



City of Bath World Heritage Site Advisory Board

Meeting held on 13 February 2019 in the Drawing Room, Roman Baths,
Bath

Minutes

Attendees			
Prof. Barry Gilbertson (Chair) BG	Cllr Paul Myers	PM	Cllr Tim Warren TW
Cllr Cherry Beath CB	Cllr Peter Turner	PT	Dr Marion Harney MH
Cllr Robert Law RL	Nick Tobin	NT	Prof. David Goode DG
Andrew Grant AG	Polly Andrews	PA	Lisa Bartlett LB
Caroline Kay CK	Rohan Torkildsen	RT	Tom Boden TB
Ainslie Ensom AE	Dr Cassie Newland	CN	Joy Roberts JR
Claire Dixon CD	Tony Crouch	TC	
Apologies			
John Wilkinson	Henry Owen-John		Ian Bell
Stephen Bird	Dr Kristin Doern		Allison Herbert

No	Agenda Item	Act.
1	Chairman's Welcome	
1.1	The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, particularly Claire Dixon, Director of Museums and Deputy Chief Exec. at Bath Preservation Trust, Dr Cassie Newland, History and Heritage at Bath Spa University (standing in for Kristin Doern) and Councillor Tim Warren, Leader of Bath & North East Somerset Council.	
1.2	BG reported that Dr Anne Bull had now stood down from the Board and he thanked her for her service. Education, in its widest sense, will now be covered by Polly Andrews.	PA
1.3	To allow Claire Dixon to return to work, BG re-ordered the agenda to take the presentation first and the Rugby Club discussion last. This change would also allow anyone who felt conflicted in any way to leave before this (now) final item on the Agenda.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None at this stage, although with regard to the Rugby Club it is acknowledged that some members may be either season ticket holders or occasional spectators.	
3	Presentation on the Beckford's Tower Project	
3.2	CK and CD gave a PowerPoint presentation on a proposal for conservation and interpretation works at Beckford's Tower, Lansdown, Bath.	
3.3	CK outlined the architectural and historical importance of the Tower, which stands like a "lighthouse" or beacon as a landmark feature above Bath. Since construction as a folly/library/study by William Beckford, the grade 1 listed building had been put to various uses after Beckford's death, including a pub and a funerary chapel and being left empty. The Hilliard family took ownership in 1977 and carried out some restoration work. Bath Preservation Trust (BPT) became sole trustee in 1993 and embarked on major structural restoration	

	which included improvement to the structural stability of the lantern. CK emphasised that intervention was again necessary now, with water ingress damaging plasterwork and public access to the lantern level closed. BPT had worked closely with Historic England (HE). The Tower is technically 'at risk'.	
3.4	CD explain that Beckford constructed a 1 mile long walk (or ride) from his Lansdown Crescent home to the Tower, which he visited daily. This designed landscape feature had largely been lost and the project sought to reveal this ride through restoration of physical features (such as a grotto tunnel and walks) and through interpretation, that would result in free access to landscape features. Within the Tower, a walkway across the lower level flat roof was being investigated along with the possibility of solar panels (hidden from general view). The museum space would also be re-configured.	
3.5	Interaction has taken place with the new community in the housing across Lansdown Road on the former Ensleigh Ministry of Defence Site. This included the new primary school, who were interested in educational visits to the Tower. A road crossing may be required and BPT are lobbying the Council accordingly.. PA has also been working with groups such as AGE UK who have visited the Tower.	
3.6	A bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) will be submitted in March 2019, with a decision expected by June 2019. The sum requested is £2.8m, which is 90% of the funding required. £300k would need to be raised through other fundraising. If successful, a start on site should be possible later this Summer. The World Heritage Enhancement Fund (WHEF) has not yet been approached for a contribution. CK said that regardless of the success of the bid, BPT was committed to carrying out conservation work, but lottery financial assistance would enable the scheme to encompass so much more. The NHLF had recently introduced increased monitoring of outputs and BG noted that the WHEF had also introduced similar monitoring and are currently working on a process. To review the condition of previous works supported.	
3.7	PT asked if there might be funding from HE's 'Wellness' agenda. CK said funding sources were being explored, but the project sat well within the wellness agenda and BPT were looking to work with the Bathscape Project.	
3.8	RT pointed toward the possibility of using modern materials on some of the elements of the Tower which needed to resist the weather. TC said that he and BG had recently inspected fibreglass dragons on the roof of the Grade 1 listed Chinese Pagoda at Kew Gardens spun from 3D printers, so there were precedents for the use of such materials.	
3.9	BG thanked CK and CD for the presentation. CD left the meeting.	
4	Adoption and review of previous minutes	
4.1	TC reported that LB had suggested alternative wording to the item about housing figures discussed at the last meeting. The proposed replacement wording was read out and was as follows: LB said that "The West of England Joint Spatial Plan, which is currently at Examination, proposes that much of the housing growth up until 2036 within B&NES will be accommodated in the Strategic Development Locations at Whitchurch and North Keynsham with around 300 dwellings being proposed in Bath. The Plan is subject to a public Hearing currently scheduled for late May 2019 where both the housing provision and the spatial approach across the West of England will be tested." The Board agreed to make this wording change in the minutes.	TC
4.2	BG said reference was made in the minutes to the signing (whereas the document had been agreed at the meeting, but not then signed as a couple of changes had to be processed first) of a revised World Heritage Enhancement Fund (WHEF) Memorandum of Understanding at the Annual Meeting in	TC

