

Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site

Partnership Board Meeting Friday 4th September 2020 Zoom Meeting 13h00 – 15h00

Present: Jane Gibson (Chair), Jane Meek (Vice Chair), Steve Bishop (North Tyneside Council), Mike Collins (Historic England), Colin Galloway (Vindolanda Trust), Bill Griffiths (Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums), Andrew Mackay (Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery), Andrew Poad (National Trust), Andrea Selley (English Heritage), Duncan Wise (Northumberland National Park Authority)

Apologies: Andrew Birley (Vindolanda Trust), Sue Clarke (Cumbria Tourism), Alison Hatcher (Cumbria County Council), Richard Hingley (Durham University), Graham Kennedy (Allerdale Borough Council), Lorna Lazzarri (Northumberland National Park Authority), Sarah Mitchell (Copeland Borough Council), Katie Read (Copeland Borough Council), Tania Robinson (South Tyneside Council), Janice Rose (Northumberland County Council), Andrew Rothwell (Newcastle City Council), Wendy Scott (Northumberland County Council), Christine Venus (Natural England), Pauline Wall (Northumberland National Park Authority), Nigel Walsh (Northumberland County Council)

In Attendance: Nick Henderson (Development Officer), Denise Hewitson (Administration Assistant) and John Scott (Management Plan Coordinator)

	Description	Action
1.	<p>Chair's Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Jane G welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those present for attending.</p> <p>Jane G introduced Collin Galloway to the Board who joined the meeting in Andrew Birley's absence who is touring through Roman Britain. She wished Andrew B good luck on his fundraising adventure.</p> <p>Apologies were noted for the Minutes.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes from the Last Meeting on Friday 3rd July 2020 and Matters Arising to be discussed at the meeting on Friday 16th October 2020</p>	
3.	<p>Partners' Update</p> <p>Jane G opened the meeting and commented she called the meeting to reconvene with Partners after the summer break to discuss any current issues which could be addressed before or be part of the next meeting in October. She added that the agenda will take the usual format at the next meeting on Friday 16th October 2020.</p> <p>She noted that she had been fortunate to be involved in the Marketing and Transport Delivery Group Meetings and commended the Delivery Groups and Partners for their work during this time. She noted that she saw such generosity of spirit and collaborative working. Businesses have had to find other resources to work through this pandemic, adapting to different ways of working and adjusting to living at work, not working from home.</p>	

She referred to Andrew Poad, National Trust and Andrea Selley, English Heritage where there has been pressure on their national organisations and at individual sites. She added that local authorities have also needed to work differently, having to conduct activities that they never thought they would have to do.

She proposed a round table discussion of Hadrian's Wall to identify what organisations have done and what the learning points are to remain on track during the months ahead.

She thanked Bill G for supporting the Partnership Board by hosting these virtual meetings via Zoom.

Bill G informed the Group that TWAM have reopened all their sites apart from Hatton Gallery which is set within Newcastle University. Visitor numbers have been 30% to 40% of footfall, similar to the national average. Visitor spend per head has increased, however, visitor numbers and income are low, similar to other organisations. They have been focusing on schools returning. He offered to share a survey conducted by Bridges where the results, 500 responses received in July, showed that schools would not be returning until next term, if not later.

Jane G asked about the type of visitor expenditure. He replied that he did not have the breakdown available, but sales for the Wall to Wall merchandise have increased. He noted that The Laing had shown the best results. Figures at Segedunum and Arbeia have also increased, but are relative.

Steve B agreed with Jane G's comment about living at work, not the other way round. They are now focusing on recovery and ways to come out of the pandemic. They have been gradually reopening libraries, on a limited basis, as well as looking at introducing other activities in these services. Events have been organised, such as a Kite Festival and Fun Fair and they have been looking at the broader cultural sector and how this is managed according to the current safety measures in place. Visitor numbers are down, but spend per head has increased. The North Tyneside Steam Railway re-opened at the weekend and this looks promising moving forward. He noted that he has also been working with the Head of Regeneration and the team on the report that Hemmingway Design did previously. This project is still in place and under discussion to identify where to source financial support for Segedunum. Organisations have had access to £275k from Central Government funding, Visit England, for marketing activities. He added that three tourism leads have worked on a campaign called "Save your Summer", coming out soon, but the project has been out of their hands in terms of timing. Unfortunately, it is too late to change the name of the campaign. The campaign will be promoted through the Newcastle Gateshead website and Hadrian's Wall will also form part of this package.

