



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Places of Worship Forum

Open Minutes of the 1st meeting held at 10:30am on Wednesday 30 November 2005 at 23 Savile Row, London W1

Members Present: Dr Christopher Wakeling
Miss Sophie Andreae
Mr Steven Bowler
Ms Judith Cligman
Mr Trevor Cooper
Dr Ian Dungavell
Mr Michael Hoare
Mr Ian Serjeant
Mr Crispin Truman

Staff Present: Mr Peter Beacham (Heritage Protection Director – for part)
Mr Guy Braithwaite (Advice and Grants Manager)
Ms Sarah Brown (Head of Research for Places of Worship)
Mr Nick Chapple (Policy Officer for Places of Worship)
Mr David Heath (Chief Conservation Architect)
Mr Richard Halsey (POWF Coordinator & Places of Worship Strategy Manager)
Mr Peter Just (Parliamentary Relations Manager)
Ms Anya Matthews (Corporate Communications Manager)
Ms Rebecca Simpson (POWF Secretary, Commission Secretariat)

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr Derek Taylor Thompson, Ms Paula Griffiths, and Dr Simon Thurley.

Announcements

- 1.2 The Chair welcomed all attendees to the first meeting of the Places of Worship Forum. Introductions were made round the table.

Declarations of Interest

- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest. Rebecca Simpson confirmed that the declarations of interest guidance was being revised and would be sent to all Forum members when finalised.

ACTION: Rebecca Simpson

ITEM 2 – PURPOSE OF FORUM

i) Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The Forum wished to replace “fully” with “well” on the fifth bullet point of the Terms of Reference. The Ecclesiological Society and The Methodist Church, which were inadvertently missing were added to the membership list. The Forum recognised that The Chapel Society should be invited to be one of the corresponding members of the Forum and not on the main membership list. Members queried the restriction of corresponding members to just eight.

ii) Places of Worship Commissioner

- 2.2 Richard Halsey reported that the appointment for Places of Worship Commissioner had been advertised by DCMS. Interviews had been held and recommendations sent to the Minister. A decision on the appointment and announcement was expected shortly. It was hoped that the Places of Worship Commissioner, when appointed, would attend the Places of Worship Forum meetings. The Committee looked forward to news of the appointment.

ITEM 3 – CORRESPONDING MEMBERSHIP

i) Communication issues

- 3.1 The Forum agreed a list of seven corresponding members, but wanted to review it once the Forum had got underway. Staff agreed to clarify what information would become available on the EH website. Members agreed that Heritage Link was a useful vehicle for communicating information and felt that they should be kept informed of items discussed at POWF and added to the POWF circulation list. DCMS, ODPM, Defra and in particular the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Heritage should also be kept well informed of the work of the Forum. Richard Halsey reported that Claudia Kenyatta at DCMS was the Head of Group on Places of Worship and was involved in the pilot projects relating to the Heritage Protection Review. Jeremy Dann was the main Policy Adviser on places of worship at DCMS.

ITEM 4 – PLACES OF WORSHIP UPDATE – SHORT PRESENTATIONS FOR INFORMATION

i) EH Research Strategy for Places of Worship

- 4.1 Sarah Brown provided an update on the Research Strategy for Places of Worship. The paper went to EHAC on 17 November and now includes the revisions made by that committee. Places of Worship were a high priority for EH research work. The strategy was intended to help prioritise EH's resources to promote research activity. Whilst it is hoped that the strategy will be of benefit to the sector more widely, it is primarily a EH strategy. The implementation plan annexed to the report was created to determine and prioritise resources against other priority research areas.
- 4.2 The Forum suggested embarking on a wider research strategy to establish the needs of the historic environment in relation to socio-economic issues. This could be incorporated in the EH Places of Worship Strategy. The Fabric Needs Survey and Mapping Places of Worship Need also needed to be more clearly fitted into the strategy. The Forum agreed that there needed to be more cross-referencing between grants and research work and closer ties to ensure it fits with the strategy. Peter Beacham highlighted the recent work carried out on places of worship in Cornwall. Staff agreed to send the findings of the Cornish study to members of the Forum.

