

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

HERITAGE UPDATE

1.0 WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE COMMITTEE?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members of the work ongoing within Culture and Tourism with regard to the Heritage agenda across the city.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Heritage is an area of continuing growth both across the region and for the City of Sunderland. Sunderland has a distinct heritage, of which there is a strong sense of pride across the city. This pride is based on our character and our traditions, including the distinct identity of specific communities and the cultural traditions of our people. A successful nomination for World Heritage Status (decision to be made in 2011) would allow the city to become a cultural heritage landmark as one of three World Heritage Sites across the region and 27 sites across the UK, allowing the city to prosper in areas such as economic development and tourism.
- 2.2 Heritage for the city (as detailed in previous reports) is managed through the Directorate along with the World Heritage Liaison Project Officer for Sunderland and South Tyneside Councils. Responsibility for the conservation of heritage buildings lies within the Development and Regeneration Directorate of the City Council, where a close working relationship has now been developed in order to ensure that projects are enhanced and developed using both areas of knowledge, expertise and funding where possible.
- 2.3 The City Council is committed to supporting heritage initiatives and this is viewed within the context of the Council's strategic priorities, Cultural Strategy and Public Library Heritage Strategy, alongside the existing commitments to other projects across the city. The Council is asked to consider their priorities in relation to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the coming years and this list is agreed and submitted through EMT. Utilising advice received from the HLF and following a series of further discussions a prioritised list for the city is now available and includes the following areas: Barnes Park, World Heritage Status, Bowes Railway, Maritime Heritage and River/Coastal Development. It should be noted however that this does not preclude other projects from receiving funding.
- 2.4 Listed below is some of the work ongoing across Culture and Tourism in relation to Heritage.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 **History Fair June 2008** – organised through the Sunderland Heritage Forum with support from Sunderland City Council, the Fair was the first one in Sunderland since 1998 and was deemed a huge success. Held in the Seaburn

Centre the event consisted of over 65 Exhibitors, with in excess of 3,000 visitors to the Centre. Feedback from both exhibitors and visitors was extremely positive and it is anticipated that this will become a bi-annual event to complement the Durham History Fair which also takes place bi-annually. The Fair was self financing with funding support from the HLF, Community Chest and Sunderland University.

3.2 Heritage Open Days 2008 took place from 11 – 14 September and has become a hugely popular event in the Sunderland Calendar. Activities for 2008 included a tour of Sunderland AFC's home grounds around the city, talk and exhibition by Bryan Talbot (best selling author of *Alice in Sunderland*), Grave concerns (a guided walk of Bishopwearmouth Cemetery), a tour of Nissan (the new industrial heritage of Sunderland) and much more.

3.3 Bede's Way Annual Walk is an event which takes place in June and encourages people to follow in the footsteps of one of our great ancestors, Bede himself. The walk from historic St Paul's Church, in Church Bank, Jarrow, follows a route to St Peter's Church in Monkwearmouth, via South Shields, Cleadon and Whitburn. This year Bishop Bryant of Jarrow joined the walk to show support for the World Heritage Site campaign. The walk took place on the eve of the day celebrating Benedict Biscop, the 7th century saint credited with establishing the twin monastery site as one of Europe's most important centres of learning and culture.

3.4 Local Studies Fact Sheets – 19 sheets are now available focusing on industry, built heritage, people and places (new additions include Monkwearmouth Station Museum and George Washington). Research is now underway to develop fact sheet number 20 in the series, which will feature Slavery in Sunderland and the North East following on from the work which is continuing since the Bi-Centenary of the Abolition in 2007.

All factsheets are available in hard copy or can be downloaded from the council website at www.sunderland.gov.uk/libraries

3.5 Fulwell Windmill has been celebrating its Bi-Centenary during 2008. 200 years on the Mill is still the famous landmark it was then and continues to be one of Sunderland's most treasured heritage assets.

The Mill is now the only working windmill in the North East, preserving crafts and traditions that span over seven hundred years of English History. Events during the year have included a launch of the Bi-Centenary by invited guests (including North East presenter and Historian John Grundy) which allowed for a large amount of press coverage across the region. In addition a family fun day was hosted which saw over 400 visitors alongside a guided walk and talk on North East Mills.

It has also recently being announced that HLF have agreed to £5,000 funding through the Friends of Fulwell Mill to develop a community art project to commemorate the end of the Bi-Centenary. The project is yet to be finalised as a further funding decision is to be confirmed by the Community Grant Foundation (CGF). If funding is agreed then the project will proceed before the end of 2008.

If funding is refused then a smaller project will proceed following discussions with HLF.

Other projects for the Bi-Centenary have included a floral display of the Mill within Mowbray Park, craft activities for children throughout the summer holidays and further activities including World War 2 re-enactments scheduled for Heritage Open Days in September 2008.