	January. This did not happen, so TC will check and amend minutes as necessary.	
4.3	With the changes in 4.1 and 4.2 above made, the Board agreed the minutes.	
5	Review of previous minutes and matters arising	
5.1	BG has spoken to Paula Freeland about delivering his talk to the planning Service and alongside TC to new councillors following the May elections.	BG TC
5.2	There was no news from ICOMOS UK about nominating a member for the Board.	
5.3	A second print-run of (20,000) Nelson Trail leaflets was about to be ordered. The Nelson Society would meet 60% of costs and the WHEF 40%. Trafalgar Day celebrations would be held in Bath on 18/20 October 2019 based at the Apex Hotel as a result of the successful launch of the Nelson Trail. BG invited to give the keynote lecture.	BG
5.4	BG had delivered a talk to HE and EH at their South-West offices in Bristol. RT said it had been very well received and will lead to a special meeting of the new Regional Director coming to Bath to meet with BG, TC, SB and CK.	BG
5.5	BG was meeting with former Board member Adrian Amber on 15 February to discuss the project concerning the Bath bronze plaques. The project may include a trail (or other interpretation) of the existing plaques, plus a possibility of new ones.	BG
5.6	TB is soon to undertake a 123 mile walk of the Palladian Way to raise funds for the Prior Park Dams project. TB thanked Board members who had already sponsored him and reminded others there was still time to do so https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/prior-park-palladian-walk The Dams project is progressing well, with planning permission expected imminently and permission to remove some trees already granted.	
6	Chairman's Report	
6.1	BG introduced his report, which had been circulated in advance, and picked out some key items.	
6.2	The series of WH awareness raising talks continues, with 945 people now having heard the talk.	
6.3	A first annual meeting of the WHEF was held on 10 January 2019, with a joint meeting of the Management Group and Working Group followed by a drinks reception for those involved in recent projects. It also enabled some increased publicity for our good news stories, for example 54 street signs have now been restored, making a big difference. BG said the reception had gone well, but he would have liked to have seen more Board members attend.	
6.4	BG has met again with B&NES Conservation Team Manager Paula Freeland and Conservation Officer Caroline Power to discuss the Locally Listed Heritage Assets project. The Conservation Team were looking at how to incorporate entries on their electronic database, but the inclusion (for Bath assets, rather than wider B&NES area assets) of the post of Advisory Board Chair on the assessment panel has been accepted now and in the future, regardless of the change of Chairman.	
6.5	BG invited TW to comment on the issue of a Tourist ITax or Heritage Levy. TW said this could be a source of significant income, with a £1 per night hotel stay contribution possibly resulting in £2m of annual income to be ring-fenced as 6.8 below. The proposal attracted widespread local citizen support, but a mixed reaction from hoteliers who voiced concerns about the resulting perception of Bath as an expensive destination and about a further cut in their takings. TW said however that hoteliers do recognise the benefit of investment in the public realm. B&NES Council was now a member of a new unitary authorities network, which gave increased access to the government and the ability to lobby.	
6.6	NT asked if the hotels were concerned about the collection of funds. TW replied that managing collection would need some thought, although BG	

