

## Notes from FoBRA attendees (Jeremy Boss & Caroline Greenwood)

### Bath World Heritage Site Advisory Board – 28 February 2023

The following significant items were on the agenda:

- Jeremy attended to represent FoBRA.
- This week (1-4 March) the **Great Spa's of Europe** second annual conference is being held in Bath with delegates from the other 10 towns / 6 countries visiting the City. On the 2 March the opportunity was taken to present Bath with its second inscription as one of the Great Spa's of Europe at an event in the Roman Baths. This reflects a great achievement for Bath as one of the 11 Spas included (a major success for cooperation across Europe). A second inscription is also an amazing achievement for Bath. One of only 22 double-inscribed places out of over 11,000 WHS across the world. This will culminate with World Heritage Day on 4 March with a series of free events at the Guildhall.
- **Reorganisation of the Council's World Heritage Team.** The Head of BANES Heritage Services, Rob Campbell explained the rationale and plans for the reorganisation after a review of future support needed for the double inscription world heritage site. The three main points are that:
  - The WHS function will move from Heritage Services to Planning. Reflecting a change of focus from interpretation and engagement to impacts of development and sustainable development. This reflects in part the completion of the WHS Centre in York Street.
  - Review of resources to support this including the requirement to support the second inscription through the Great Spa's of Europe. Which is acknowledged as complex and time consuming. There will be a small net increase in resources.
  - The current chair of the WHSAB (Barry Gilbertson) has been appointed for a further three-year term.
- **Chair and World Heritage Manager's updates:** The key points of interest were:
  - Lots of activity in the last six month around sharing and promoting World Heritage.
  - Plans are being developed for an "Artist in Residence" in the City which is a great opportunity to bring in someone of international renown to look at architecture (built and landscape) across the City. It will managed through this board, led by BANES and supported by Bath University.
  - Continued outreach work including the planned series of six talks at BRISLI which have been separately communicated to FoBRA members.
  - Reporting of a special display in the WH Centre on World Heritage and War with strong links and support for Ukraine and the threats to its World Heritage Sites.
- Progress with the **Combined WHS Management Plan** for Bath
  - Continued work on the WHS Management plan which with the double inscription is particularly complex and we are on new ground.
  - Discussion on how this will interact with the New Local Plan which BANES is working on in tandem. As ever the processes and dates don't line up perfectly! There will be a role for residents in both processes.

- **Bath Abbey** confirmed that their new Discovery Centre will be open from 5<sup>th</sup> March which should significantly enhance the visitor experience. They also explained that they are moving from asking for a donation of £6.50 to charging an admission fee. This is always a controversial change. Unlike cathedrals the Abbey receives no special funding. The Abbey wanted to point out that the fee is less than any other heritage assets in Bath, and all cathedrals, and that worshipers and local residents (Discovery Card) will be able to enter for free.
- **Broadband installation guidance** for listed building has been developed by the Bath Preservation Trust. It's a simple guide for householders of listed buildings should be found on their website.
- **Re Balance Bath** the Well Being Festival held in February has been judged a successful event with lots of positive national press for the City and positive feedback from local businesses. It is being scheduled again for next year by Bath BID.
- Next meeting 16 May 2022