

SENSITIVE

MINUTES: Heritage Council - 27th February 2024 16:00 - 17:30

1.1.	UK City of Culture 2025 officials in DCMS to connect relevant colleagues in Bradford with the National Railway Museum, on potential join up for Railway 200.	DCMS
1.2.	Heritage Railway Association and National Historic Ships to provide information on the impact of loss of coal in the UK, for heritage rail and steam vessels.	Heritage Railway Association/ National Historic Ships
1.3.	Heritage Railway Association to identify sites where suitable coal could be sourced from, to share with DCMS/DfT.	Heritage Railway Association
1.4.	DCMS and DfT to send a joint letter to the Welsh Government, regarding the supply of coal for heritage rail.	DCMS/DfT
2.1.	DCMS to explore expansion of 2014 MoU with MoD, to include other Government departments.	DCMS/MoD
2.2.	DCMS to coordinate further government activity on marine and underwater cultural heritage before the next Heritage Council, with MoD and DEFRA.	DCMS/MoD/DEFRA

In attendance

- *Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Minister for Arts and Heritage*
- *Huw Merriman, Minister for Transport*
- *Lord Benyon, Minister for Climate, Environment and Energy*
- *Earl of Minto, Minister of State, Ministry of Defence*
- *Brigadier Jock Fraser, Royal Marines*
- *Lord Hendy of Richmond, Network Rail (NR)*
- *Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)*
- *Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)*
- *Historic England (HE)*
- *National Trust (NT)*
- *Historic Environment Forum (HEF)*
- *The Landmark Trust (LT)*
- *National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)*
- *The Heritage Alliance (THA)*
- *Historic Houses Association (HHA)*
- *Heritage Railway Association (HRA)*
- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA)*
- *National Railway Museum (NRM)*
- *Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee (JNAPC)*
- *National Historic Ships (NHS)*

Apologies

- *Historic Royal Palaces (HRP)*

Welcome and introductions

- Lord Parkinson welcomed attendees to this meeting of the Heritage Council. The agenda consisted of two items on heritage rail and underwater/marine heritage, for which there were specific organisations in attendance alongside regular Council members.

1. Railway 200 and Heritage Rail

- Lord Parkinson introduced the item. He invited Lord Hendy of Richmond (NR) to provide an update on plans to mark Railway 200 in 2025, a series of events to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first passenger rail. This will be an opportunity to tell the story on the legacy of rail, showcasing its past, present and future. 2025 will also mark 50 years since the opening of the National Railway Museum.
- Lord Hendy (NR) noted that a key aim of Railway 200 is to inspire and engage people across all ages and utilise the geographical reach of bodies including the Science Museum Group. It was suggested that there could be join-up with the 2025 UK City of Culture launch in Bradford, which DCMS officials could facilitate.
- Lord Hendy outlined that some areas of the Railway 200 programme needed further work, including community outreach and ensuring a tangible future narrative around building careers and apprenticeships for young people in heritage rail. On the former, attendees suggested specific community outreach in towns and villages that had a dependency on rail.
- HE commented that they would continue to support preparations and ensure join-up across planned activities, including through use of the HE archive and heritage schools programme.
- NT highlighted an opportunity for collaboration on Railway 200, through which rail exhibits could be taken to different NT locations. In terms of future progress, NT were interested in the environmental sustainability of heritage rail and were keen to work together with relevant bodies.
- NHS also welcomed a continuing conversation on sustainability, noting that the same issues also apply to historic vessels.
- Attendees discussed broader challenges for heritage rail, including the availability of coal. Huw Merriman asked that DfT and DCMS work in partnership, to address the availability of coal, as well as ethical and climate implications. He suggested that a letter was sent to the Welsh Government in the first instance, regarding coal supplies. Lord Parkinson agreed that a joint letter be sent.
- Additionally, the HRA and NHS agreed to provide information on the impact of the loss of coal for both heritage rail and steam vessels. HRA may also be able to identify and share sites where suitable coal could be sourced from.
- More broadly, THA commented that questions about protection and sustainability were applicable across all 'mobile heritage' and further work should be undertaken to understand the range of challenges in this area.
- Lord Parkinson thanked speakers for the update on Railway 200, which was a good opportunity for UK wide reach and cross-sector engagement. He noted that the discussion of ongoing and future challenges for heritage rail was timely, and presented actions to take forward.

Actions

- **1.1. UK City of Culture 2025 officials in DCMS to connect relevant colleagues in Bradford with the National Railway Museum, on potential join-up for Railway 200.**
- **1.2. DCMS and DfT to send a joint letter to the Welsh Government, regarding the supply of coal for heritage rail.**
- **1.3. Heritage Railway Association and National Historic Ships, to provide information on the impact of loss of coal in the UK, for heritage rail and steam vessels.**
- **1.4. Heritage Railway Association to identify sites where suitable coal could be sourced from, to share with DCMS/DfT.**

2. Underwater and Marine Cultural Heritage

- Lord Parkinson introduced the item, which covered elements relating to underwater cultural heritage, including the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. He noted that Lord Benyon and the Earl of Minto had joined the meeting for this discussion.
- Bob Yorke (JNAPC) was invited to provide opening remarks. He noted that there were increasing challenges for underwater and marine heritage, including net zero, the implications of climate change and challenges of pollution to vessels.
- There was a clear ask from the sector for Government to take a joined-up approach across all departments on underwater cultural heritage. The ratification of the 2001 Convention would be a notable starting point to do this, which would help shape international underwater management.
- Lord Parkinson noted attendees' comments on the ratification of the 2001 UNESCO Convention, on which work would continue. He shared that more immediate ratification would occur on the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- The MoD and FCDO were in agreement that a wider-reaching, clearly defined MoU between relevant departments, would provide a suitable framework through which to implement a unified approach. This could also cover points on reducing incidental risks to wrecks and marine heritage, including pollution and broader effects of climate change.
- HE were supportive of the proposal to introduce an extended government MoU, which would be an opportunity to better streamline processes and resources.
- Lord Benyon raised that conservation and offshore considerations were an important part of this conversation. DEFRA were willing to be involved in an MoU and in efforts to progress the ratification process.
- Sector attendees asked that there be further coordination on government activity at working level between Heritage Councils, with point people in each Department, including DEFRA.
- The Galloper Wreck was briefly raised. It was agreed that the existing DCMS/MoU should be utilised to determine next steps at pace. Brigadier Fraser shared that MoD

were actively exploring the use of new technology to carry out an underwater survey of the site.

- Lord Parkinson summarised the discussion. Stronger joint working would build knowledge and utilise those who possessed expertise, strengthening the framework for coordination across the marine heritage agenda.

Actions

- **2.1. DCMS to explore expansion of 2014 MoU with MoD, to include other Government departments.**
- **2.2. DCMS to coordinate further government activity on marine and underwater cultural heritage before the next Heritage Council, with MoD and DEFRA.**

3. AOB and closing remarks

- Lord Parkinson thanked attendees for their time and engagement, noting that the more specific focus of the agenda had been successful.
- Both the rail and marine sectors had raised similar challenges and opportunities, which required stronger collaboration and more innovative approaches. The meeting had been a good starting point to build on momentum and consider next steps.