

Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)



Guidelines



1. Guidelines for Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs) from the IHSO Project

Introduction

- England's preserved, interpreted, and publicly accessible industrial heritage sites include **mine sites, ironworks, water and steam-powered textile mills, waterworks, glassworks, potteries, railways, breweries, maltings, roads, bridges, ports, harbours, gas works, workers housing and more.**
- These 'historic entities' often include the building, structure, their contents and sometimes associated, working machinery. They represent the public face of much of England's industrial heritage, and are a major educational, leisure and tourism resource.
- Over two thirds of publicly accessible heritage sites are managed either by small to medium sized charitable trusts or by local authorities. While, this community and public investment is in many ways a good news story, there is an urgent need to support the volunteer effort which is the mainstay of many sites, to address increasing pressures on funding and organisational sustainability, and to encourage improved conservation and management best practice.

Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs) are being established across England to help facilitate this.



- The above logo has been created to support the development of the networks. In addition to the above logo, each network will also receive a **regional logo** with the name of the region outlined below 'Networks'.
- The IHNs' symbol** represents two aspects of industrial heritage: a cog wheel and a decorative tile. This combination showcases the diversity and the wide range of industrial heritage sector.



1 WHAT are the Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)?

- **Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)** are regional, **umbrella organisations** which provide a platform for **free peer to peer** support for industrial heritage sites and organisations together with their staff and volunteers.
- IHNs are groups of **like-minded individuals** who care about preserved, publicly accessible industrial heritage sites and their future.
- IHNs are **open to professionals and volunteers** (at all levels) with interest in, and the passion for, industrial heritage, with a focus on those who own, manage and operate preserved industrial heritage sites that are publicly accessible, together with other bodies and organisations who can provide support in management of those assets.
- **IHNs** are supported by England's Industrial Heritage Support Officer (**IHSO**), whose post is funded by Historic England, managed by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, and supported by the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA).



3. Guidelines for Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs) from the IHSO Project

2 WHERE are the IHNs?

The IHNs are **regional**.

The following 10 IHNs are already in place:

- IHN Cornwall & Devon (IHNCD)
- IHN East of England (IHNEoE)
- IHN East Midlands (IHNEM)
- IHN London (IHNL)
- IHN North East (IHNNE)
- IHN North West (IHNNW)
- IHN South East (IHNSE)
- IHN South West (IHNSW)
- IHN West Midlands (IHNWM)
- IHN Yorkshire (IHNY)



Full lists of members in each region are available on the IHNs website:

<https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/>

3 IHNs' Purpose

The **purpose** of the IHNs is to help ensure sustainability of preserved industrial heritage sites across England.

To help achieve that goal, the IHNs' members focus on delivering the following five aims:

- **Improving Communication**

Members communicate with each other by attending two meetings a year (one online on in-person) but also, and more importantly, by staying in touch throughout the year either virtually via the online platform, or by meeting more regularly on a smaller scale.

- **Working in Partnerships**

By joining an IHN members already show willingness to work in partnerships but there are more opportunities which members can explore between themselves focusing on common issues, targeting similar audiences together or creating more robust bids for funding.

- **Improving Skills and Knowledge**

Members use the IHNs as a platform for analysing each other's experiences, good and bad, deciding the best ways forward, discussing and brainstorming to deal with common issues and learn from each other. Through that, members can determine gaps in the knowledge and ask for tailored training to be developed and or delivered (the IHSO assists with the training provision and the delivery).

- **Staying Relevant**

Becoming, and continuing to be relevant is perhaps the most important aim. Without the visitors, local communities and volunteers there is no interest, engagement and primarily, income. Members can look at how to become or stay relevant by, for example, analysing their audiences and establishing how they can keep them engaged, and determining what other audiences they have not engaged with yet.

- **Improving Awareness**

Members increase awareness of their industrial heritage sites and organisations across their regions and nationally by showcasing those sites and organisations during the bi-annual meetings, and through regular participation in online communications.



4 HOW Do The IHNs Operate?

▪ Support Structure

The **IHSO** will maintain support for the networks and support the development of the new networks.

The **IHSO** helps with bringing members together, organising meetings and promoting the IHNs.

The following organisations are invited to take part in each IHN: the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA), Historic England and Museums Development Officers, together with a close working relationship with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the European Route of Industrial Heritage.

With the development of each network, the IHSO will invite appropriate staff members and, or volunteers from the above organisations to join the online platforms and the biannual meetings in their corresponding regions, or ones they might find relevant.

The aim is to make the networks wide-ranging and as self-sustaining as is practical in the current economic environment.



▪ Biannual Meetings

Each IHN has **two meetings per year, one in-person and on online**. Each meeting is hosted by a different member.

All-Year-Round communication and information sharing is provided via a dedicated website (www.industrialheritagenetworks.com), a Facebook page (industrial heritage networks), and social media accounts (@ihso).

Members can **volunteer** to be a host. **Hosting offers** an opportunity to talk about and showcase your site, your operations, successes and achievements, and gain insights from other members about any issues you might be experiencing.

Hosting involves helping to choose the date for the meeting, choosing the theme for the day and offering facilities (catering is optional and not a requirement). The IHSO chooses an overall theme for the network meetings each year, but hosts can highlight any successes they have achieved and would like to share, or an issue/challenge which they would like to discuss with other members.

▪ Agenda

Items on the agenda include a talk from the host, discussions and workshops focused on the theme for the year/day, updates from members, and a site tour. Meetings are interactive and members are encouraged to share successes, suggest improvements and present new ideas.

5 HOW Can We JOIN?

If you would like to join as a representative of your site or your organisation, have any questions or would like to share thoughts and offer suggestions please direct all enquiries to the IHSO via email:

ihs@ironbridge.org.uk

- To join as a site, an organisation or an individual representative of a site/organisation contact the IHSO either by email, or mobile. The IHSO will then add your name and your site/organisation's name to the list of members.
- This means you will then be informed about your regional IHN meetings and developments, and once established, join an online resource to communicate with other network members between meetings. Currently, members can communicate via the IHSO, the IHNs website and social media on Facebook, LinkedIn, Threads, and XTwitter.

