

Feedback Analysis of Edinburgh Technical Workshop – January 2016

1. Introduction

A Technical Meeting of World Heritage UK was held on the 25th and 26th January 2016 at the offices of Historic Environment Scotland in Edinburgh. The theme of the Conference was “World Heritage Site Management Plans and Systems” and included a key speaker from Icomos and representatives talking on behalf of UNESCO and IUCN and best practice case studies from a number of UK Sites. There was a final break-out session looking at what had or had not been learnt and what the next steps might be to develop better management systems. The Workshop also included short site visits to Edinburgh Old or New Town (unfortunately bad weather deterred many from this) and a social evening to celebrate Burns Night.

The Workshop was attended by around 50 delegates, including a number of European colleagues from the Frontiers of the Roman Empire Serial WHS, and feedback was received formally through a Survey Monkey questionnaire distributed to all delegates after the Workshop with 28 responses. (At 56% this was a slight improvement on the Survey Monkey done after the Saltaire Conference of 49%). 16 (57%) of the responses were from members of WHUK.

This paper looks at the feedback received in relation to the mechanics and the practicalities of the Workshop organisation and the lessons that need to be taken on board for future events. A separate paper has been prepared on the findings from the final break-out session which addressed the value and usefulness of the Workshop in terms of technical knowledge.

2. Awareness and Information of the Workshop

16 delegates (59%) became aware of the meeting through a direct email from WHUK and a further 6 (22%) heard about it through word of mouth. HES and colleagues associated with the Frontiers of the Roman Empire appear to have been particularly helpful in promoting the Workshop.

21 people (75%) had all the information they needed prior to the event and only one had a serious issue. This was related to Eventbrite locking out sales for the members category free tickets but this was quickly resolved through contacting Chris.

3. Venue and Catering

All delegates felt the venue, catering and access were excellent or “just fine”, the catering was particularly positively received. However, there were a number of comments relating to the size of the room for the number of delegates meaning it was a bit cramped and that ideally discussion groups need to be in separate rooms as the noise can become distracting.

4. Workshop Format and Cost

100% of the delegates thought that the format of the meeting – 24 hours over 2 days – was about right as generally it meant travel could be undertaken on the same day either side of the Workshop. A few additional points:

- For people coming from further away two days makes it more attractive to put in the effort to get there. Spreading it out over two days also makes it possible to treat subjects in depth, to not feel rushed and take the time for social interaction during lunch/dinner.
- Even a one day event would have meant overnight costs for those travelling from a distance so thought format worked well and allowed time for informal networking in the evening.
- Fine to spread over two days if it's a once yearly event, more frequent overnights become problematic, also good it was immediately adjacent to the weekend.
- Not too sure one day would work because of distance travel for a lot of members and depth of subject
- Pressure on travel and subsistence means that fitting into one day might be better but depends on how accessible the venue is. As it happened in Edinburgh even if just one day, would still have needed an overnight stay

All those who responded on cost ie those non-members who did not get a free place, felt the ticket price was about right. One comment mentioned that it was good to keep it affordable if people are travelling and staying overnight. There were a few comments from members who didn't know what the cost was – we should be emphasising the savings made for members and that this is part of the value of membership, to help our membership drive.

5. Workshop Content

100% of delegates found the Workshop content interesting and useful with the vast majority in the top category for both interest and usefulness.

- It was well planned with the technical element on day one but the practical examples day two
- Management of WH properties is a key-issue in WH; focus should be given on practical aspects, e.g. "model structure" of management plans or -systems, practical aspects of management of serial / transnational WH sites, comparison of different structure of management plans, examples of success and failures of Management plans (however, who wants to present his/her "failures"?)
- Great timing for the review of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh Management Plan - some pertinent discussion and some good links/contacts made.
- Exchanging experience and knowledge was the most valuable

All delegates also found the event enjoyable and of interest beyond the main theme although nearly 20% were slightly less enthusiastic about any additional interest. However, of 19 additional comments, 16 specifically commented on the valued opportunity to meet and network with other world heritage colleagues and meeting European colleagues was also welcomed. Other comments noted:

- The management in different parts of the world have problems in following the instructions from "Paris"
- As someone not involved in WH on regular basis but someone who writes management plans it was fascinating to learn more about world heritage sites in general.
- EXTREMELY useful to hear the thoughts of Susan D and Christopher Y; quite distant from my own view of the reality of handling all the complexities of site management WITHIN the legislative systems in place...

