

 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	 City of Bath inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987	<h2>City of Bath World Heritage Site Advisory Board</h2>
<p>Meeting held on 13 October 2020. Online meeting using the Zoom platform</p>		

Minutes

Attendees			
Prof Barry Gilbertson (Chair) BG	Cllr Paul Crossley	PC	Stephen Bird SB
Mark Evans ME	Caroline Kay	CK	Rohan Torkildsen RT
Joy Roberts JR	John Wilkinson	JW	Paul Simons PS
Andrew Grant AG	Tom Boden	TB	Dr Marion Harney MH
Kathryn Davis KaD	Dr Kristin Doern	KD	Prof Astrid Swenson AS
Henry Lowe HL	Cllr Robert Law	RL	Helen Daniels HD
Sarah Simmonds SS	Polly Andrews	PA	Tim Cottrill Tim
Tony Crouch TC			TOTAL 22 attendees
Apologies			
Canon Guy Bridgewater	Polly Robertson		Ainslie Ensom
Allison Herbert	Lisa Bartlett		Prof David Goode
Paula Freeland	Henry Owen-John		Nick Tobin

No	Agenda Item	Act.
1	Chairman's Welcome	
1.1	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Although unable to attend this meeting, He congratulated Board member Henry Owen-John, Head of World Heritage, Historic England, who was awarded an OBE in recognition of Services to Heritage Protection in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None declared.	
3	Adoption of previous minutes (14 Jul 2020)	
3.1	The minutes were accepted as a true record. SB asked if his attendance was properly recorded – TC to check and amend as necessary.	TC
4	Matters arising	
4.1	BG introduced Tim Cottrill. Tim is a Bath Spa University student undertaking a 25-day placement project focussing on the links between transatlantic slavery and Georgian Bath. Tim explained that his research would tell the story of the impacts of slavery through the lives of selected local people. These included a doctor who lived in Alfred Street and who, to supplement his income, had financial shares in a slave ship. He would also touch upon the better-known associations of wealthy families such as the Beckfords and Pulteneys, and describe the lives of black people in Bath at the time. The output from this research will enable the story of this era to be told in a more inclusive manner and it is hoped it will provide material for BG to incorporate into a new talk to deliver to local groups.	
5	Chair's Update	
5.1	BG reported that since the last meeting much time had been devoted to	

	<p>running the Slavery Sub-Group meeting and subsequently arranging Tim Cottrill's placement. The programme of WH talks was largely on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions and lack of face-to-face group meetings. It was clear that Covid-19 would result in long term changes and the next WHS Management Plan needed to reflect this. In 2016 tourism figures for Bath stood at 5.7m visitors per annum, rising to 6.25m in 2018. We have now gone from a position of potential over-tourism to one of concern over low numbers almost overnight. Predictions are that tourism will take 4 years to recover. With this in mind BG asked the Board for their views on two related questions. 1) How can we, the Board, demonstrably support UK tourism to the WHS, and 2) How, with reduced levels of tourism income, do we ensure the continued conservation of the WHS?. These questions were discussed later in the meeting.</p>	
6	World Heritage Manager's Report	
6.1	<p>Great Spas of Europe Mayors Steering Group meetings (x2) were held since the last meeting and were working well on the Zoom platform. UNESCO met in September but failed to agree a way forward with regard to the postponed World Heritage Committee. They will meet again on Thursday 15th October. It appears likely the Great Spas nomination will now be considered in early July 2021.</p>	
6.2	<p>TC has supplied advice on the Planning White Paper to inform the Council's response, plus liaised with WH:UK who held a national webinar on 9 October and who will supply their own response. Consultation closes 29 October 2020. The consultation proposal is here: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future The proposal to overhaul the current system raises many questions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it is 36 years since the UK signed the WH Convention, there is no inclusion of WH in primary legislation. This proposal presents a potential opportunity to address this and properly recognise WH within the planning system. • There is concern that the proposed 3 zoned system (growth, renewal, protection) will not cope with the complexities of Bath. • There is concern that the proposal for centrally allocated housing targets are predicated primarily on demand, not on an ability to deliver. Bath may (once again) be handed housing targets it simply cannot deliver. • There are questions over the proposed abandonment of the 'Duty to Co-operate' without a proposed alternative. The absence of a formal buffer zone for Bath WHS is due in part to the comfort of knowing the Wiltshire are required to work with B&NES. If this is removed, protection of the setting may need to be re-examined. 	
6.3	<p>Public realm. Security measures involving a 'ring of steel' of security rated over-size bollards around the City Centre are being planned as part of national anti-terrorism measures. The current timetable envisages consultation in November 2020 before implementation in November 2021. TC has been working with Highways and Planning Conservation to reduce the potential impact of these. The value of this interaction is demonstrated by the amendment of original proposals to cut through the huge Caithness stone paving slabs just North of the Abbey.</p>	
6.4	<p>The current Bath WHS Management Plan expires in 2022. With regard to replacing this, TC advocated a 'leaner' approach than previously adopted. Information on the history and significance of the Site has not changed and this can be made available on the website, leaving the Action Plan as a smaller document (again most likely electronic) which can be adjusted more easily.</p>	