ACTION: Peter Beacham/Rebecca Simpson

- ii) Review of EH/HLF Repair Grants for Places of Worship
- 4.3 Judith Cligman presented an update on the review. The recently published "Our Heritage, Our Future, Your Say" HLF consultation document reviews the work of HLF over the last 11 years and consults on lottery benefit. This document gives people an opportunity to comment on the Government's plan for lottery money going to heritage.
- 4.4 The Review of EH/HLF Repair Grants for Places of Worship would be taken to the HLF Board in February. It summarised the three schemes operated 1996-2005 and reviewed their effectiveness. Currently, £25 million was available for offer annually, and though the resulting expenditure varied from year to year. The first cycle of offers for 2002 (under the third scheme) were now coming to completion, with a deadline of 2006. 90% of the offers made at Stage 1 for development grants had returned for repair grants. Members of the Forum asked if it would be possible to see the amounts actually claimed, and some analysis of the timescales for individual projects. The Forum agreed that their meeting in January should include a seminar about grants and funding.

ACTION: Rebecca Simpson/Richard Halsey/Guy Braithwaite

- iii) Places of Worship Fabric Needs Survey
- 4.5 Richard Halsey reported that the Fabric Needs Survey was now in progress. Once complete, the conclusions will be compared to the results of similar work carried out in 1994/5. Information on average repair costs and a baseline figure for maintenance costs will be established from the results to try and understand where the greatest grant support needs are. An update on the progress of the survey would be presented to the next Forum meeting.

iv) Mapping Places of Worship in Need

4.6 Richard Halsey reported that the point of the mapping exercise was to identify the number and broad location of 'vulnerable' churches apparently facing large bills in small communities. The definition of 'need' and the measure of vulnerability would need to be clearly defined to ensure consistency. The results of the survey and mapping exercise would be brought to a future Forum meeting and form the basis of the *Inspired!* campaign.

v) *Inspired!* A Campaign for England's Places of Worship

4.7 A paper copy of the *Inspired!* leaflet was tabled at the meeting. When printed, the *Inspired!* leaflet would be sent to approximately 150 opinion holders in denominations, key people in the heritage sector and parliamentary contacts with a letter from Dr Simon Thurley. The *Inspired!* Campaign would be launched in the spring of 2006, centred on the results of the Places of Worship Fabric Needs Survey and mapping exercise. This campaign aims to raise the public profile of the needs of listed places of worship and emphasise their importance to the nation's heritage.

vi) Heritage Protection Review Pilots

4.8 Peter Beacham reported that the Heritage Protection Review pilots were currently underway in Lincoln and Bath & Wells dioceses and Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals. They should feed into the Heritage White Paper which would be introduced next year. This item would be brought back to the Forum for comment at a later stage as the pilots and legislation progresses.

vii) Building Faith in our Future

4.9 Crispin Truman of The Church of England Archbishop's Council introduced the item. The report demonstrates how mixed-use and wider partnerships can support churches and help to maintain them whilst bringing benefits to the community. At the last meeting of the Church Heritage Forum, members focused on the endgame of the report. The first aim being to achieve a more symmetrical relationship between churches and their facilities. The second aim being the wider recognition of churches as key regeneration facilitators which support local communities.

4.10 There were several opportunities to help raise the profile of places of worship. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Historic Places of Worship would prove a useful vehicle to promote the role and needs of historic churches in Parliament. Education projects could be provided in conjunction with tourism organisations such as Visit Britain to promote historic churches and demonstrate their importance to local communities. The sector could work with organisations such as Visit Britain and the Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA) to develop a marketing strategy for historic churches.

4.11 The Forum noted the Church Sector lunch with David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture, which would be held on Friday 9 December. Forum members that were attending were pleased to be invited and to have the opportunity to discuss the needs and roles of places of worship with him.

ITEM 5 – FUTURE SEMINARS

i) Topics

- 5.1 As discussed earlier on in the meeting, the Forum agreed that the first seminar in January 2006 should be on 'Funding Repairs' for places of worship. Michael Hoare of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust agreed to do a short presentation on its grants at the seminar.
- 5.2 It was agreed that members would be asked a couple of weeks before each POWF despatch for suggestions for future seminar topics.

ACTION: Rebecca Simpson

- ii) Dates
- 5.3 The dates for POWF meetings in 2006, as set out in the accompanying report, were agreed by the Forum members. Members were asked to let the Secretary their which dates they already knew they would not be able to attend.

ITEM 6 - AOB

- 6.1 There was no other business discussed.

Rebecca Simpson
POWF Secretary
Corporate Governance
December 2005