

# *Workshops*

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Conference participants divided into three groups. Each group was further divided into tables of eight to twelve participants. Steered by representatives of the Civic Trust, IHBC and National Trust, each table was asked to focus on four key questions, and to relate their responses to the HESS presented during the morning session. Outputs from each room were summarised informally in plenary.

## **Focus Questions**

**The HESS will be a key opportunity for the Welsh historic environment. How can we build effective partnerships across the sector to ensure that this opportunity is addressed constructively?**

- 1 What will be the priorities for the sector?**
- 2 How can we build effective partnerships?**
- 3 How can we recognise and strengthen the voluntary sector contribution to the historic environment?**
- 4 What other issues or initiatives should we address as a sector?**

A detailed record of the workshop outputs follows the summary of the final session.

# *Plenary*

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Each group leader made a short presentation, picking out some of the key areas debated in their workshops. Inevitably there is overlap with the detail in the previous section of the report.

## **Group 1 (led by Ruth Williams, National Trust)**

The first priority was to broaden the sector, with **Cadw** finding means to address a wider professional and voluntary sector audience, promote good practice and “take a lead”. Its position in government was recognised to be limiting from certain perspectives, and there were issues of resources and political direction to be considered, but an important development could be to work more effectively with grassroots groups. Wales needs an equivalent for the heritage sector of an organisation such as the Federation of Museums.

Associated with this kind of initiative, there was room for an expert team of “facilitators”, capable of identifying structures at risk and acting in an advisory capacity.

**Local authorities** should have to service local heritage fora. There was a need to provide training in historic environment issues for chief officers, councillors, building control staff. Above all, leading

officers and members need to take on board the implications of national and local policies for the heritage. There should be efficiency audits of local authority performance in heritage matters.

The **HESS**, indeed the **whole sector**, needed smart targets set by ministerial statements.

**Raising the profile** of the heritage might be achieved through engaging celebrities and sportspersons – to capture the imagination of youth in particular. At a practical level, good practice case studies could sell positive messages about the economic benefits of conservation. It would help to connect the historic and green agenda – climate change could provide the glue.

**Networking** could assist the sector through briefing on policy and funding issues.

### **Group 2 (led by Geraldine Delaney, Association of Preservation Trusts)**

**Priorities** were to engage and support the whole sector through communication, education and information; to spend more time on “softer projects”; to recognise the effects of climate change; to identify all assets at risk, especially where they are “unknown unknowns”; and to enhance the knowledge of the sector.

**Building effective partnerships** required communication, ideally through a Welsh “Heritage Link”, which could be facilitated through imaginative use of digital communication. All audiences need to be embraced, through the use of plain language and opportunities for interactivity (maybe even a Cadw “blog”). Effective partnerships also required the targeting of limited resources. The heritage also needs **champions** at the local level.

**Building the capacity of the voluntary sector** depended on effective communication via a strong network which could become the first port of call for local groups and champions. Conservation officers were also key, given the potential support they could offer – but this is limited by time and resources. The voluntary sector needs online support and guidance.

**Other key issues** included the need to adjust the VAT regime to enable more sustainable management of the historic built environment; greater focus on control of streetscape; initiatives to develop “interpretation for all”; and the opportunity for all interests within the sector to come together to think strategically.

### **Group 3 (led by Neil Sumner, IHBC, and Matthew Griffiths, Civic Trust for Wales)**

**Priorities** included a focus on the **role of the local authorities** in managing and co-ordinating local heritage activity. They should be enabled to take a lead role within their areas of benefit, including the co-ordination of local voluntary sector heritage partnerships – which should be mandatory. To carry out this sort of role required funding from government.

The **sector as a whole** needed to learn from its successes and failures. An important contribution to this would be the development of a framework to bring together existing networks and organisations in a **sectoral forum**.

**Lifelong learning** had a key role to play in communicating a vision for the historic environment and raising its profile amongst all age groups, not just the young. This goal was possibly of greater significance than seeking to alter school curricula. The whole community needs to be engaged.

The **philosophy of the HESS** needed to be more robust; it needed to recognise the role of the private sector, and to promote the importance of modern as well as historic architecture.