	pointed out that there are many continental cities already providing a model. TW pointed out that on-line agencies such as Booking.com take about 18% of the booking value in fees, so hotels are already feeling under pressure.	
6.7	TW said that the emergence of 'Air BnB' private lets was a related issue which was problematic. There were no around 900 rooms in the city available and new planning controls were needed to be able to manage these, both in terms of numbers and public safety. TW already lobbying Government on this issue.	
6.8	BG said he had heard concern that funds generated might be used for purposes such as supporting the Destination Management Organisation (Visit Bath). TW responded that he was happy to confirm that it was the intention to ring-fence all funds for public realm works in support of the World Heritage Site.	
6.9	Finishing his report, BG said this was now his 6 th meeting as Chairman and he reminded Board members of the importance of regular attendance and the 'three strikes and out' policy. An attendance register was being kept and he would speak to those struggling to attend as necessary.	BG
7	World Heritage Manager's Report	
7.1	TC talked through his report, a copy of which was circulated in advance of the meeting.	
7.2	In accordance with the UNESCO requirement to notify them of major applications which might impact upon the site, there had been some recent activity. A letter had been sent regarding the Bath Rugby proposals (see 10 below). There had also been correspondence with Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) regarding a planning application for deep-quarry excavations at Halescombe Quarry, Somerset. The potential impact (of this deep quarrying in the Mendips) on the flow of the hot spring waters to Bath is not fully understood, and consequently a precautionary principle is applied. In this instance, Somerset County Council had permitted the application despite an objection from B&NES. A concerned member of the public had subsequently written to the Government (Dept. of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)) asking for the decision to be 'called in', but DCLG had declined to do so. B&NES Council had followed this up with their own letter requesting call-in and stating that this was of more than local interest, but LB confirmed that this request had also had been declined.	TC
7.3	Proposed changes to the wording of Action Plan of the World Heritage Site management Plan had been circulated with the advance papers. TC said if the Board was happy with the proposed changes, he would then seek to ratify the changes, most likely through a Council single member decision. If approved this would pave the way for a summary version of the management plan incorporating the updated Action Plan. NT asked if the changes included comment on the production of the Destination Management Plan (DMP). TC said he did not believe they did, but would check and confirm. BG asked PM if he had any news regarding the production of a DMP. PM said Visit Bath were currently business planning and he was happy to investigate and report back. The Board were happy with the Action Plan changes.	TC PM
7.4	TC reported that the Great Spas of Europe nomination had been completed on time and delivered to UNESCO, Paris on 22 January. With regard to the next steps, we will know by early March whether the limit of 35 new nominations, which is the maximum that the annual UNESCO World Heritage Committee will accept, had been exceeded or not. If it is exceeded, there is a risk of a one year delay to the processing of the Great Spa's nomination. If not, UNESCO would acknowledge the submission and work to put inspectors in place who are expected to visit Bath (probably for a maximum of one day) in early Autumn 2019. The earliest possible date for a successful inscription is at the World Heritage Committee of July 2020.	
7.5	TC said that regardless of the nomination success, we have unique access to	TC

	the Great Spas of Europe brand and that a marketing sub-group of Great Spas members had recently met in Bath. PM had organised and run that workshop and it would result in a draft marketing strategy. PM added that the 11 spa towns working together had a much greater impact (and budget) than we could hope to have alone and he offered to share a summary of this strategy with the Board, which BG welcomed. On behalf of the Board, BG congratulated TC, PM and CB on their work to submit the Great Spas bid, which had been secured due to long term cross-party political co-operation and support.	PM
7.6	Finally, TC reminded Board members that World Heritage Day would be celebrated on Thursday 18 April 2019 at Green Park Station, accompanied by a series of short talks across the road in the Salvation Army Citadel.	
8	World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund	
8.1	AE introduced her update report, circulated with these minutes.	
8.2	The refurbishment of Walcot Steps is a currently project being worked up. The steps are Grade II* Listed at the top, so they have high heritage significance and are well used. Their current poor condition exacerbates incidences of anti-social behaviour. The Fund is investigating a trial of new LED streetlighting here, plus repair works to the steps themselves, anti-pigeon netting, cleaning, etc.	
8.3	The street signs project, mentioned earlier by BG, has been underway for 8 years and performance of the workmanship has been monitored. The earliest works have weathered very well. Stone carver Iain Cotton thinks the shallow carving helps protect the painted letters and that the letters were always intended to be painted.	
9	Any Other Business	
9.1	As noted in 1.3 the Chairman moved this item forward on the agenda.	
9.2	PT reported on Bryan Chalker's ongoing work with regard to the increased recognition of Bath's industrial heritage. Bryan is close to securing funding to erect a plaque in Southgate to the last surviving Titanic passenger, who grew up in Bath. He is also in discussions about restoring a steam beam engine and erecting a plaque at the former Stothert and Pitt works.	
9.3	LB, TW, PM and JR left the meeting at this point. Before leaving, TW thanked the Chairman for inviting him and the Board for all of their hard work.	
9.4	CB said that as she was a sitting councillor she would listen with interest but not comment at this stage.	
10	Bath Rugby Club	
10.1	BG said that the recent public consultation/exhibition by Bath Rugby, showing the latest proposals for a new stadium at The Recreation Ground, had resulted in significant local discussion. It would be useful to hear the views of Board members for the purpose of information exchange. He asked TC to open by confirming the position with regard to notifying UNESCO.	
10.2	TC said that as noted in 5.2 (above), paragraph 172 of the UNESCO Operating Guidelines asked all state parties to notify UNESCO of any major schemes which might have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. What to notify on, and when, always required judgement, and B&NES Council and HE liaised closely on such matters. In the case of the Rugby Club, it was considered that now was the time to notify, as there was relative certainty that the Club intended to progress a scheme, but final details of that scheme were not set in stone and were still able to be amended if necessary.	
10.3	TC had liaised with both the Rugby Club and HE and a letter had been sent to DCMS dated 15 January 2019. DCMS had subsequently used the content of this letter to write to UNESCO, Paris. It was likely that this would result in UNESCO asking to be kept informed, or making comments on the scheme, or (less likely at this stage) suggesting an inspection 'Mission' visit.	
10.4	RT said that the Historic Environment Advisory Committee (HEAC), a national	