Jane M commented that that Carlisle is beginning to reopen and has become more vibrant over recent weeks. She added that Andrew M would provide his update from Tullie House.

Carlisle City Council are now moving towards a full deal for Borderlands. In spite of this pandemic, Borderlands partners are putting together a Covid-19 response to Government to see how they can support the economy. She has been working with Hadrian's Wall partners on that part of the deal to get the right level for a business case. Civil servants have been focusing on milestones with the DCMS to see how to achieve that full deal stage. It may not be needed to have full business cases for all projects, as this is a 10 year to 15 year deal and projects will develop over time. It is evident that the business cases prepared 6 months ago will need to be updated.

It is evident that a good BCR (Benefit Cost Ratio) might have been affected by Covid-19. Recovery is starting, but clearly the business model will be affected. She noted that they will be meeting the Tourism Minister to discuss the impact on the DMOs and how Government can fund them moving forward. Some tourism offers are supported by Councils or by DMOs, but there are concerns of what DCMS is doing.

Jane G was pleased that this topic has been raised. Jane M added that Borderlands is maintaining momentum and we need to keep working as a strong partnership.

Colin G provided an update.

Vindolanda reopened on Friday 17th July 2020 and they have slowly seen visitors return. Visitor numbers have been better than forecast; 55% at the Royal Army Museum and 80% at Vindolanda, compared to 2019. It is evident that visitors are looking more for an outdoor experience. He added that the spend per head has also been good. They are reviewing their online operation, but change would require a great deal of financial investment.

He added that they have also been organising a number of fundraising activities which have been very successful, and he advised the Board that Andrew B will update Partners about his recent fundraising campaign at the next meeting. Revenue is down by £150,000 from last year. They are looking ahead and booking next year's archaeology season, but in the meantime re-introducing some small trail excavations towards the end of September 2020 with a small group of volunteers. He reported that this will give them the opportunity to adapt the way they do this in the future to comply with social distancing guidelines.

As children return to schools and very few school groups booked to visit Vindolanda, they will need to see how to recover losses or change their offer. He felt that September may be a difficult month as the senior visitor market usually returns when children are back at school. He stated that there is a lot of shielding still in that category and they will need to consider this to adapt and react accordingly

Jane G said that there has been some exciting news released at Vindolanda.

Colin G replied that they have recently opened a new Post Roman Gallery where a chalice (early Christian) is on display. There has been a lot of activity on social media and engagement about this which is excellent news and potentially will open up a new market to the Wall.

Andrew P reported that there have been a lot of changes at the National Trust and that fundamental changes are being proposed to the way that the organisation worked previously. There had been an unfortunate leak to the press which needed to be corrected by Hilary McGrady, the Trust CEO. The Trust needs to achieve £100M savings this year and is basing new models on the V, U or L curve. The changes proposed are for next year's business model and these will be considered for all sites.

Booking system changes have allowed them to adapt to how activities are done. Visitor numbers at some properties have increased and spikes have been ironed out. He added that members of staff on the ground have been adapting to these situations and finding it easier to manage these fluctuations.

He reported that some places, for example, at Allen Banks, the numbers are double what they were last year, but sadly this was misinterpreted in the leak to the press what the National Trust is doing. They need to respond to the nation's appetite in what they are doing in the outdoors. Housesteads opened in July and is still working on a skeleton staff, but trying to find a balance. Spend per head has increased and sales are good. He added that Pauline Wall at the NNPA has hosted Partners Communications Meetings with the NNPA, English Heritage, National Trust and The Forestry Commission and this was started when sites were given 3 days' notice by Government on the reopening of the countryside. This has been an excellent platform and communication network and there has been great positivity shown during these meetings. He hopes that these meetings will continue. **Jane G** asked how he has managed through this difficult time.

He emphasised that the Trust has been extremely supportive, looking after all employees and those working on the ground. The National Trust has not suffered as much as other Partners during the reopening of sites and they have been extremely fortunate for this.

