

**HADRIAN'S WALL HERITAGE LIMITED**

**MEETING OF THE BOARD: TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2007**

**REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. Staffing and Resources**

- 1.1 The restructure has now taken place and all staff affected have been informed. All posts have been realigned to work with the HWHL strategic vision. Two posts are at risk of redundancy.
- 1.2 Bryan Scott has been appointed as the new Sustainable Access officer and starts on 5 November 2007.
- 1.3 Many of the HWHL team attended an Assertiveness Training course in September.
- 1.4 New computers will be installed in November 2007.

**2. Funding**

- 2.1 Applications for Rural Development Funding for the NE and Cumbria have been made requesting a total of £4.9m over three years to cover areas of development around Visitor Orientation and Information, Building a Business network 'Know Your Hadrian's Wall Country', Improving Accommodation Quality and facilities, Sustainable transport and Access, Developing the Hadrian's Wall Locally Produced scheme, Events and Festivals Development, Marketing Hadrian's Wall Country, Community Engagement and Tourism Skills Routeway.
- 2.2 Applications also made to Cumbria Vision, West Lakes Renaissance, HLF re capital and other developments.

**3. Events and Meetings**

- 3.1 The series of autumn road shows across Cumbria and the NE have been very time intensive for all staff and also very successful. New contacts have been made, many ideas volunteered for improving the visitor experience across the Corridor. Each road show covered progress HWHL has made, listened to participants questions and offered an expert's talk on marketing, using local foods, business advice etc. There was an overriding sense of positive interest and shared endeavour in our strategy; dissonant voices were few, but where this did happen, individual meetings will be held to get to the bottom of people's issues. Evaluation and de-briefing will now take place and suggestions for next steps made.

- 3.2 Culture 10 in the NE has determined to make Hadrian's Wall its key focus for 2009. An outline plan has been determined. HWHL will appoint a project manager to take the initiative forward; Culture 10 will guide developments appropriately to meet their objectives. Three main areas of activity have been outlined:
- 3.2.1 A celebratory festival around the opening of the Great North Museum in January 2009. This will be followed by a five month 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' exhibition which will move to Tullie House later in the year and subsequently tour the USA offering a fantastic marketing opportunity for Hadrian's Wall.
  - 3.2.2 A programme of re-enactment, re-garrisoning and event development for the Wall will be put together for late spring 2009. These events will take place at many sites and along the Wall itself – a more spectacular set of events than has happened previously.
  - 3.2.3 The Pilgrimage and Limes Congress, both in August 2009, will be marked by an appropriate event.
  - 3.2.4 The Winter Lighting Festival of 2009 will take place entirely on the Wall over a period of weeks/months with contemporary and innovative lighting culminating in a spectacular 'lighting of the Wall' sufficiently of note to attract national and international focus. Visual, musical and theatrical work will be programmed and commissioned to support this autumn festival.
- 3.3 Meeting held with Catriona Mulligan, NNPA, and Andrew Poad of the NT to discuss the ongoing differences of opinion over trail maintenance. A further meeting will take place on 9 November 2007 to discuss the proposed conference which will bring various kinds of expertise together to look at best practice in archaeological site trail maintenance. All parties have agreed this would be a good learning opportunity for all to appreciate each other's expertise and points of view. HWHL has the opportunity to develop a 'best practice' model of use to many trail funders and managers.
- 3.4 Natural England held a strategy day inviting comments on their future activity plans. This highlighted many areas of possible co-operation and was beneficial for the HWHL staff who attended. Possible joint activities could include higher level stewardship take-up by farmers along the Corridor, healthy walking/cycling promotion, tourism/access to the environment rural development opportunities and flora and fauna based tourism would be options.
- 3.5 Detailed examination has taken place of the potential for co-funding and supporting the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' exhibition with Tyne and Wear Museums and Tullie House, and its extensive marketing potential.