6.5	Construction of the Bath World Heritage Centre continues. Following the appointment of illustrator Natsko Seki, digital interpretation consultants have also now been appointed. Images for use in the centre have been collected or procured and checked. City trails are being prepared. Early planning for World Heritage Day 2021 (Sunday 18 th April) is focussing on the promotion of new trails (by a variety of partners) as a basis for the (socially distanced) day. The Lottery Funded Youth Ambassadors Project is still on-hold and will most likely need to be re-configured to address social distancing.	
6.6	Nationally, World Heritage UK has reacted to Covid-19 by staging a series of on-line meetings, bringing together all site managers to ensure information flow. These have been well attended/received and allowed attendance from overseas territories including Bermuda and Henderson Island. A second meeting of Steering Group Chairs is being arranged in November.	
6.7	In response to the above, CK commented that Full Council endorsement of the Management Plan was important and should continue. JW said he would, if necessary, look at processes for taking the plan through Council. BG said that any statutory recognition of WH in the planning system might bring the welcome addition of the Advisory Board becoming a consultee in major planning proposals.	
7	World Heritage Enhancement Fund Report	
7.1	BG introduced this item, drawing attention to the update report issued with the agenda. Both the Council and the Bath Preservation Trust had not been able to give their normal contributions to the Fund this year (£20k and £5k respectively) but BG said he very much hoped that this funding would be forthcoming next financial year. In the meantime, projects are on-going using financial reserves. These reserves amounted to £77,250.38, comprising of unallocated funds of £16,860.44, balances currently unspent on approved projects £48,689.94 and funding earmarked for projects yet to be formally approved £11,700.00.	
7.2	CK said that Bath Preservation Trust (BPT) would most likely follow the Council's lead with regard to Enhancement Fund financial contributions in 2021/22, but discussions on this were yet to be held. She noted that BPT provided the management for the Fund and that this contribution in kind had continued.	
8	Presentation: Cleveland Pools	
8.1	Paul Simons, Chair of Trustees, Cleveland Pools Trust gave a presentation on the Cleveland Pools Project (attached with these minutes).	
8.2	The grade II* listed Pools are the oldest surviving open-air public swimming baths in Britain and (through research conducted as part of the Great Spas project) no earlier examples have yet been found in Europe. A brief outline of the history was given, which is currently being written by Linda Watts.	
8.3	The £5.7m construction contract was due to be signed in March 2020 but was delayed due to Covid-19 issues. Costs have since risen and a revised final contract sum should be known in December. An emergency grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) was recently received. It is intended to start on site in March 2021 with an anticipated opening date of July 2022. PS praised the Council, NLHF and all partners for their support and said the Trustees were working hard to mitigate issues still causing some concern with local residents.	
8.4	BG thanked PS for his presentation. HL asked if the Bathwick Act of 1801 (banning naked swimming) was still in force and PS said he believed it was, but noted it only applied to the river.	
9	Update on impact of Covid-19	
9.1	Cllr Paul Crossley (B&NES Council). The significant financial impact of Covid-19 had been addressed by swift budget adjustments. Part of these measures included keeping the Victoria Art Gallery and Assembly Rooms closed, thus	