**Subsidiary points** stressed in this workshop included:

- The status and funding of historic religious buildings, given their significance in the landscape
- The need for easier access to regeneration funding, including EU monies
- Skill-sharing, and the provision of good practice toolkits as part of a practical framework of support, guidance and confidence building
- Engaging the Design Commission for Wales in HE issues, recognising the linkages between good design and sustainable management of the historic built environment.
- The promotion of an independent champion for the heritage in Wales.

## **Discussion**

- Debate focused initially on the proposal for a **Welsh heritage network** – an issue that had surfaced prominently in each workshop. There were clearly issues to be discussed in terms of role, funding, *modus operandi* (including the exploitation of digital communication), and connections with the English Heritage Link, but there was overwhelming support for the proposal, demonstrated when the chair rashly called for a show of hands.
- **Education** also stimulated discussion, with comments made on the successes of projects such as Castell Henllys. The idea of a “Welsh Heritage Commission” – on the analogy of the Design Commission – was floated, with the recognition that it would need voluntary support by panel members. There was also a focus on formal and informal learning, with the place of the heritage in the curriculum and the opportunities presented by the Welsh baccalaureate highlighted. The potential offered by adult education and lifelong learning through imaginative approaches to discovery and interpretation received strong support.
- **The role of Cadw** had surfaced in the workshops. Delegates suggested that information about Cadw’s work could be presented more effectively, for example through a better, more interactive, web site and via an annual report.
- It was commented that the **Wales Spatial Plan** neglected the historic environment, and that there could be benefits from drawing clearer linkages between design and the historic environment.
- The position of **conservation officers** and their capacity to assist the voluntary sector elicited comments. One conservation officer emphasised both an appreciation of voluntary sector commitment and the obstacles provided by varying CO job descriptions and resource

constraints. It was agreed that local authority links with the voluntary sector needed strengthening.

- It was commented (by its chief executive) that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was rare amongst local authorities in the resources it could direct towards the historic environment. He had concerns about the Heritage Protection Bill, both in respect of the responsibilities it laid on local authorities and the resource implications for its implementation. He wondered how the concern of local authorities for the historic environment could be increased and their capacity to deliver improved. Was there a role for Cadw in raising the profile of the historic environment within local government? In response Cadw's chief executive emphasised Cadw's concern to raise both awareness and capacity within local government; she also stressed the fact that local priorities are set by electorates and that therefore historic environment issues need to be articulated more robustly within communities.

### **Closing summary: Richard Keen**

Richard reflected on the success of the conference in enabling many different voices to be heard within the sector. The event had bridged the concerns of professionals and volunteers, and in doing so an important threshold had been crossed.

There was clearly the potential for further events of this kind, and to build on its achievement. Location would be an issue, since there were fewer northern than southern accents present. The keynote for the day was the convergence of aims and objectives, underpinned by the call for more effective liaison, representation and networking across the sector. The engagement of the private sector needed to be considered, and there was a clear requirement to explore better communication and address resources issues.

## *Workshop outputs*

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Most groups tackled the focus questions but recorded their responses in different ways. We have therefore logged proposals under a several. Some suggestions would fit in more than one category. The frequency with which similar suggestions appear offers a rough and ready index of the extent to which concerns and ideas were held in common. There was little direct discussion of the HESS, but there was a general recognition in the groups and in the plenary that this was a significant opportunity to raise the profile of the historic environment, and to spur on more effective co-operation across the sector.

Given the mixed nature of the conference, it was the case that some participants had a greater knowledge of the legislation and organisations relevant to heritage management than others. There are some suggestions below that reflect a lack of professional expertise, but are important nonetheless because they reflect perceptions and concerns amongst volunteer groups. Generally the woollier ideas come lowest on any list! Participants were encouraged to be constructive and this may explain the relatively limited comments on resourcing.

On the basis of the documentation, some issues clearly stood out more than others. These appear to be:

- The potential for some sort of all-Wales network of heritage interests – though its breadth and role needs definition
- Communicating with each other and the public at large to raise the profile of heritage issues
- Developing effective partnerships – and improving connections between the voluntary sector and local authorities
- Strengthening the voluntary sector
- Tackling resources issues
- Concerns about the management regime – now, and under proposed legislation
- Education – identified more than once as a priority, but eliciting little detailed discussion