- 3.6 Plans are being made for HWHL participation in the Newcastle University Centre for the Rural Economy event at Beamish on 20 November 2007. There is an opportunity to involve our partner businesses to balance public sector involvement in seminars with a focus on local food and supply chains, and business networks.
- 3.7 An excellent planning meeting took place with Tullie House and the Carlisle cultural dept on potential joint activity over 2008 and 2009, particularly in relation to the focus on 2009 and extending the cultural programme to cover Cumbria and the western Wall. Commissioning city based interpretation for the trail, the forthcoming Hadrian's Head exhibition, community engagement through the arts and the 2009 'Frontiers..' exhibition were discussed. We are working very closely with The British Museum, Tullie House and Segedunum in order to maximise the visitor marketing opportunities around the forthcoming Hadrian touring exhibition in the corridor and the blockbuster BM exhibition in the summer of 2008. The British Museum has been very co-operative and we are confident we can leverage additional coverage for Hadrian's Wall Country through BM channels. HWHL is highly involved in the Carlisle Renaissance Plans and as a result, Hadrians Wall is now being included in the Carlisle Historic Quarter.
- 3.8 World Travel Awards – an excellent conference was held at the Sage Gateshead for NE region CEOs with speakers at the forefront of new media, green tourism, travel market trends etc. Two dinners with European-wide participants were also attended at the Alnwick Garden and the actual award ceremony itself at the Gosforth Park Marriott. Seaham Hall was the European Spa winner.
- 3.9 A meeting was held with David Ronn, NT Northern Region Director. Good discussion about our plans, joint co-operation and future working. Discussed trail management issues, opportunities for working with Bellester Castle and the Estate. David offered NT properties for our Board meetings. Progress on Housesteads dominated the conversation. David is happy suitable plans for site sharing are being progressed by EH and NT.
- 3.10 Thanks to James Arkless and Peter Judge for advice and views on the purchase of **Camp Farm**. See separate paper which outlines the options for doing this in a way that is legally appropriate. The Messengers are now anxious to sell before March 2008 as changes in Capital Gains tax will be detrimental to them after this date. We will now progress the purchase subject to Board approval and positive feasibility prospects. Roman Maryport continues to develop, and we are currently preparing a bid for £100k to West Lakes Renaissance to ensure the feasibility provides the right level of information. Meetings have taken place with Roman Maryport regarding advising on access plans and Steering Group, Research Framework Steering Group and Project Management meetings have all been attended.

- 3.11 All local authorities have now been approached to partner in our activity with funds. Very positive responses about next year if not this. Excellent follow up meetings with North Tyneside Council (re ambitions for Wallsend) and Cumbria CC on joint working and pinpointing cultural funding. See separate papers on Communications strategy.
- 3.12 Cumbria Vision meeting re actioning plans in first week of November. Excellent meeting with new Chair Ron Liddle (an HW lover..) and Chief Executive Richard Greenwood. Positive support offered to move our plans forward.
- 3.13 LT helped launch the 'Carlisle Unearthed' exhibition at Tullie House – a lovely example of less sometimes being more.
- 3.14 NWRDA AGM Manchester Central Conference Centre. Great presentations on developments in the NW. Good to have this overview on priorities for Cumbria and the NW. Very interesting exhibition by partners. It was a good networking opportunity and there was an opportunity to meet several Allerdale/Cumbria officers and councillors – all interested in HW.
- 3.15 Cross project teams have been developed to move the rural development and website projects forward.
- 3.16 Solway AONB is commissioning a variety of projects, and HWHL is partnering/leading/ advising where appropriate including the new cycleway along the B5300, and the signage strategy for the Solway Coast.
- 3.17 Work continues with Whitehaven Development Company and Harbour Commissioners on the development of new town trails, which will now include a trail to Maryport and Ravenglass.
- 3.18 Romans in Ravenglass is working very effectively and we have worked very successfully on "Steam and Romans" and the acquisition of free exhibition space at Dalegarth to promote Hadrians Wall Country.

#### **4. World Heritage Site Management Plan**

- 4.1 The current position is as follows:
- Part 1 Introduction: Role of MP – complete.
  - Part 2 Description of WHS – complete.
  - Part 3 Interests in the WHS – complete.
  - Part 4 Statement of Significance – awaiting Chris Young.
  - Part 5 Review of 2002 Plan – awaiting EH response.
  - Part 6 Management Issues:
    - Identify – complete;

- Protection – complete;
- Conservation – in progress; and
- Presenting; Transmitting – internal HWHL meeting to discuss contents held. Text writing in November/December 2007.

4.2 The following interest group meetings are arranged:

- Planning & Protection 30 October 2007;
- Conservation 29 November 2007;
- Access 28 January 2008;
- Tourism 30 January 2008.

## **5. National Trail and Sustainable Access**

5.1 The Walkover condition survey has started on the National Trail with 10 dates planned throughout October and November 2007.

5.2 Several projects are in progress regarding scheduled monument consents.

5.3 Funding request for Trail project FY08/09 is with Natural England for approximately £400k.

5.4 Between January and June 2007 there were an estimated 107,000 visitors to the Trail hotspots. The average for this period since the Trail opened was previously approx 80,000. The number of end to end walkers has decreased compared with previous years. The People Counter data for July to September 2007 is awaited. 140 completed surveys have been collected for the National Trails 2007 survey; this exercise was carried out by the Trail Volunteers.

5.5 Web hits to [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall) - Average monthly web hits for 2007 is currently 33,000 (based on Jan-Sep 2007 data). 2006 average was 18,000. Hadrian's Wall Path Walking Pack is now available to order via a downloadable form from the national trail website (cheque payments only). Only a few sales so far.

5.6 The Hadrian's Wall bus service is due to finish at the end of October 2007 and planning is starting for next year's operation.

## **6. Heritage and Learning**

6.1 HWHL has been contributing to the Limes conference planning with visits to focus on the hinterland of the Wall and opportunities to raise the profile of hinterland sites. A symposium was held in Utrecht in October 2007 to discuss balancing tourism, heritage and communities.

