

AGENDA ITEM 7i (2)

NOTES OF THE MEETING of the HERITAGE ALLIANCE held on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 11am

In Attendance:

Representing Tavistock Heritage Trust – Alex Mettler

Representing Tavistock Museum – Tony Rose

Representing Tavistock Town Council – Wayne Southall, Louisa Semmens, Cllr Andy Hutton

Representing Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall – Alison Holmes

Representing Tavistock Subscription Library – Ruth Blowey

Representing Tavistock Local History Society – Chris Bellers

Representing West Devon Borough Council – Cllr Caroline Mott

Representing DALC (representative for WHS Partnership) – Paul Ward

Representing Bedford Hotel – Mike Coombes

1. CONFIRMATION OF NOTES

- a) The Notes of the meeting of the Heritage Alliance held on 7th February 2024 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

2. HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS UPDATES:

- a) It was explained that there had been recent discussions pertaining to arranging a Heritage Quarter launch event, aligned with the Tavistock Museums official re-opening, planned for 30th March. Following discussions, it was decided that for 2024, the main focus should be the re-opening of Tavistock Museum and the Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall confirmed that they were hoping to open on this date as well. It was agreed that the concept should be reviewed in January 25, with the aim to have a larger co-ordinated launch event with all partners for March/April 25. Tavistock Museum explained that they had become far more active on social media re: general information and promotion and stated that they would be looking at some Easter aligned activities to support the re-opening.
- b) Guildhall Officers provided an update on arrangements pertaining to the Heritage Fair, planned for 16th March, 10am-4pm. Each organisation attending provided a brief overview of their intended footprint and the Guildhall Duty Officer explained what the timings were for set up/breakdown, as well as explaining the mediums used to promote the event within the short mobilisation period.
- c) Attendees were advised of the successful grant application pertaining to the 'Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project', where Historic England had awarded just under £7,000, with the monies allocated towards carrying out some emergency works to Betsy Grimbals Tower, including removing dense vegetation, masonry repairs and undertaking a condition survey. It was

explained that this was the start of a much broader, currently unfunded project, estimated IRO £450,000.

3. ADVERTISING/WEBSITE:

- a) A broad discussion arose relating whether there should be a systematic approach to advertising events/activities and if so, who should be the lead Officer/organisation, and how should this be achieved. The debate then looked at the current practice pertaining to the 'Visit Tavistock' website and whether this was deemed as an effective process. Part of the discussion then led to an acknowledgement that individual heritage organisations needed to take a proactive approach in relation to facilitation of their offer/planned activities and it was understood that there were resource challenges that needed to be considered. One key outcome was a general consensus that each project/initiative needed to be effectively scoped to assess the resource implications and that any committed project should, if feasible, be planned well in advance.
- b) Concerns were raised relating to the amount of website platforms that were currently active and that there didn't appear to be a coordinated approach between heritage partners around sharing information and that some websites had outdated content due to resource challenges. Again, discussions focused on the aims and purpose of 'Visit Tavistock', including tracking website traffic, and whether it should be a conduit for cross-promotion, and if so, how best this could be achieved. For this concept to be developed further, it was widely acknowledged that additional physical resource was essential to assist with such a concept and that the starting point was for the BID Manager to liaise with the VIC around vision/expectations. Options around how to engage more volunteers was discussed, with suggestions to explore such platforms as 'Reach', to liaise with established groups such as 'Tavi Helps', and to use such events as the Heritage Fair to seek expressions of interest.
- c) Attendees then discussed the pros/cons pertaining to reach, cost, accessibility of various advertising mediums, including social media, Links magazines, the local press, using fixed infrastructure at various locations (poster boards/banners/barrows/A Frames (Pannier Market, Guildhall Complex, church, Library etc)). It was suggested by Tavistock Museum that consideration should be given to ensuring there was a collaborative approach pertaining to producing a regular Heritage Newsletter and whether there should be a coordinated approach re: allocating funding to assist.
- d) Relating to the above, it was agreed that it was important to understand the behavioral demographics of Tavistock and its visitors, including how much it may have changed since COVID-19. It was suggested that it would be helpful to carry out some surveys throughout the year, either face to face or utilizing such platforms as 'Visit Tavistock' but that serious consideration needed to be given to the type of questions being asked.

4. HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

- a) The topic of Heritage Open Days was discussed, focusing on participation, with both the Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall and Tavistock Museum confirming that they would be involved in 2024.
- b) Following previous discussions, the point was again reinforced around the importance of securing additional resource to assist THT in the administration of Heritage Open Days.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) It was agreed that the Heritage Alliance should discuss their aspirations for 2025 which would include agreeing a project programme pertaining to initiatives/events.
- b) It was agreed that a Focus Group should be established to consider such aspects outlined in 3. Advertising/Website.
- c) It was agreed that the next meeting of the Heritage Alliance would be held on 16th April at 11am in the Robing Room, Guildhall.