

<b>NORTH WEST INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE NETWORK MEETING</b>	<b>Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 11:00-12:30</b> <b>Zoom</b>
<b>SESSION 1</b> A brief introduction and update from Mike	
<b>Dr Mike Nevell, Industrial Heritage Support Officer for England</b>	<p>The Industrial Heritage Support Officer project and post has been until 2025. The key objectives of the project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support and advice, whilst developing partnerships between organisations</li> <li>• Provide strategic leadership within the sector</li> <li>• State of resilience and condition of preserved industrial sites in England</li> </ul> <p>All ten regional Industrial Heritage Networks are now up and running – they are: Cornwall &amp; Devon, East of England, East Midlands, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire.</p> <p>There are four social media channels for industrial heritage support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website <a href="https://industrialheritagesupport.com/">https://industrialheritagesupport.com/</a></li> <li>• IH Networks Website <a href="https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/">https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/</a></li> <li>• Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/IHSOengland/">https://www.facebook.com/IHSOengland/</a></li> <li>• Twitter @IHSOEngland (for immediate support)</li> </ul> <p>Mike is also setting up an Instagram account for the project.</p>
<b>Impact of the Pandemic</b>	<p>There are currently 606 preserved industrial sites that are open to the public within England, identified by either scheduling or listing. Within the North West there are 70x protected sites and 5x with no formal protection – by January 2022, approximately 10% of these sites are no longer open.</p> <p>Between Oct 2020 and Oct 2021, 9x Industrial Heritage Network meetings were held, attended by a total of 101 individuals. Feedback at the meetings have shown the different ways organisations have adapted throughout the pandemic – these have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-openings as outdoor venues, with a particular focus on food and retail.</li> <li>• Online resources have increased but only at 10% of sites – these resources include online shops, tours, workshops and videos. Not all of these extra resources are free to use.</li> <li>• Larger sites seemed to have generally fared better than the smaller ones.</li> <li>• Medium to large sites appear to have been better at applying for government cultural recovery grants</li> <li>• Many smaller, volunteer-run sites didn't receive as much extra funding – this could be because they were unaware they were eligible for the grants.</li> </ul> <p>There are concerns that more sites may close now that the cultural recovery funding has finished.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance costs are also a concern – these have been made worse through the pandemic closures and the cost of repairs caused by increased vandalism at closed sites during the lockdowns.</p>
<b>SESSION 2</b> The attendees each introduced themselves and the organisations they represented. They described the challenges they have faced during the pandemic	

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Phillip Butler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Throughout the pandemic, they weren't too affected. However, there is now a concern that that Local Authority budgets will be cut going forward</li><li>Social distancing was applied to the sites that were able to reopen</li><li>Museum visitor numbers haven't yet returned to pre-pandemic levels</li><li>A number of specialised staff have been lost (i.e. weavers and engineers) and the successive lockdowns have prevented recruiting replacements.</li><li>The sites are now open for the full summer season.</li><li>They are working with the National Trust on the extension of their HLF funded mills project, which provides NT members with free access to two sites.</li></ul>	
Joan Livesey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The council made use of the second lockdown by refurbishing 80% of the gallery, which included moving the shop and reception desk.</li><li>They created a large exhibition space at the front of the site. It is currently housing a Rugby League exhibition, including a stadium space that is proving very popular with visitors.</li><li>Visitor numbers are steady and slowly rising (there are indications that people are still cautious)</li><li>School visits have returned</li><li>In-person talks have restarted – bookings were slow to begin with but the last few have been fully booked.</li></ul>	
Katie Belshaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The museum has been busy since reopening.</li><li>Large scale restoration projects are still happening on site – some buildings are closed but some will reopen for the summer.</li><li>Guidance is being refreshed</li><li>A new exhibition is due to open on the site within the next few weeks.</li><li>Sustainable running of the steam engines is being explored by the engineering curator Sarah Baines.</li><li>The long term future of using heritage fuels such as coal needs to be examined.</li></ul>	
Bernard Rostron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It's not clear whether Helmsore will remain in the control of the local council.</li><li>Trustees are committed to maintaining the site whatever decision is made.</li></ul>	
Andrew Fielding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Initial feedback suggests that many meetings are returning to face-to-face – this is despite other comments that people prefer online meetings as there are no travel costs to consider and therefore more can attend.</li></ul>	
Any Other Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The project is committed to continuing the Network meetings online. There will be some site visits, but these will be hybrid so that others unable to travel can join online.</li><li>The nature of hybrid meetings will restrict what sites can host the meetings as they will need to provide correct facilities and have a good wi-fi connection.</li><li>The project is planning on holding an online meetings for all the Industrial Heritage Networks across the country – this is likely to be in the summer.</li><li><b>Suggestions for speakers at future meetings should be sent to Mike (Action = ALL)</b></li><li><b>Mike will circulate a copy of his presentation to the group (Action = Mike Nevell)</b></li></ul>		

<b>ATTENDEES:</b>	
Katie Belshaw	Science and Industry Museum, Manchester
Philip Butler	Museum of Lancaster
Andrew Fielding	Salt Industry Independent Researcher
Joan Livesey	Museum of Wigan Life
Bernard Rostron	Helmshore and Higher Mill Trust