All the talks and workshop session had an approval rating of well over 90% finding them very or fairly useful. Usefulness of the walking tour did suffer from the weather but of those who braved the weather, over 80% found it useful. The case studies appear to be particularly helpful with four of 11 additional comments mentioning this. Organisation of the workshop was criticised in being too short to go into much detail, too large a group for proper discussion and would have been helpful to have been notified of topic in advance to enable more meaningful discussion. On specific further comment:

- Chris' presentation was as ever very valuable, but I think it would have been better to have reached some clearer conclusions / practical advice - although he did provide that in the Q&A.

92% felt the balance between the talks and the interactive session about right, especially for this technical subject although the lack of discussion around the case studies was mentioned specifically. Two respondents felt they would like more interactive / Q&A sessions.

96% felt they had learnt something new from the session with only one person being unsure. Again experience of other Sites / case studies was felt to have been particularly helpful as many of the issues are similar. One particular problem mentioned was Section 170 notifications and how these are filtered.

Everyone felt that they would be likely to recommend meetings of this type and comment made that it would be recommended to copy this type of session in the Netherlands.

6. Social Event

All respondents felt that the social evening was a valuable part of the Workshop in that it was a chance to be able to network informally. One point mentioned to bear in mind for future events was that the layout of the venue restricted being able to talk to wider group.

7. General Meeting Arrangements in General

75% responded to the question about number and type of meetings each year. Although the answers were somewhat ambiguous, the general consensus is that the arrangements as currently proposed is about right, based on a technical meeting and conference. The more informal Members meeting wasn't mentioned (possibly because there had been no experience of it). There was a suggestion to have more focussed meetings bringing together a smaller group of WH Co-ordinators; this in fact will now happen with the seven industrial sites talking about a joint project.

8. Summary of Practicalities / Lessons for Next Workshop

What Worked Well	What could be improved
General	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Presence of European colleagues added to the event ▫ Format allowed subject to be addressed in depth ▫ Good to have event adjacent to weekend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Need to promote the event to European networks ▫ "Pecha kucha" session recommended for short/sharp updates from Co-ordinators ▫ WHUK needs to ensure that follow up actions are implemented
Prior Arrangements	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Generally good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Ensure Eventbrite functions correctly ▫ Listing of preferred accommodation close to venue ▫ Negotiate a block booking for discounted stay
Venue / Catering	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Room layout needs to be thought about. ▫ Room needs to be large enough to accommodate the number of delegates in comfort.
Speakers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ The case studies were a great opportunity to learn best practice from other sites. ▫ Practical aspects welcomed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Need more time for Q&A especially around the case studies ▫
Workshop	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ The workshops content was both relevant and interesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Need to ensure rooms / space / acoustics suitable for group discussion ▫ Time allowed was too short to go into much detail ▫ More meaningful discussion if topic had been notified in advance
Tours	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Weather! ▫ Time them for end of day in case get wet.
Networking	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Networking opportunities welcomed, formal and informal ▫ Social evening appreciated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Seating arrangements for social event should allow freer circulation for mixing
Funding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Conference fee generally felt about right for members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Need to publicise value to members of free ticket

NB: Comments highlighted were similar to those for the Saltaire event.

9. Suggestions for Future Technical Meetings

Planning / Development x 7
 Heritage Impact Assessments x 5
 Buffer Zones / Boundaries x 4
 Attributes x 2
 Management Plans x 2
 Working with Communities / Friends x 2
 Consultation methods x 1
 Funding Opportunities x 1
 Governance (Sustainability of Management Teams / WH Champions) x 1
 Historic Urban Landscapes (HUL) / dynamic authenticity/ tourism protection x 2
 International Links x 1
 Learning x 1
 Marketing x 1
 Periodic Reporting Outcomes x 1
 Tentative List Sites x 1
 World Heritage Day x 1

9. Summary Comments on Workshop

- Many compliments to all! I had a great time, felt well cared for and left a lot wiser than I came.
- A Dutch guest noted that in the UK we actually mean the management plans to be used, not just to go through the motions, and found this novel but exciting!

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 12th June 2016