

World Heritage Site Advisory Board (WHSAB)

15 April 2026

Informal notes for FoBRA

Note: these are the not formal minutes of the meeting but are intended to give FoBRA members an insight to the main items discussed, including any points of relevance to residents.

Items discussed were:

1. Local Listed Buildings Consent Order (Alex Best, Conservation Officer BANES)

To encourage update of sustainable improvements for listed buildings, Alex updated the Board with progress on introducing a listed building consent order which would allow Solar Panels within the Bath Conservation Area removing the need for listed building consent in the following main circumstances:

- All listed buildings except religious buildings
- Must be roof mounted within the inner face of an M shaped roof (only)
- Must submit details of the type of solar panels before work starts which must meet certain criteria both on visibility and low impact on the building fabric, including the ability to make good once no longer needed
- Evidence based assessment underway (with Historic England) followed by Public Consultation likely to be in November 2026
- Once in place, listed building consent is not required for individual; properties and aiming that documents required to support the implementation should be capable of production by the owner along with technical documents from the solar panel provider

The Board were supportive of this as a helpful initiative to support sustainable listed buildings for the future.

2. Update The Bath Riverline Project (Gemma Amana, Riverline Project, B&NES)

Gemma updated the Board on the works and plans for Phase 1 of the Riverline project from Newbridge to Churchill Bridge. Works already been completed at Norfolk, Crescent, Greenpark and plans for by Windsor Bridge. Also, on the wayfinding and interpretation signs (21 in all) that have been delivered and installed between Pultney Bridge and Newbridge.

The separate funding for Phase 1 is nearly complete and the current project staff will be leaving. Phase 2 (Churchill Bridge to Batheaston) will need future funding to be identified.

On going maintenance will be important and some allowance has been made in BANES regeneration team budget but support from volunteers including "We Are Avon" will be important.

3. Bathscape update (Andrew Grant, Bathscape)

May is the formal end date for this lottery funded project which has been running for 5 years. The project recognises the importance of landscape as part of the WHS.

25 projects have been delivered with grant, additional funding and volunteer time (£2.2m).

A project evaluation is currently being prepared. Important successes have included the engagement of many volunteers, successful walking festivals and a fully developed website with resources and information. But most importantly is the increased understanding of Bath as a “Landscape City”. Interestingly Bath was recently voted the No 1 City in the World for greenspace and nature in the recent Timeout Worldwide survey of residents across the world.

<https://www.timeout.com/travel/best-cities-for-green-space-2026>

Whilst Bathscape project is formally closing the intention is to maintain the Bathscape Partnership in some form to continue with this focus.

4. Local Plan Update (Steve George, BANES)

Following the consultation over the winter, with over 7000 comments, the plan is now being updated to reflect these comments. The government are still looking for an extra 27000 new homes across BANES.

The target is to aim for Cabinet approval in June, followed by the formal public consultation on the selected options between 26 June and 7 August 2026.

5. National Trust update (Tom Boden, NT)

Planning consent for the spaces outside the Assembly Rooms has been approved.

The renovations on the Assembly Rooms are progressing with opening sometime in 2027.

NT has planted 10,000 trees in the Bathampton Meadows and a new permissive footpath in the meadows has been opened.

6. WHS Manager’s update (Adrian Neilson, BANES)

Focus on Bath’s industrial heritage including the Riverline Project

Public Realm study instigated for the area around Westgate Street/ Cheap Street and associated lanes. This is a pilot area study.

Southwest UNESCO trail launched in partnership with GWR. <https://www.gwr.com/stations-and-destinations/travel-inspiration/unesco>

7. Great Spas Towns of Europe (GSTE) manager’s update (Tony Crouch, GSTE)

Next General Assembly is late April in Vichy, France which consider the impact of the heritage status 5 years on.

On the 14 July there will be a Climate Adaption in heritage sites workshop in conjunction with NT.

Bath are looking for nominations for the GSTE Youth Forum if anyone knows of anyone likely to be interested.

Bath will host the next General Assembly in December 2026.

8. WHS Enhancement Fund update (Alex Sherman, BPT)

Four applications have been submitted for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding totalling £33,000. They are

- Holburne Railing footings (cost shared with Museum)
- Continued street sign restoration
- K6 telephone box restoration at Queens Parade Place (grant contribution)
- Reinstatement of gas lamps on the raised pavement at Sydney Buildings

Next meeting 27 October 2026

Any questions to Jeremy Boss and Caroline Greenwood.
April 2026