## **Priorities**

### **Working together in partnership**

- Effective cross sector links
- A framework to enable effective partnerships and develop links between existing structures.
- Sharing of skills.
- Training/capacity building.
- Get young people involved by tapping into youth interests
- Improve communication across the sector through hubs and networking.
- Develop inclusivity and involve a wider range of groups in the heritage
- Create a Welsh heritage link capable of organising regional meetings
- All levels of the sector need to draw together. Cadw or the Civic Trust should give a lead.
- Give ownership and community engagement to an ethnically diverse society

### **Better communications**

- Communicating the importance of heritage
- Publish good practice examples .
- Shift perceptions of the HE so that developers recognise the economic benefits of sensitive development
- Targeted communication to the rest of the sector (by Cadw? – “we’re the heritage agency that likes to say ‘yes’.”)
- E-engagement: improve (Cadw’s?) website
- Communication within and beyond the sector: sharing the vision.
- Identify key messages
- Finding the right messages to engage the young

### **Heritage management**

- Bring the archaeology research agenda into the equation.
- Learn from the past through case studies that would enable us to avoid mistakes such as the Brynmawr Rubber Factory and identify good practice.
- Identify assets at risk
- Buildings at risk
- Education of asset owners
- Identify areas where assets are unknown – the maritime and inter-tidal zone, the uplands, redundant chapels and churches, 20C military and agricultural buildings
- Setting SMART targets and timescales
- Climate change
- Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change
- Identify the Welsh contribution in the European and international context – our place and responsibilities
- Ensure the new legislation is effective.
- Seek private sector sponsorship

### **Education**

- Education
- Education/communication/media partnerships
- Get heritage on the curriculum

### **Partnerships**

#### **Networks and links**

- There is a lack of networking and co-working within Wales, partly due to constraints of time and distance.
- We need to clearly communicate the potential of each stakeholder. We need the equivalent of an Heritage Link in Wales.
- We need to support and develop linkages and partnerships.

- There is a need for a forum within which to work and to enable links to colleagues. This would be a body for NGOs to work together and could include amenity societies and the private sector
- Wales would benefit from a Heritage Link.
- A link network is needed.
- We need to link both local groups and networks within the voluntary sector.
- We need to develop a more formalised network and explore mechanisms for cross-professional working, for example through digital communication.
- A collective voice is needed to deliver actions
- An independent body is needed to represent the sector
- We need to link general and specific interest groups. The Civic Trust or the CBA could provide a forum to bring together specialist interest groups (and those with a wider remit). This happens but on an ad hoc basis. The process needs to be broadened and made more regular.
- National coordination needs funding to support the voluntary sector.
- Is it too early for a national organisation?
- Successful voluntary sector organisations should be enabled to mentor others.
- We need to find ways of forming partnerships with others not in the “heritage club” – developers and owners of land and buildings
- We need to develop inclusivity.
- Partnerships need clear objectives.
- Capacity building is needed, and links between local authorities and the voluntary sector.
- We need to invest in developing and sharing skills.

### **The voluntary sector and local authorities**

- Local authorities now have less access to resources than the voluntary sector
- Local authorities should work more proactively with the voluntary sector (this includes civic societies, BPTs, the amenity societies and local history groups)
- We need to strengthen the contribution of local people in their communities and their interaction with the HE.
- Educate local authorities so that regeneration and care for the HE go hand in hand.

- Local authorities can lead in developing local heritage fora
- Partnerships need support at member/council level.
- Local authorities need to develop ways of listening to the community (“a running conversation”)
- Both local authorities and the voluntary sector need to reach out to each other
- Effective delivery through local authorities depends on recognition of critical mass: often local authority areas are too small. This has led to the development of regional provision, e.g., the archaeological trusts. There is potential further to develop the skills within the ATs, for example in conservation
- Promote local heritage groups parallel with LAs (at present attitude of councils to local groups is very mixed)
- Promote liaison between LA conservation staff and voluntary sector locally
- Designated LA post to assist VS projects and groups (WAG funded at £5K per authority)
- Cadw could conduct efficiency audits of local authority heritage management

#### **The benefits of partnership.**

- HEG can play a part in building partnerships
- Organisations need to think in terms of the added value they can bring to the table.
- Partnerships can promote the wider benefits of regeneration.
- Partnerships are enabling and can tackle larger schemes; they can apply for convergence and HLF funding.
- We need to empower and back up local voluntary groups so they can help the conservation officer
- We need to bring together locally civic groups, architects and planners, BPTs and COs.
- We need to develop ties with the private sector, which is not represented for example at the BHF
- We need more local networks and partnerships – people are often more comfortable in smaller groups

#### **Miscellany**

- Cadw needs to be external to government

- Open Heritage weekends embrace local authority and voluntary sector partnerships.
- Recognise the role of private archaeology in Wales.
- Recognise the role of the IFA.