	allowing re-location of staff to the Roman Baths which was opened with a raft of safety measures in place. Visitor feedback at the Baths had been very good, with visitors enjoying the relaxed atmosphere and appreciating the safety measures introduced. The intention is to open the other sites at the end of March 2021.	
9.2	Stephen Bird (B&NES Heritage Services). Since re-opening the Roman Baths has welcomed 100,000 visitors generating a £2.1m turnover. This was around 30% of the usual capacity. Visitor booking was essential to control numbers and ensure distancing and no group booking were taken. The transfer of staff from other facilities has saved £1/4m. Many visitors came from London (28%), the South-East (18%) and 10% from the North. Only 3% were international. With regard to the Archway Project , building contractors Beard had managed to work through lock-down, with some inevitable delays in obtaining materials. The school lunchroom, (known as the Water Tank as it replaces a former tank on the building roof) is currently under construction. Opening dates were now predicted to be April/May 2021 and further funding bids (Garfield Weston, Claw Duffield and NLHF) are being made.	
9.3	Dr Marion Hamey gave an update for the University of Bath. During the summer break, the campus was re-configured to safely accommodate 18.5k students returning at the end of September. There has been a reduction in post-grad. overseas students returning but not in UK students. A programme of 'blended learning' was introduced with 4hrs in person teaching time per week. Only 20% of students are on campus at any one time with masks compulsory. There are currently 143 Covid cases in first year halls (numbers are posted on the Uni website). The Uni is looking after isolating students. More social activities are taking place on campus this year, with lower numbers of students going into the City. The Ground floor at Carpenter House (opposite Churchill Bridge) is now part of the national, Government-run Covid testing system. The Uni Security team is safely transporting students with symptoms to local test sites both at Carpenter House and other nearby test centres in a Covid-secure vehicle where needed. In addition to this, to ensure response times for testing are as rapid as possible, the University has now invested in purchasing swab test kits for students, to complement local public health arrangements.	
	Mid meeting Break (Kathryn Davis joined the meeting).	
9.4	Dr Kristin Doern gave an update on behalf of Bath Spa University. The situation for the students (around 7k) was similar to that at Uni of Bath, with campus-based universities having a distinct advantage over those integrated into city centres. First year students were glad to be there and were being looked after in-house groups to ensure they were checked on regularly. There were a small number of Covid cases (13) but again none amongst the 1,300 staff. Staff continued to work from home where possible. Anecdotal evidence and reduced bus movements suggested significantly reduced numbers of students going into the City centre. KD observed that the Covid-19 situation was going on much longer than original planning measures had anticipated.	
9.5	Tom Boden (National Trust (NT)). Dyrham and Prior Park Gardens continue to be open with booking essential. During the summer demand was at capacity for bookings but this dropped off into September. An estimated £200m lost income has accrued by the NT so far which has necessitated a major restructure seeking to find £100m of savings. This includes (nationally) 514 compulsory redundancies and 782 voluntary redundancies. In the Bath portfolio this includes the loss of 7 posts to date, with a further 3 or 4 to follow. The Prior Park Dams project has benefitted from a £1.141m grant from the DCMS Heritage Stimulus Project which should ensure successful completion by early Summer 2021. A 'soft' opening of the Dyrham Park house will start this weekend and will include the 'Colonial Dyrham' exhibition. This opening is	

	a trial to test procedures and many challenges remain, notably around bringing volunteers back.	
9.6	Caroline Kay (Bath Preservation Trust (BPT)). A £825k Cultural Recovery Grant (funded by the NLHF/DCMS) has been received. No.1 Royal Crescent opened in August, with pre-booked tickets and a one-way route around the building. Capacity is subsequently significantly reduced and income is at 25% of previous years. A programme of redundancies has already taken place. Visitor demand remains high and feedback is good, with customers feeling safe and having exclusive access, but previous numbers cannot be accommodated. No commitment can be given to remaining open across the winter and BPT will (permanently) move away from the practice of having volunteer room guides delivering interpretation. Private tours of other BPT museums have been successful, including astronomy events in the Herschel Museum garden. Work around scrutinising planning applications continues and BPT has been shortlisted for a Royal Town Planning Institute (SW) award. The Planning White Paper threatens a potential marginalisation of the ability of third parties to engage with applications, which is of concern.	
	(Sarah Simmonds joined the meeting)	
9.7	Joy Roberts (Mayor of Bath's Corp of Honorary Guides). The Guides have been operating since 1934, so it was a break in tradition to have to stop tours on March 16 th . The Guides have all missed it. Insurance demands meant that risk assessments needed to be revised at each change of Govt. advice, causing significant work. The Guide's Committee walked the City risk-assessing routes and have subsequently re-started tours for booked participants in groups no larger than 6 people. 2/3rds of guides have returned for duties. 2 tours are conducted in the morning, 2 in the afternoon. Participants are predominantly from the UK, rather than from worldwide as in 'normal' times. JR thanked Stephen Bird who had been supportive throughout.	
9.8	Kathryn Davis (Visit Bath). Bath hotel occupancy rates in August were around 70% which is above the UK average and better than expected. Internet traffic was also up from 2019 reflecting a growth in domestic demand. Visit Bath has made two successful funding bids and is currently running the 'Rediscover Bath' campaign. The merger with Visit Bristol will provide an opportunity for a regional organisation, but KD gave assurances that the Visit Bath brand will remain. The Covid-19 restrictions (South Wales in particular) are likely to have a detrimental impact on tourist numbers.	
10	Discussion on future tourism.	
10.1	Earlier in the meeting, BG had asked Board members to consider 1) How can we, the Board, demonstrably support UK tourism to the WHS, and 2) How, with reduced levels of tourism income, do we ensure the continued conservation of the WHS?. Discussion on these questions followed.	
10.2	AG highlighted opportunity in the natural landscape setting of Bath, which is an under-appreciated resource in tourism terms. The 20-mile circular route being developed and implemented through the Bathscape project will be a significant new offer for visitors and had indeed helped AG, as a long-time Bath resident, discover new places. A link to the 'Explore Bathscape' short video is here: https://vimeo.com/454710788 Alternatively this link leads to the Explore section of the Bathscape website which starts to introduce more of the places and experiences you can discover. Then scroll down to find the explore Bathscape video: https://www.bathscape.co.uk/explore/	
10.3	HL endorsed AG's comments and said that Bath & Counties Archaeological Society has been working with the Bathscape Project to explore Bath as an archaeological landscape. The Lansdown plateau was of particular importance in this regard. Outdoor spaces are currently very important and this goes for urban areas with street art, sculpture gardens and the like.	
10.4	JR said that the Mayor's Guides, as an outdoor attraction, had won a	