- 3.6 Fulwell Mill Christmas** event takes place on an annual basis and is delivered over 2 days. The event for 2008 is now being progressed in order to accommodate the growing number of visitors to the Mill.
- 3.7 Sunderland Heritage Forum** has now been established for 11 years and is a partnership of voluntary and professional organisations who work towards celebrating and protecting Wearside's heritage. The Forum have now secured a £30,000 grant from the HLF for a street names project which will be delivered using volunteers from across Sunderland. The project will result in a booklet and website and will involve schools and other community groups from across the city. The conclusion of the project will result in an Exhibition and symposia to publicise the project.
- 3.8 Their Past Your Future 2** programme follows on from the Round 1 programme in which Sunderland secured a funding grant of £12,500 to deliver the Home Front Recall Project. This round of funding is aimed at targeting young people or delivering an inter-generational project focusing on the themes of remembrance, commemoration, First and Second World Wars, post 1945 conflict, citizenship, human rights etc.

Sunderland was one of only 29 projects which were successful in this round across the country securing £10,000, and the project is now well underway looking at the collection of photographs taken on bomb damage in Sunderland by the Air Raid Precaution wardens during the Second World War which are unique to Sunderland. The project has involved working with a number of groups including Age Concern, Monkwearmouth and St Anthony's Schools, and Sunderland AFC Kick Start Project. Using written and photographic skills the project has allowed for site visits to the bomb damaged areas and using today's technology the young people have superimposed themselves onto the original images.

As part of the final project an E-Learning resource pack will be available for public access, along with educational resource material.

The project is now approaching completion and a launch event is currently in the planning stages in order that all the groups who have participated can come together to celebrate the success of the project to date.

- 3.9 Remembrance 90** – is a pan-BBC campaign to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the First World War Armistice. The aim of the project is to encourage partners and authorities to participate in events and activities in order to engage people of different ages and backgrounds to acknowledge the act of remembrance. Work has now begun to develop programme and activity in order

to contribute to the campaign. Suggested programme includes Poetry and Creative writing sessions, an exhibition consisting of letters from the Front line along with replica artefacts from the World Wars including the Mills Bomb which was created in Sunderland, school sessions delivered in partnership with Living History North East and Tyne and Wear Archives and also to incorporate the launch of the Their Past Your Future Project (detailed above).

3.10 Black History Month – is an annual event which takes place throughout October with the aims to promote knowledge of Black History, Culture and Heritage; disseminate information on positive Black contributions to British Society and heighten the confidence and awareness of Black people in their cultural heritage. Working with Tyne and Wear Museums and following on from the work in 2007 with the Bi-centenary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, activities are now being planned throughout October. The programme includes poetry and storytelling sessions, creative writing workshop, cookery demonstrations, author session with regional author John Charlton, school class sessions using Slavery resource boxes, James Stansfield Walk around the East End and much more. All details of events will be promoted through joint material with Tyne and Wear Museums and through the Sunderland events website (www.sunderlandevents.com).

3.11 Bowes Railway – following the recent feasibility study carried out in partnership with Gateshead Metropolitan Council, work is now progressing to address the immediate priorities highlighted within the report, including health and safety issues, management and governance of the site and conservation management of the site. Whilst this work is progressing there have been a number of issues raised concerning theft and vandalism to the site which has resulted in much press coverage over recent weeks. In order to address these issues Sunderland City Council are working closely with the Bowes Railway Company and the vandalism and theft issues have been discussed at a recent LMAPs (Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group). Work is now progressing to install cameras on site with initial funding through LMAPs and working alongside English Heritage and Conservation Officers to ensure the sensitivities of the Scheduled Ancient Monument are taken into account. Further work is also progressing with Sunderland City Council to carry out an assessment and provide a specification of works for the essential repair works needed on the Blackhams Hill Hauler House although funding to carry out this work has not yet been identified.

3.12 World Heritage Site Status

The Nomination Document and Management Plan are in the final stages of preparation. Text is to be agreed by the end of November 2008 and taken through public consultation from January – April 2009 before being submitted by the UK Government to UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) by January 2010 as the UK's nomination.

Ongoing negotiations with ONE North East for resources to support this process during 2008/9 and 2009/10, including funding for the design and production of the Nomination Document, information and awareness raising work through the public consultation period, and capital improvements to the way the site is presented, including investment at St Peter's, have resulted in an initial rejection

of the bid. This is being pursued at ONE North East at the highest level and the bid partners are trying to identify alternative resources.

Awareness raising work through the summer has included stands at a number of events, including the Sunderland Airshow, Friendship Festival and Heritage Fair and national conferences such as the Leeds International Medieval Congress. Members of the public are being asked to sign a modern-day “manuscript” to demonstrate support for the nomination.

A “VIP” book also exists for signature, first signed by the Duke of Gloucester and most recently signed by David Dimbleby.

Northumbria Water has commenced work at St Peter’s, renewing a sewer pumping station under archaeological supervision. To offset potential damage to the site (which should in any case be prevented through archaeological supervision) and demonstrate support for the bid, they have agreed to install a marked-out footprint of the monastic buildings originally excavated.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to receive further updates regarding Heritage in Sunderland in the future.

5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.1 Local Heritage Strategy

6.0 GLOSSARY

MLA – Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

TWM – Tyne and Wear Museums

HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund

CGF - Community Grant Foundation

LMAP - Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group

UNESCO - United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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