### **Strengthening the voluntary sector**

- The voluntary sector needs support and guidance as well as resources.
- Volunteers may be deferential to professionals, but volunteers are often retired experts.
- Recognise the expertise of the voluntary sector – they know their community
- Voluntary sector organisations need to be careful in claiming to speak for “the community” rather than themselves
- Develop ways of listening to the community
- LAs could grant aid secretarial posts in voluntary groups to ensure proper admin
- Develop toolkits/good practice guides for the voluntary sector to improve practice in engaging and involving the community.
- Record offices are underused and can be a basis for building partnerships around family history.

### **Communication and education**

- We need to improve communication within the sector
- There is insufficient conservation expertise. Where it exists it is not always listened to.
- We need to get our message about the HE across to the Welsh establishment and the general public.
- Improve communication between stakeholders – this is currently haphazard
- To find ways of improving communications we need to meet more regularly to debate issues. In doing so, we need to take note of the breadth of interests within the sector.
- We need to clearly communicate the potential of each stakeholder. We need the equivalent of an Heritage Link in Wales (duplicate from partnerships)
- Harness public support for the heritage through hubs of information: this needs resourcing.
- Campaign by celebrating excellence and castigating bad practice
- Cadw is too identified with the Assembly Government to be perceived as an independent promoter of good practice, and is unable to speak as freely as English Heritage

- Cadw and RCAHM need to advertise their information and resources and make these available online.
- Cadw's position in WAG makes it seem remote.
- Government needs to finance soft promotional material as well as support for "hard" monuments
- We need guidelines on the HE for developers.
- We need similar guidelines for purchasers of listed buildings.
- Links between specialisms could be achieved at the local level, providing workers with interdisciplinary opportunities, and facilitating the collaboration of professionals and volunteers.
- Education is missing from HESS: there needs to be a strategy for heritage education, from the primary stage to post-secondary
- Education, education, education
- Interpretation for all.

## **Resources**

- Resources are a priority.
- We need adequate resources to implement the legislation.
- Resource local authorities so that they can be proactive and engage positively with heritage issues and organisations in their areas.
- The voluntary sector lacks ready access to funding.
- Personal commitment provides a resource free of charge.
- The HLF is available, but capacity building is needed to enable it to be accessed.
- We need sustainable rather than project specific funding.
- Cadw is short of resources.
- Provide resources and support to COs

## **Sustainability**

- Sustainability ought to be commercially attractive.

- Are there studies to show how retention of historic buildings makes economic sense?
- The VAT regime needs amendment to favour sustainable approaches to the historic environment.
- Change the VAT regime – it's bad for sustainability.
- The HE sector is perceived as anti-development: this perception should be corrected.
- Sustainability may be a route to appeal to the young

### **Legislation/legal action**

- Damage to the heritage should be prosecuted.
- The new legislation needs to be effective, but will it have teeth?
- The HESS does not portray the reality of historic environment management on the ground.
- Conservation areas need to be strengthened or reviewed
- Take emergency measures to protect the heritage at risk
- Adopt a carrot and stick approach
- WAG to tackle worst cases of BAR
- Publicise an all-Wales BAR register
- Develop a small group of experts to tackle worst BAR with unsympathetic owners, advise LAs and develop exemplar projects
- Name and shame
- Encourage local authority CPOs
- Facilitate sales by owners with BAR
- Give the heritage greater prominence in community strategies
- Give properties of local importance a grade III listing
- Locally listed buildings need an adequate protection regime that has statutory underpinning
- There is a need for a clearer approach to the conservation of modern architecture underpinned by a strategy document
- Planning committees need training
- Planning committees need greater input of architectural advice and other design professions

- Implementation of then new legislation needs input from voluntary sector, together with advice from specialist bodies such as CABE (*sic*). There should be a consolidated consultation process for all historic buildings and all buildings that might become historic
- Religious buildings need funding and a clearer protection regime
- Chief executives and leaders should champion heritage issues