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City of Bath
Inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1987

City of Bath World Heritage Site Advisory Board



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The Great Spa Towns of Europe
Inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 2021

Online meeting held on 30 November 2021

Minutes

Attendees					
Prof Barry Gilbertson (Chair)	BG	Cllr Dine Romero	DR	Robert Campbell	RC
Laura Dean	LD	Alex Sherman	ASh	Nick Tobin	NT
Joy Roberts	Joy	Andy Gilson	AGil	Rohan Torkildsen	RT
Andrew Grant	AG	Polly Andrews	PA	Paul Simons	PS
Canon Guy Bridgewater	GB	Tom Boden	TB	Sophie Broadfield	SB
Sarah Simmonds	SS	Cllr Robert Law	RL	Prof Astrid Swenson	AS
Paul Jackson	PJ	Henry Lowe	HL	Ainslie Ensom	AE
Paul Saynor	PSa	Helen Daniels	HD	Mark Evans	ME
Paula Freeland	PF	Chris Pound	CP	Tony Crouch	TC
Ruth Malloy	RM	Allison Herbert	AH	TOTAL 29 attendees	
Apologies					
Kathryn Davis		Dr Kristin Doern		Dr Marion Harney	
Prof David Goode					

No	Agenda Item	Act.
1	Welcome	
1.1	The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. This is the first Board meeting since the successful inscription of the Great Spa Towns of Europe and he thanked all those who had worked on the project for over a decade and confirmed that both inscriptions would be run through a single Advisory Board.	
1.2	Attendees are recorded above, but to note that Laura Dean, Visit West, kindly stepped in at the last minute to represent Kathryn Davis who was delayed in a London meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None.	
3	Previous Minutes (11 May 2021)	
3.1	The previous minutes were accepted as a true record.	
3.2	For information, minutes of the very first Bath Steering Group meeting, held in June 2001 had been circulated. TC pointed to these as evidence of the importance and continuity of the Board as an effective roundtable.	
3.3	Reviewing actions of the previous minutes, both BG and TC had written to Henry Owen-John, retiring Head of World Heritage, Historic England, in thanks and appreciation for his work and support.	
3.4	Item 6.1 concerned the opening of the Bath World Heritage Centre. Advisory Board members had an opportunity to visit the Centre and adjoining Clore Learning Centre on Friday 26 November. BG encouraged anyone who was unable to attend this to drop in when doors open.	
3.5	BG gave thanks to Helen Daniels who has spent many hours sourcing and checking copyright on images for the new WH Centre. HD added that planning	