Andrea S reported that English Heritage sites reopened in June 2020 and Hadrian's Wall sites in July 2020. They have seen more than 600,000 visitors between June and the end of August, compared to 5 million in previous years. She noted that it is great to be re-open, putting measures into place and complying with the health and safety measures for both staff and visitors alike. The pre-booking system has been a revelation and the technology has helped to manage staff levels during this time, offering a better visitor experience.

Spend per head has been good. English Heritage signed up to the 'Eat out to Help Out' scheme which has supported the sites financially and are planning to offer some bounce back offer in October 2020. Catering has been a challenge and they are currently looking for alternatives with a view to reopen indoor catering spaces in the future. She reported that English Heritage secured a financial grant to the tune of £20M which will support Project Managers to focus and push through those projects on hold including that at Warkworth Castle. There is still 30% of staff on furlough and they are trying to find the right balance to bring people back who are critical to the work. It will take a couple of years to get back to where they were at English Heritage prior to Covid-19. They are not expecting international visitors and group visits to return to the sites. They are, however, focusing their attention on opening UK school bookings from September 2020, but may consider moving these back to Spring.

It is evident that Corbridge has done well and this has been reflected across the sites and local audiences have flourished during this period. Chesters has not been as promising as they are reliant on groups and events. Houseteads has picked up after a slow start and they have achieved the 600 pre-booked tickets a day capacity through August 2020.

Andrea S commented that Jane G often mentions the sewage at Lanercost. She informed the Group that sadly the Lanercost Tea Room has temporarily closed which will have an impact on facilities as a consequence. She felt that we need to try to find a way with Partners to resolve these problems and they are looking for funding to support this.

John S added that he has recently invited Victoria Farley at the Lanercost Tea Room to the Marketing and Transport Delivery Group Meeting to represent the private sector. Nigel Jarvis, Heart of Hadrian's Wall, is already instrumental in these meetings and she will be a great asset to the Group. Jane G noted that it is important for her to be involved in these discussions through her network whilst her business is temporarily closed.

Andrew M reported that at Tullie House they are in a similar situation to TWAM is reporting. Tullie House reopened in phases on Wednesday 8th July 2020 and like TWAM visitor numbers are about 30/40% of footfall. Unlike others, income is 30% or less. Visitors are not spending as much as they previously were. It is incrementally improving, and visitors are feeling more comfortable with the health and safety measures in place. He hopes that visitor numbers will increase. He added that projections show that they are not sustainable and need to refocus their business planning, He added that they have applied for emergency funding through the Cultural Recovery Fund. 50% of staff still remain on furlough and they are trying to find a delicate balance to open up as much of the building as possible and deliver as many activities for visitors whilst financially viable. Capital investment 'Project Tullie' is progressing to support the long term planning to enable them to rely less on Carlisle City Council. Signs are more encouraging but, he hopes the National Heritage Lottery Fund will soon re-open their window for funding. Events are scheduled into the diary. They have been working with Rob Collins at Newcastle University on a Wall CAP display and Hadrian's Wall Community Work.

He noted that they are looking at the overseas visitor market to Hadrian's Wall and are trying to think and plan ahead a couple of years to see how they can refresh their existing galleries. He also felt that it is important to talk about the Borderlands landscape as well as the Wall. Cumbria has a rich story to tell on bio-diversity. Despite this situation, he still remains optimistic, however, he added the cultural recovery fund is extremely important to the work at Tullie House.

Jane G asked when he expects to receive news from the NHLF. He hopes that he will be able to report to the Board at the next meeting in October 2020. He supported her comments mentioned earlier in the discussion on theatres and that 48% of budget is reliant on commercial activities and therefore they are suffering as a consequence.

Duncan W provided his report to the Board from the NNPA. Visitor numbers were at 50% in July, compared to 70% to 80% in 2019. Visitor numbers at the Sill reached 15,500 visitors and income has increased to 115% on previous years.

The Lost Word Exhibition has been extremely successful and is expected to stay at the Sill until late October. It is evident that the range and lines of merchandise are suitable at the Sill for the visitor market. He commented that there are limited signed prints on sale with a price tag of £400 to £500.