	panel of eminent design professionals, had recently visited Bath, commented on the scheme and that these comments were shared with the Club. HEAC had a number of concerns including the height of the stadium and the impact this may have on key views. HE were awaiting an invitation from the Club to engage further.	
10.5	CK said that BPT had issued a statement which was on their web-site. She noted that this was still a consultation process, no final plans had yet been drawn up and BPT reserved the right to amend their comments in line with any amended proposal. BPT had concerns over height and scale and they would welcome improvement of the scheme if it was possible to do so without harm to views of surrounding listed buildings and landscape. The corners of the stadium were thought to offer possibilities with regard to keeping views open. CK noted that visualisations had not yet been seen. The Pulteney Estate Resident's Association (PERA) had circulated some impressions, but these were not purporting to be a scientifically accurate visual assessment.	
10.6	NT said that the Federation of Bath Resident's Association (FOBRA) were finalising their statement which would be issued shortly. The height of the stadium, impact upon views and lack of visualisations were causing concern. The proposed under-pitch car park was a concern both in terms of increasing overall height, but also increased traffic movement/air pollution. The floodlights had the potential to leak light and should be examined and the 'market hall' proposals introduced new retail outlets into a local market already under pressure. Limited retail outlets to serve the stadium may be justified.	
10.7	PT said that the PERA position statement was on their website, and included the potential direct impact on surrounding residents. This impact included noise, other disturbance and a potential negative impact on property values. PERA would be seeking amendments to the scheme.	
10.8	DG said he found the mass and height of the building at that location overwhelming. There were ecological concerns over the impact upon flooding, especially with the likelihood of greater flood episodes. The impact of traffic, encouraged by a new car park, was also of concern. There was little opportunity for 'greening' the riverside. The height could potentially be reduced by dropping the car park and DG suggested the stadium might also be moved further back into the Rec.	
10.9	MH noted that when looking back into the site from the wider landscape setting, the visual impact might be dramatic. These 'reciprocal views' were important and must be considered.	
10.10	TB said that the National Trust had engaged with the proposals and they too had concerns over the potential impact views to and from the landscape. They were awaiting the Landscape Visual Assessments.	
10.11	RT asked if there was an architectural model. CK said there was, in the Rugby shop in Argyle Street. He thought that the absence of an architectural competition was regrettable and that this had proved successful on other projects such as the building to house the Mary Rose at Portsmouth.	
10.12	AG said he was awaiting final designs to see if these were acceptable.	
10.13	CN said that Bath Spa Uni. had been approached to undertake some 'viewshed analysis' and as such it would be inappropriate for her to comment.	
10.14	AE said that the river frontage formed a strong linear entity and when lit at night this could have a dramatic impact. She also noted that the scheme would result in commercial use of a local green space, although CK commented that the High Court had already ruled that the Rec could be developed.	
10.15	AG said it would be useful if there were a series of view cones taken from specific points. RT pointed out that the Setting Study SPD does address this point. PT said we should not forget this is still a consultation and not a 'done deal'.	
10.16	BG thanked everyone for their comments, which had provided a very useful	

	holistic view. He then closed the meeting.	
11	<p>Dates of next meetings: PLEASE DIARISE NOW</p> <p>Tuesday 18 June 2019 2pm – 4pm Tba Tuesday 22 October 2019 2pm – 4pm Tba</p> <p>World Heritage Day: Thursday 18 April 2019, Green Park Station</p>	
12	<p>Papers issued with these minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Heritage Enhancement Fund projects update 	