

World Heritage Site Advisory Board (WHSAB)

26 September 2024

Informal notes of meeting for FOBRA members

These notes are intended for FoBRA members and are not a substitute for the full minutes which will be published in due course on the WHS site. The WHSAB covers both the world heritage inscriptions for the City of Bath and for Bath as one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe.

- This was the first meeting to be chaired by Professor Marion Harney. She noted a formal thanks to Barry Gilbertson for his substantial contribution as the previous Chair.
- The updated terms of reference for the Advisory Board and the supporting Strategic Management Group were approved.
- Alex Sherman of Bath Preservation Trust provided an update on the **WHS Enhancement Fund**. He noted that the funding basis has changed previously it comprised £5k from the WHSAB and £20k from BANES. The BANES element has been replaced by a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bid which has been successful with £60k allocated over three years. Projects will need to follow the CIL criteria and this will focus on the public realm and may limit some of the communication and educational projects previously funded. It was noted the funding has been at the same level for many years so in real terms has been falling rapidly.
- At the request of FoBRA members we raised at this point concern about deterioration of **heritage assets and the public realm** particularly in respect to weed-induced damage to railings and street furniture. Especially in the area outside of the core Bath centre. We emphasised that as a register of these assets and their ownership does not exist how can maintenance be planned and controlled. Councillor Matt McCabe noted that BANES has been working on a new process to record local heritage assets which will allow for recording of street assets. It should be ready for launch “soonish”. [Note after the meeting Matt approached me to sound out whether this could be a community supported activity and I thought a many of our RA members would be willing to support an initiative like this).
- The main item for the meeting was the consideration of the latest draft of the **WHS Management Plan**. This version has been updated after a comprehensive workshop and separate sessions by the Strategic Management Group. All agreed this was a very good draft which addresses the key concerns and priorities. This is a near final draft which will be submitted to the council in November for approval to be released for a full 8-week public consultation in December & January. The aim is for it to be adopted in Feb/March, which whilst, tight fits the target timeline set by UNESCO.
- Yesterday the new **Architect in Residence** for the City was formally announced. He is **Bob Allies** (a distinguished architect and partner of the firm Allies and Morrison). His post is fully funded by Bath University for a period of three years, and it is anticipated that Bob will be working on two days a week commitment.
- There were **updates** from the Great Spa Towns, Mayor’s guides (Duncan Barley is their new Chair), Bathscape on projects to end 2026 (current funding period) and initial thoughts on how work can continue after this and from Bath Preservation Trust. It is BPT’s 90th year. On the 10th October Adam Fergusson of Sack of Bath fame will be

made a Freeman of the City in recognition of his role in the debate about greater protection of our heritage buildings. On the 23/24 October BPT are holding a two-day conference on Sustainable Development in a World Heritage City. Tickets will sooner be available at £175 for some local organisations/ people.

Report for FoBRA by Caroline Greenwood and Jeremy Boss