A decision was taken to run the café independently this year and visitors appear to like the menu on offer.

He noted that September is a good walking month for the older profile of visitors. The AD 122 service will be continuing into the winter months and he hopes they will sustain those figures then.

A few pop up events have been organised and the ranger patrol will be hosting Hadrian's Wall Bike tours. Walltown is open three days a week and visitors are grateful to see there is a facility in this area, but some have been disappointed that this is not open all the time. It is intended to review this moving forward as they hope to invest more in this facility. He added that there has been a significant increase in car parking revenue. All visitors are happy to see that these sites are open, but it is important that the smaller facilities need to be available for visitors and the visitor experience to Hadrian's Wall.

Jane G thanked Duncan W enormously for hosting the Marketing and Transport Delivery Group and the time he has dedicated to Hadrian's Wall and she paid tribute to his involvement as Acting Chair during Sue C's other work commitments at Cumbria Tourism. He acknowledged this by saying that this has been a great pleasure, supported by John S, Nick H and Denise H. The Marketing and Delivery Group has presented an opportunity to meet on a regular basis, sharing best practice and feedback has been extremely positive. Duncan W thanked Jane G for her comments.

Mike C commented that Historic England has not been subject to the furlough scheme. Members of staff have been working continuously during the pandemic and he felt that they have been extremely fortunate.

They have been administering their own emergency grants and deploying staff resources into these programmes. Offices have been closed, but they will be reopening the office in Newcastle next week.

The Planning White Paper has been published and is in the early stages for consultation, but the Government have made some significant reforms around the planning system and that further work will need to be undertaken on this.

He commented that he has just returned from managing a team in Yorkshire and new appointments had been made.

John S said that it has been a great pleasure to work with Partners on the Board in difficult times. He commented that we now have a better understanding of what Hadrian's Wall looks like as an ecosystem. Self-catering has been successful, bookings into October and November, which is promising news. Looking at the B&B sector, he added that the service accommodation sector is either booking rooms three weeks before arrival or into next year. Some businesses have been lost along the way, people who were already thinking about retiring, sadly Covid-19 has forced their hand to do so.

Duncan W replied to John Scott's comment that they have done very well, particularly with limited capacity. Northern Rail has been good and at a recent meeting, the Tyne Valley Community Railway Partnership reported that they are in the rail network's Top 10 with more than 100 passengers on the train.

John S added that the AD 122 service is at 50% capacity, excellent news to report and the service is bringing in good numbers. It is clear that we are all losing money, but in terms of recovery, we are all doing well. Hadrian's Wall is a great open space and the best indicator is car parking figures which are all above anticipated. He thanked Duncan W for providing these statistics. Duncan W noted that they set car parking figures last year, but struggled to meet them and this results this year show part of the recovery.

John S then updated the Board that the Management Plan Consultation is scheduled for the end of September, however, due to annual leave commitments, it is anticipated that this will be delayed by two weeks. The first tranche of the Consultation will be conducted digitally. He noted that he is also looking at an extension for the Resilience Project with the NLHF, but requires a costing schedule to extend the roles for both Nick H and Denise H for a further six months. He added that he is working on extending and promoting the season during winter and getting this message out to the public, with the support of the AD 122 service.

He also noted that clearly there has been an impact on international visitors to the area and this has been shown through the passenger numbers on the DFDS service route when the Netherlands went into quarantine.

Jane G asked John S about Robson Green and the recent filming along Hadrian's Wall. **John S** replied that there is an appetite for 'nice TV' and Robson Green will hopefully bring us some good coverage along the Wall.

From Hadrian's Wall Partnership, **Nick H** reported that the NHLF bid 'Uncovering Roman Carlisle' and the Augmented Reality Project 'Uncovering the Wealth of Hadrian's Coast' are currently on hold. This latter project will form the basis of a NHLF bid when they reopen for applications. He also commented that he has created and is developing a funding matrix folder for partners to use and has had the opportunity to have some training through Carlisle City Council to support this project. **Jane G** asked if there would be any potential funding to support Lanercost.

Nick H added that he would explore this further as he had recently helped a funder for a similar project (Biffa) for funding another project.