	was underway for World Heritage Day 2022, with a provisional date of Sunday 24 April. (Note: Now provisionally moved to Friday 22 April for an online event).	
3.6	Paula Freeland confirmed that the Locally Listed Heritage SPD had been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and would 'go live' early in the New Year. She was happy to provide an update at a subsequent meeting.	PF
4	Changes in Board Membership	
4.1	Several new members have joined the Board. BG invited introductions.	
4.2	Sophie Broadfield is the Director of Sustainable Communities, B&NES Council. She has a wide remit of place-shaping functions including economy, planning, transport, climate change and heritage.	
4.3	Robert Campbell is B&NES new Head of Heritage Services, replacing Stephen Bird. He reports to Sophie and has World Heritage within his portfolio.	
4.4	Alex Sherman is the Chief Executive of Bath Preservation Trust, succeeding Caroline Kay. Alex took up the role in October.	
4.5	Andy Gilson is the new Chair of the Mayors Guides, taking up the role in November and succeeding Joy Roberts. Joy joined the meeting as a handover and was thanked for her significant contribution.	
4.6	BG proposed a vote of thanks to Stephen Bird, who has recently retired after 41 years with Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Heritage Services.	
5	Chairman's Update	
5.1	Continuing Covid-19 restrictions on physical meetings meant that only one new public talk had been delivered since the last meeting, with the total now being 54 talks reaching 2,253 people. Demand however remained strong.	
5.2	BG had organised a talk on the Great Spas of Europe at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute (BRLSI). PS and TC had spoken alongside BG and feedback was good. It was delivered as a hybrid event, with members able to join in person or on-line.	
5.3	3 World Heritage Enhancement Fund (WHEF) meetings have been held. The Jewish Burial Ground at Combe Down was upheld as an excellent community project interpreting a little-known aspect of Bath heritage and worth visiting. Former Bath Mayor/Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones is voluntarily undertaking 'quinquennial' reviews of implemented projects to assess how they have performed and to identify any actions required. These include the Norfolk Crescent Watchman's Box, which was the first project of the WHSEF in 2011. Around 19 restored milestones and markers are also being revisited.	
5.4	Mentoring work for heritage colleagues has been undertaken and BG celebrated a recent birthday by walking the entire length (84 miles) of Hadrian's Wall WHS. Informal discussions around a potential new Bath Rugby stadium continue, although no formal application is currently lodged. BG has been working with Fairfield House, former home of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie to explore opportunities to involve UNESCO and our WHS inscription details.	
5.5	BG chaired the 3 rd annual meeting of UK Steering Group/Advisory Board Chairs on 24 November. This group contains some influential people and has the potential to raise the profile of World Heritage.	
6	World Heritage Manager's update	
6.1	TC highlighted the main points of his report, which had been circulated with advance papers.	
6.2	The highlight is undoubtedly the inscription of the Great Spa Towns of Europe (GSTE) at the UNESCO World Heritage (on-line) Committee on 24 July. TC mentioned that the global significance of the achievement was very apparent whilst watching the on-line committee discuss various exotic sites, followed by consideration of Bath and Cllr Malloy's message of thanks to a worldwide audience. The criteria were adjusted by the committee, which also officially sanctioned the name change to Great Spa TOWNS of Europe and requested a	

	'State of Conservation' report to be submitted in 2022 picking up further work (see 9.1). Bath will be asked to sign up to a new company underpinning the GSTE and allowing it to be an employer and to register and protect its brand. This is likely to require a cabinet decision in Spring 2022. The first of three planning workshops involving all spa towns has also been completed.	
6.3	Bath World Heritage Centre is nearing completion. (see 12.1). Over 50 volunteers have been recruited and training is underway. Tim Cotterill's student placement work on Transatlantic Slavery is being prepared as a potential temporary community exhibition at the Centre. Tim has kindly undertaken training talks for the volunteers.	
6.4	The annual World Heritage UK conference in September concentrated on Climate Change, ahead of the COP meeting. It provided useful thinking and material to incorporate into our management plan revision and that of many other sites. Also to note is that the Welsh Slate Mining Landscape was inscribed at the UNESCO WH Committee in July. This, plus the sad de-listing of Liverpool, means the number of UK sites now stands at 33.	
6.5	BG invited questions plus took the opportunity to place on record thanks to Tim Cottrill for his continued support.	
6.6	Cllr Romero said that she is the chair of the Council's Race Panel and this panel would be happy to look at the content of the proposed Transatlantic Slavery exhibition material for the World Heritage Centre.	TC/ HD
6.7	Joy Roberts asked if there were any plans to add to the World Heritage symbol in Stall Street following the Great Spas inscription. TC replied that this was still under consideration with no firm plans, but possibilities included adding a second railing plaque(s) to match the first and potentially inscribing the bronze floor roundel with lettering (although Chris Pound felt this may compromise the purity of design of the roundel).	
7	World Heritage Enhancement Fund	
7.1	Ainslie Ensom highlighted areas from her report (circulated with the agenda).	
7.2	Elim Chapel repairs to one feature window have been funded. As often with the Fund, one element (window) has been funded encouraging further funding from other sources to follow. This work also increases energy efficiency in the building and makes it more suitable for community use.	
7.3	The restoration of the Wood family tombs project at Swainswick Church is proceeding slowly, due in part to on-going discussion over removal of pews.	
7.4	Repair and restoration of street lighting at Sydney Buildings has included fragile oil, gas and electric lighting, resulting in lighting representative of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries now restored and visible in this one street.	
7.5	Four further street name signs have been restored this year and in 2022 attention will move to the historic parish boundary markers.	
8	Commemorative Plaque Scheme	
8.1	BG introduced this topic saying all will be aware of the historic bronze mural tablets in Bath, originally instigated by Alderman Thomas Sturge-Cottrell in the late nineteenth century. (The London scheme started circa 1840). The initial Bath list of those commemorated was 44 names, which had grown to 141 by the time a pamphlet and map was published in 1939. The scheme is long since dormant, but demand continues so work has been undertaken on re-launching it. The proposal is to use similar bronze wall-mounted tablets, which would be supplemented with mobile 'phone technology giving further information.	
8.2	A working group has been established which includes BG, TC, TB, Betty Suchar (of Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute), Joanna Robinson, Alex Sherman and Alex Best of Bath Preservation Trust and independent researcher Melanie Harper. The group has looked at the London Blue Plaque Scheme & the Leeds Civic Trust initiative to inform a governance model, which must be fair and transparent. Heightened current awareness around matters of	

