixed planting due to be done in the Dale end park beds where we removed the old roses in the spring. We postponed planting from the spring due to the dry weather • Culture (JB) - Cultural Strategy – Coalport Ferry Disaster – 28th Oct The culture and events team were supporting the ferry disaster event, taking place at the Boat Inn. <p>Shropshire Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CCB) • (AW) <p>Broseley Town Council</p>

- **(CCB and SET)** - The Pipe Museum, which has been closed, was open this weekend as part of the WHS Festival with a team of volunteers guiding a large numbers of visitors round. Discussions regarding the future of the museum were taking place separately between Broseley Town Council and IGMT.

The Gorge Parish Council

- **(MB)** - Parish Council have constant battle explaining the effect of planning on OUV from planning. One example of a contradiction are the large 'Keep Clear' road markings. Cllr Healy indicated that the supplementary guidance was updated to support local residents. Andrew indicated that a series of information events for Parish councils were taking place from T&W's planning department. LF indicated that she would follow up with the highways team and had requested an invitation to attend the Gorge's next parish council meeting.

Madeley Parish Council

- **(RE)**

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

- **(RH)** - Updates on the conservation works that have been going on and are yet to take place with various scaffolding going up and coming down, the project will continue for a further 12 months. KS asked how the summer had gone, with Rory advising that the hot dry summer at times had deterred visitors. However, visits are comparable with the industry (5-10% down) with spending on catering slightly up and spending on retail slightly down.

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

- **(JPB)** - Set up a stand alone business providing forestry services outside of SGCT land and will be main focus until April. LF will speak with Declan K about land stability near the viaduct and follow up with JP.

Coracle Trust

- **(ML)**

Birmingham University

- **(HJ)** Update sent in absence. By way of updates, I provided detailed comments for the research proposal circulated by Simon Segar after the last meeting, which he indicated were very helpful, and I have indicated my interest in being part of the proposal, so we'll see about that - he hasn't circulated a revised version

Historic England

- **(BW)**

ICOMOS UK

- **(AH)**. Update sent in absence. ICOMOS are meeting the new / potential Steering Group representatives that day, and I hope that we may be able to confirm a replacement for Ironbridge. I'll be in touch when I know more.
LF provided more context, that ICOMOS intend to provide new representatives to all WHS steering groups. They had received a substantial number of applications and would be shortlisting based on experience to find the best candidate for each site's needs.

Chair – wine making day 24th Sept as Harper Adams planted a vineyard.

8. AOB

- .None



9.	Date of next meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 11th, 2026 from 1300-1500 (in person)

Appendix 1: Attendance and Apologies

Ken Sloan (KS)	Chair
Laura Fildes (LF)	TWC WHS Coordinator
Andrew Gittins (AG)	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Carolyn Healy (CCH)	Telford & Wrekin Council
Sarah Bird (SB)	Telford & Wrekin Council
Jon Bielstein (JB)	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Caroline Bagnall (CCB)	Shropshire Council
Andy Wigley (AW)	Shropshire Council
Ben Williscroft (BW)	Historic England
JP Brayford (JPB)	Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Rory Hunter (RH)	Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Mary Lewis (ML)	Coracle Trust
Maureen Bragg (MB)	The Gorge Parish Council
Su Evans Turner (SET)	Broseley Town Council
Dr Simon Segar (SS)	Harper Adams University

Apologies

Helle Jorgensen (HJ)	University of Birmingham
Alison Hems (AH)	ICOMOS-UK
Adrian Corney (AC)	Environment & Neighbourhood Team Leader TWC
Cllr Eileen Callear (CEC)	Madeley Ward
Ed McGregor (EM)	English Heritage
Cllr Angela McClements (CAM)	Telford and Wrekin Council