Nick H reported that he had recently acted as Chair at the Northern World Heritage Sites Coordinators Meeting with Kerry Shaw from WallCAP, and is working with the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (TVCRP) with their Open Place App.

Jane G mentioned that she has just obtained Rob Collins' and the Curators new book "Living on the Edge of Empire: The Objects and People of Hadrian's Wall".

Following the various briefings from Partners, Jane G mentioned a couple of threads which emerged through the meeting which the Board could usefully debate; online booking systems/single ticket for the Wall and events.

She asked the Board if we should use Covid-19 as an opportunity to tackle some of those 'sacred cows', using North of Tyne and Borderlands funding to work differently and make a case to take these to Government.

The informal discussion concluded that trying to have the single ticket for the Wall discussion with partner organisations at this time was counter-productive as income generation was front of mind. However, it is evident that there is an appetite for a signposting between sites conversation and to take what we have got already, for example, the Hadrian's Wall Country website and explore all potential options.

	<p>All agreed that a better connected signposting between sites was worth exploring in more detail and John S and Nick H would focus on this in the coming months. This also extended to events.</p> <p>The discussion concluded that events, no matter how small, during Covid-19 have allowed us to get back out and we need to encourage people to return to the area, not just to heritage venues but across all sectors. Jane G noted that organisations who have introduced events on a very limited budget will be judged well. Professional staff and volunteers have worked hard to keep visitors' attitude and morale up. Sadly, the international impact was significant to tourism and this visitor segment has now unfortunately disappeared.</p> <p>Andrea S agreed that signposting for a 'one stop shop' sounds positive. She commented that events which have worked well have been promoted extensively through social media. She proposed a Hadrian's Wall YouTube channel where visitors can get weekly podcasts/films and documentaries. This would potentially present a great creative space to broadcast Hadrian's Wall to the world. AS and JS to explore</p> <p>Jane G reminded the Group that there will be three episodes of Robson Green on Hadrian's Wall in early Spring and that the whole Partnership should use this to promote their sites, even if they were not specifically featured. The fact that the TV researchers has reverted to the usual suspects indicated why we needed to have more Wall-wide action planning.</p> <p>Jane G turned to Bill G to ask him for an update on the Hadrian's Wall 1900th Anniversary preparations.</p> <p>Bill G informed the Board that there have been good discussions about the anniversary in 2022 and preparations are underway. Overall, the model proposed is that used for the Late Shows. Hosted across Newcastle and Gateshead every year this brings up to 80 organisations together over two nights to present the areas daytime cultural offer, but at night. This event works due to its simplicity. To take part in the Festival, organisations have to fulfil a simple set of criteria. He added that an overarching brand will be used. There will be a timeframe established for the festival and organisations will have to sign up to promote the brand in their literature. He indicated that the scale of the event can range from a table at a village fete to up to a £15M artistic event along the Wall (referring to the Festival of Britain budgets). Wendy Scott has drafted a brief to appoint a Creative Coordinator, but he emphasised that there will be no capacity for fundraising for individual groups. Other projects will need to be standalone and self-sufficient, but they will need to fit into the brand to avoid any potential clashes.</p> <p>The festival will be coordinated with a mix of people; Hadrian's Wall Marketing Group, Amanda Drago formerly at the Arts Council and WallCAP representatives to maintain contact with the local communities. He added that the Hadrian's Wall Networking Day showed that there is great interest to join the celebrations in 2022. He noted that it is important to get the community on board and to make the celebrations as inclusive as possible. Whilst a high profile event would attract the attention of the press, it was important to understand and celebrate community connection to the Wall too.</p> <p>The Festival is scheduled to start on Hadrian's birthday in January 2022 and conclude at Saturnalia in December 2022.</p>	
4.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Jane G thanked Partners for their contributions and commented that this has been a very useful gathering to share news and ideas.</p> <p>Bill G promoted to Partners the last academic legacy of Hadrian's Wall Cavalry. He added that previously there was a Hadrian's Wall Newsletter and he felt that it would be useful to design something similar in a digital format.</p>	

5.	Date of Next Meeting The date of the next meeting is scheduled to take place, via Zoom, on Friday 16 th October 2020 from 13h00 – 15h00.	
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