	social injustice will inevitably lead to interest in how any scheme is run and the process of assessing nominations should be democratised. A nominations panel including both members of public and experts is favoured, with a governance group that reports directly to Advisory Board. Draft criteria for a Bath scheme have been drawn up.	
8.3	The proposed scheme vision is that 'Bath will Continue to be recognised as a city that values, respects and promotes its heritage of famous residents, extending Sturge-Cotterill's legacy in today's world for the benefit of future generations of residents and visitor alike'. The four aims are 1) To commemorate individuals of local or national significance as well as important events, 2) To draw upon, highlight and promote the association between historical people and places in our city. 3) To create an accessible link between residents and visitors with the past to educate and inspire. 4) To reveal the significance of Baths diverse built environment and to enhance local areas and communities.	
8.4	Requests submitted by the public during the time the scheme was dormant have been logged and a list therefore exists. One example for consideration is Caroline Herschel, sister of William Herschel the astronomer. Caroline was a noted scientist in her own right and recognising her alongside the existing plaque to her brother (the first plaque in the historic Bath scheme) would redress the current imbalance. It is envisaged that 2/3 plaques per year would be erected, but initially more to capitalise on enthusiasm and interest. It is envisaged that the first plaque will be erected in 2022.	
8.5	BG suggested that a bespoke Board meeting in the Spring should be devoted to this subject, informed by papers fully outlining the proposals. He then opened the subject for questions.	TC/ BG
8.6	NT asked if the Board might see the criteria and if it was the intention for the Board to approve it. BG replied that the criteria can be circulated and he would like the Board to approve it.	
8.7	DR asked about the scheme Governance. BG said he envisaged that someone at senior level in the Council should serve on the governance group or nomination panel. DR asked if, as Chair of the Race Panel, she was ruled out of being included on these bodies. BG said he thought not and that DR would have significant relevant knowledge to contribute. DR expressed an interest in this but would leave it to the Chair to decide.	BG/ DR
8.8	PF asked about the physical appearance of the plaques with BG describing the bronze tablets which allow one line of text in addition to name and dates. PF said it was possible that a Listed Building Consent Order might be suitable, effectively giving blanket consent over a specified area. PF offered to investigate this suggestion.	PF
8.9	GB asked if consideration had been given to the scenario where future generations may wish to take down controversial plaques. BG said he would ask the Governance Group to consider this in the terms of reference.	BG
8.10	AS applauded making future recommendations more diverse, but also asked about existing plaques. Would they be reviewed? There is currently little public acknowledgement of the darker aspects of history. BG said that both Leeds Civic Society and English Heritage had been considering this same issue.	
8.11	TB said that Leeds had reviewed their existing scheme and issued a report on this topic which he is happy to circulate. Based on other schemes, the decision-making body should be free from political influence and working to a clear set of criteria. A two-stage process with the nomination panel being separate to the decision-making body is desirable. In the Chat Room TB added the following link to the London scheme: https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/	
	Mid-meeting break	