6.2 The Education Forum is developing a Wall-wide education strategy to input to WHS Management Plan.

- 6.3 Contributions have taken place to ONE Heritage research project in development of the Heritage product in the NE. HWHL has attended Tynedale LSP to discuss community strategy and heritage and discussions have also taken place regarding the outreach projects with NE Museums hub.
- 6.4 A Volunteer Social event was held on Friday September 28 2007 and included a guided walk around Holmhead Guesthouse, Thirlwall Castle and a Roman food tasting. A meeting was held at Greenhead hotel, followed by lunch.
- 6.5 Work continues on the Feasibility study on Volunteer-led Guided Walks/Tours. Volunteer Questionnaires have been distributed and collected and included questions on assessing volunteer satisfaction and ideas for future involvement.

## **7. PR and Marketing**

- 7.1 The *Plan Your Invasion* summer marketing campaign came to an end at the end of September. Over 1 million hits to the website were received, and over 50,000 unique visitors in the first three months alone. More than 2.1 million people were exposed to messages about Hadrian's Wall Country through above the line national press advertising and inserts. The Flash animation from the Plan Your Invasion site has now been added to the home page of [www.hadrians-wall.org](http://www.hadrians-wall.org) as an option for viewers to see. The autumn campaign, pushing circular walks, has kicked off with a feature on Hadrian's Wall in the Enjoy England autumn e-newsletter sent out to over 500,000 contacts, with consumers being directed to [www.hadrians-wall.org](http://www.hadrians-wall.org) where the Walking Guide can be ordered or downloaded. The spring campaign will involve a direct mail piece sent out to 100,000 contacts interested in walking and the outdoors. Meetings have been held with English Heritage and The Alwick Garden to discuss closer working and joint marketing initiatives.
- 7.2 We have continued to receive strong consumer-based PR coverage, including most recently an extensive feature on Hadrian's Wall Country in VisitBritain's In Britain magazine aimed primarily at the North American market. Travel and freelance journalists interested in walking have been targeted with a special backpack, embroidered with the Hadrian's Wall Country logo, containing our new Walking Guide and other essential publications for walking circular routes and the National Trail. The aim is to generate interest from at least 3 national journalists to obtain coverage in the national press by the spring. Press releases for half-term activities have been sent out. We are working closely with Culture 10 to generate consumer awareness of the Stone winter lighting event at Walltown Quarry, in order to maximise post-event coverage. We are attending the VisitBritain PR networking day in Liverpool on 31 October 2007, which provides the opportunity to meet with overseas press officers.

- 7.3 Following the road shows the aim is to send out an e-update shortly after the publication of the Annual Review, highlighting some feedback from the road shows, our plans for follow-up, and the Annual Review itself which will be available as a PDF on the website. The Review will be published at the AGM and the corporate DVD is being updated as well. The second edition of the World Heritage Site newsletter, Frontier, has been published and has been mailed out to subscribers, and the e-zine sent out to our corporate database.
- 7.4 An agency has been appointed to deliver our core consumer-facing print for 2008, consisting of an inspirational map-guide to Hadrian's Wall country and a companion practical information Mini Guide containing accommodation, food and drink listings. It is expected that the Mini Guide will generate substantial advertising revenue from SMEs along the corridor, all of whom have expressed interest in advertising in our publications. Discussions are under way with Tynedale Council regarding the refitting of the TICs at Hexham and Haltwhistle in order to reflect the Hadrian's Wall Country message more effectively, and to convert visitor interest into a visit to one or more of the Wall sites.
- 7.5 Plans to re-brand the Tyne Valley Railway as the Hadrian's Wall Country Line are well advanced, and a Line Guide will also be produced highlighting six Roman sites along the Wall with special offers. This has afforded the opportunity to streamline and modernise the existing Hadrian's Wall Country branding, and to create an integrated family of consumer brands incorporating the bus, railway, walking, cycling and locally produced initiatives. We are also working on a 'train wrap', branding an entire train with Hadrian's Wall imagery, and this train will operate in the general North of England area providing above the line marketing for Hadrian's Wall Country. The launch of the Hadrian's Wall Country Line will provide corporate PR opportunities for HWHL and Northern Rail.

## **8. Business support**

- 8.1 Discussions have taken place with Northumberland COVE and Newcastle City Council regarding piloting tourism training opportunities. Costs are currently awaited to take this forward. Work continues on highlighting Cumbria and ONE training opportunities for HWHL.
- 8.2 Partnership working has commenced with Business Link NE and new Tourism Skills Advisors and a referral system is to be progressed. The Business Support Officer will attend the next Business Link Tourism Skills Advisors meeting.

8.3 Work is underway in conjunction with ONE/Cumbria Tourism re training options on Green Tourism, All are Welcome, ICT Awareness, Quality Awareness and VAQAS.

8.4 Partnership working with Tynedale Enterprise Project is ongoing, which will give businesses coaching and mentoring opportunities.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 It is recommended that:

- i) the Board note the contents of this report; and
- ii) this report may be published.

### **Chief Executive**

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