	Tripadvisor award recognising them as being amongst the top 10 most highly rated attractions world-wide. They were seeking to build on this with further promotion via their web-site.	
10.5	AS said that the University could offer expertise in research through student and staff projects, and how to put this on digital display. There were also lessons to be learnt about how previous periods of crisis were dealt with plus the University may have access to funding streams that others do not.	
10.6	PS reported that all 11 Great Spas of Europe partners were experiencing similar Covid-19 issues, although spas on the European mainland had the advantage that overland tourism between countries was still active. 2021 was the European Year of the Railway and an opportunity to promote cultural routes. Bath is a founder member of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association https://ehтта.eu/portal/ and through EHTTA we have access to European Cultural Routes.	
10.7	RL said it was important to remember we are here to preserve Bath as WHS. Historic shopfronts are under threat and the current lull in visitors should be used to address these and items such as street furniture. Small details matter and we should learn from other WHS, such as Bordeaux where the paint colours were controlled.	
10.8	From the Zoom 'Chat Room': RT: The WHS Management Plan is critical to ensuring that the city remains an attractive destination where the OUV is safeguarded. How about reviewing the actions of the Management Plan and seeing how funding has been affected and what we might be able to do about the actions that were to be funded? TB: Agree with Rohan. The Management Plan should be the starting point for the AB to review and this works with the timetable which requires a new plan to be created. (CK, SB, SS also agreed) SS: I would like to suggest some public Zoom lectures/panels with the Great Spas partners. So much easier now we don't have to travel. KD: If anyone wants to share content, we have a great resource in VisitBath.co.uk and socials. Bathscape have been in this (and the film is fab). Also, Instagram takeovers have been successful. Digital content relating to waking and exploration outdoors has boomed and will continue to. SS: Also using the Bath Setting Study to get people visiting things directly related to the OUV outside of the City. Not sure how many of the domestic visitors are returners but some very different themed weekends may encourage them back. CK: The link between the public realm, tourism and retail should not be forgotten. 'Old' retail is dead and we need at pace to encourage the thing that Bath used to have but has priced out, which is small scale almost pop up bespoke independent retail (at affordable rents) alongside regeneration of the former shopping streets into a mixed-economy including lived-in accommodation at street level. SS: Climate change impacts on the WHS could help draw attention to climate change more generally.	
	Stephen Bird and Tom Boden left the meeting.	
11	Forthcoming climate change meeting	
11.1	TC outlined the proposed structure of the forthcoming climate change meeting on Tuesday 17 November with the suggested title Suggested Title: What positive role can World Heritage play in the Climate Change Emergency? He said he had discussed the question to whether to include the Ecological Emergency in the same meeting with Board member Dr David Goode, but David advised against this. His rationale was that the reasons for Climate change were now understood as were many of the actions needed to address it. The reasons for ecological destruction were different and wide ranging; and	

	included for example food production and pesticides.	
11.2	TC proposed a meeting structure of introduction, what the future for Bath WHS will look like, adaptation and mitigation of climate change, and what actions we, as a Board, can take. Any comments on this or who might speak were welcomed.	All
12	Any Other Business	
12.1	None. BG thanked participants and closed the meeting.	
	Date of next meetings:	
	Tues 17 Nov: Special AB Climate Change meeting. 2-4pm Online Zoom	
	Papers issued with these minutes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides from Paul Simons – Cleveland Pools. 	