9	Great Spas Towns of Europe	
9.1	Paul Simons reported on the recent inscription, saying that only 22 other sites worldwide shared a similar double inscription to Bath. The UNESCO Committee decision included a request for a State of Conservation Report to be made to the July 2022 Committee outlining progress on 15 key actions (one of which is the progression of the Bath Management Plan).	
9.2	The Great Spas are currently run by an un-constituted partnership of the 11 towns. The intention is to form a new not-for-profit organisation to which all partners will be asked to sign up. A report to B&NES Cabinet on this subject is expected in Spring 2022.	
9.3	Project governance will move from the current Mayors Steering Group (of all 11 Mayors or their representatives) to a Great Spas Management Board. This will include all 11 'mayors' and meet 2x a year (reduced from the current 4 meetings). An Executive Board will be created, steering an annual action plan. This Board will comprise of 4 Mayors, one being the Chair (currently Baden-Baden), one Vice-Chair (currently Karlovy Vary), the Financial Controller (currently Baden Bei Wien) and one other. It will meet 4x a year or more if required, probably virtually. The Secretary General will be co-opted to the Board. Site Managers Group will continue as existing, meeting as required.	
9.4	There is currently some confusion over the roll-out of new UNESCO logos. These had been issued then 'recalled'. The Great Spas project is discussing how to produce logos within the UNESCO guidelines using the different languages of partners but staying as uniform to each other as possible.	
9.5	The UNESCO Periodic Reporting exercise, undertaken every 6 years, will next be staged in Summer 2022. Presumably Bath will be required to respond twice.	
10	Management Plan renewal	
10.1	Project planning for the replacement Bath WHS Management Plan has started. This will involve bringing the two inscriptions together under a single plan and TC said he was not aware of another site where this had been done. Specialist advisor Chris Pound is already working on the factual material and it is intended that a sub-group will be established to steer this work forward. No formal timetable has yet been produced but the target is to have the work, including full public consultation, completed by the end of 2022.	
11	Cleveland Bridge	
11.1	TC reported that B&NES Cabinet had resolved in September 2021 to continue to push for permanent restrictions for HGV's and to work with the sub-regional transport board to officially divert such vehicles along alternate routes. Supporting studies are needed as part of this work and the Board has been asked to indicate their support, which can be included in a letter signed by the Chair. TC noted that Action 7 of the 2016-2022 WHS Management Plan is to 'Engage with central government and neighbouring authorities as necessary to reduce the impact of major road traffic routes passing through the WHS' and therefore was entirely consistent with this. The Board supported this proposal.	TC
12	Updates on Lottery projects	
12.1	RC - Bath World Heritage Centre and Clore Learning Centre . The extension to the subterranean areas of the Roman Baths opened on Friday 22 October. It is a Roman exercise yard, badged as the 'Roman Gym' and interpreted with film projections and details of exercises. The area contains remains of an ancient sauna (<i>laconicum</i>) and one of the best-preserved doorways from Roman Britain. The increased floor space helps extend dwell time in the museum plus aids with capacity issues. Final fit out work is underway on the World Heritage Centre, which will be ready for public use in early December. The Centre will offer a mobile phone app and paper trails, designed to help and encourage people to explore the wider World Heritage Site. Essential roadworks outside the Centre (previously delayed so traders could find their	

