Agenda item 5b

Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape (Cornish Mining) World Heritage Site Partnership Board

Management Plan consultation – feedback from Historic Cornwall Advisory Group meeting 9 December 2011

1. Background

The WHS Co-ordinator was asked to run a workshop for the Historic Cornwall Advisory Group (HCAG), and used the opportunity to trial some of the issues emerging from the Management Plan Review. HCAG comprises a range of organisations interested in preserving Cornish heritage, including local museums, history and archaeology societies and those interested in protecting the historic environment.

HCAG members received a report and presentation outlining the scope and purpose of the WHS Management Plan, and then split into three groups to discuss three aspects of WHS management – Protection, Visitor Management and Learning. The results are described below.

2. Protection

The questions posed were;

- How could the WHS Partnership communicate the concept of, and the need to protect, Outstanding Universal Value to the local groups represented on HCAG?

- What communication tools or channels would be most effective?

- Would HCAG members be interested in regular reports on planning cases within the WHS and outcomes?

The group concluded that working together with other organisations, eg the Cornish Buildings Group, on joint publicity and information, would help achieve greater understanding. Using the websites – our own and potential partners’ - to target key messages and individuals was a recurring theme. Highlighting best practice examples as encouragement was recommended, eg through a CBG Award for a project in the WHS, was recommended, as was emphasising the human/personal stories, expanding interpretation of OUV beyond CMAMA sites. Embedding WHS themes in town trails/conservation plans/local development orders would help to increase recognition of the WHS.

Ensuring a consistent approach to dealing with WHS Planning cases was a concern, with calls for local Planning staff to be educated on OUV. A detailed information base on the stock of assets exhibiting OUV would assist. HCAG would appreciate regular reports on planning cases in the
WHS, and thought that these would be useful for professionals staff in the authorities, too.

3. Visitor Management

The questions posed were;

- How would you recommend we encourage local residents to "discover what’s on your doorstep" and to promote the WHS to local people?
- Should the WHS now broaden its tourism benefits to include other partner organisations beyond its formal boundaries and CMAMA membership?
- If so, which organisations would you suggest we target?

Events, advertising and signage were the key recommended methods for increasing local people’s use of the WHS. Another strong theme was recruiting and developing volunteers to communicate the WHS message and acts as advocates for the WHS.

HCAG would like to see the WHS expanding its communications work and building wider partnerships, eg with Gardens, Country Houses and other brands – such as the National Garden Scheme. Joint ticketing and shared funding for initiatives was seen as desirable.

Schools were seen as a key target audience, both working with teachers and parents/families to highlight the informal learning opportunities. Family history and genealogy was another suggested target group. HCAG would like to see the WHS on local schools’ curricula.

4. Learning and Outreach

The questions posed were;

- Integration with other providers - The WHS learning strategy has potential to cross support the learning activities of a wide range of organisations, not just mining heritage sites. Which HCAG members would be interested in working with us?
- What are those organisations’ priorities for developing their learning services?
- Which learning audiences would you ideally wish to target?

The group saw education professionals as key to delivering the WHS learning goals, however, whilst Cornwall still has an advisory service and central staff and programme with which the WHS can integrate, in Devon this provision has recently been externalised, making collaboration more difficult. The fragmentation of LEA’s generally was making access to
schools harder. How to locate them teachers and work with them collectively was an issue to be addressed.

Other recommended groups with which the WHS should work to deliver its learning services include Old Cornwall Societies, Local history groups and Historical Associations. Retired teachers were another possible source of help.

HCAG priorities for learning services included;
- Architecture
- Economic History
- Earth Sciences
- Bibliographies of key characters
- Creative Arts and writing – including developing further public arts/annual cultural events
- Cornish Identity - Sense of interdependence - “Cornwall knowing itself as Cornwall in the world”

All of the HCAG groups are potentially interested in working with WHS, but their capacity is limited by reliance on voluntary staff. They would appreciate help in accessing learning groups. Their target audiences include U3A and informal learning organisations.

5. Conclusions

Recurrent themes from each of the issue groups included
- Broadening the range of groups with which the WHS works on a regular basis to include more strategic interest bodies (eg county buildings preservation groups, gardens) to purse shared objectives
- more engagement with local or community based societies was also seen as desirable
- Schools and learning organisations are a key target group shared with the WHS, but changes in education structures are making co-ordinated action more difficult
- Interpreting the importance of the WHS and the human stories attached to places and buildings would contribute to training for planners and raise awareness among local people about why preservation of the WHS asset is so important.

There is clearly an appetite to work with the WHS from the wide range of groups represented on HCAG, but constraints on partners’ capacity will need to be addressed if strategies to deliver collaboration are to be successful. Notwithstanding the resource implications, expanding the WHS’s partnership working is an issue to be further explored as the next Management Plan evolves.