	feet after lockdown) will now take place early from January - March 2022. Public access to the Centre during this period will not be possible, so it will be formally launched in Easter 2022. The Clore Learning Centre is also undergoing final works. Community learning activities already underway (but not yet in the centre) include a maquette making for stonemasonry and an art course based around the Roman Baths collection. The Learning Centre is accessed from Swallow Street and as such can operate during road works. RC thanked all who have supported the project across the years.	
12.2	PA - Bath Abbey Footprint Project. The project is now 95% finished with snagging underway. Abbey visitor levels are back at 75% of pre-pandemic numbers and Luke Jerram's 'Museum of the Moon' exhibition continues until 24 th December. The vaults area and song school are open, with the Discovery Space delayed for opening until September 2022. Regarding learning resources, 900 families have engaged since October half-term. The acoustics and seating are now ideal for conferences.	
12.3	AS – Beckfords Tower. Currently in the Development Stage, with the main bid (£3.4m requested from NLHF) due to be submitted in May. The works to the Tower are urgent and will halt water ingress and should remove it from the 'At Risk' register. Some bid aspirations have changed, especially with regard to the garden and grotto. The Tower will be open from Easter next year and the Trust is directly addressing difficult narratives with regards to Beckford.	
12.4	TB – Prior Park and Assembly Rooms. Prior Park Dams work should be complete in Spring, barring very wet weather. Much work is already complete, although the cascade is still to be clad in stone. At the Assembly Rooms, Connolly Wellingham Architects (Bristol) have been appointed in advance of the March 2023 transfer from B&NES Council to the NT. BG said that we hope to have a Board visit to Prior Park in the Spring if conditions allow.	
12.5	AG – Bathscape. There are 25 individual projects involved, all of which are underway with the latest being Views and Vistas. A PhD researcher is working on an evidence base for this particular project and a workshop was held on 1 November. https://www.bathscape.co.uk/event/bathscape-views-vistas-workshop-2/ Work is underway to ensure the project has a strong legacy, which should be assured through events such as the Walking Festival, which attracted 1,300 people last year with 60 walks and 52 volunteers. Ash die-back remains a concern and is being studied by the Woodland Advisory Service. The NLHF are regarding Bathscape as a Landscape Partnership best practice example.	
12.6	TC (on behalf of Parks and Greenspaces Team Manager Keith Rowe) – Sydney Gardens. Delivery Phase started in January 2019 with tenders coming in at £1m over the £3m budget, so a considerable amount of value engineering has been necessary. Capital works were largely able to carry on through lockdown but the activity programme has only been partly delivered. Two seasons of activity (2020 & 2021) have been disrupted with many items cancelled/postponed and post lockdown participant numbers were reduced as some audiences were reticent to attend group activities. Activities have gone online where possible, providing only a partial solution as the unavailability of partner organisations who had either closed or furloughed staff added to difficulties. Outdoor CoVid activities were re-designed including trial Volunteer Gardening Sessions and horticultural training plus exercise sessions for the Julian House clients and a creative workshop for families. Delays were also caused by contaminated ground and the discovery of a Roman Sarcophagus and associated remains. Due to the delays in the Activity Programme the Lottery have granted a project extension until the end of 2022. There will be a pause in the capital works at the end of December (2021) whilst the budget is reviewed and final works prioritised, with works carried out in April/May 2022.	
12.7	PS – Cleveland Pools. Works progress and all of the concrete has now been	

	<p>poured. Project costs stand at £8.3m, with £525k fundraising still required. PS said he was grateful to Historic England and B&NES for an increase in their grant funding. Sadly, the preferred operator has fallen through so the search is underway for a new operator. Dr Linda Watts is currently writing a history book. The volunteer programme recently won first place in the prestigious national Marsh Volunteer Awards scheme. The Pools are due to open to the public in Summer 2022</p>	
12.8	BG closed the meeting and thanked all attendees and participants.	
13	Date of 2022 meetings: PLEASE DIARISE NOW	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 1 February 2pm – 4pm • (Commemorative Plaques meeting – TBA) • Tuesday 17 May 2pm-4pm • Tuesday 27 September 2pm-4pm 	
12	<p>Papers attached with these minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Heritage Enhancement Fund update • World Heritage Manager’s Report 	