



The Ironbridge Gorge is one of Britain’s first World Heritage Sites, inscribed onto the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List in 1986. The Ironbridge Gorge is of universal significance for its unique role in the development of the Industrial Revolution that largely originated in Britain in the eighteenth century and later spread across the world. Within the World Heritage Site (WHS) are substantial remains of furnaces, works, dwellings and transport systems together with extensive collections of artefacts and archives relating to the individuals, communities, processes and products that made this area so important. At the heart of the WHS stands the great Iron Bridge, the world’s first bridge constructed of iron that has become a universal symbol of the Industrial Revolution.

The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Steering Group (IGWHSG) is comprised of representatives from the following organisations: Telford & Wrekin Council as lead organisation together with; Shropshire Council, the three local Parish and Town Councils, Historic England, English Heritage Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. Each of these organisations collaborates with each other and together ensures that the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is conserved and that the Ironbridge Gorge story is presented to a diverse audience of visitors and scholars.

Due to the end of term position for the current Chair the World Heritage Site Steering Group is now seeking a new Chair and the details of the role are set out below.

Chair of Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Steering Group: Role Specification

1. Role of the Chairperson

To act as a champion and advocate for Ironbridge World Heritage Site.

To chair the Steering Group and ensure it carries out its role effectively in:

- Delivering the UK Government's convention commitment to protect, conserve, present and transmit World Heritage Sites to this and future generations.
- Delivering the actions of the current World Heritage Site Management Plan, and inputting into any review to the Management Plan.
- Setting the strategic direction, through the Steering Group, for the World Heritage Site agenda in Ironbridge.
- Enabling the Group to engage and encompass views of stakeholders.
- Contributing to the effective management of the World Heritage Site in Ironbridge.
- Safeguarding the good name and reputation of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

To represent Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site at local, regional and national meetings.

2. Behavioural competencies

The Chair should be able to:

- Demonstrate experience in chairing large and diverse committees.
- Demonstrate excellent communication skills at a senior level.
- Gain the confidence and respect of key stakeholders, government departments and national agencies, especially the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Historic England.
- Demonstrate strong negotiating skills and the ability to achieve consensus amongst a wide range of potentially conflicting interests.
- Develop and maintain networks of relevant senior national and international contacts.
- Be recognised as having knowledge, understanding and interest in UK Heritage, specifically that of Ironbridge Gorge, without necessarily being an expert.
- Distil strategic issues of importance from high levels of detailed input.
- Be non-partisan while politically aware and diplomatic.
- Have experience in media and public relations matters.
- Think creatively and exercise independent judgement.
- Demonstrate a strong public service ethic.

3. Other

The Chair should be prepared to commit themselves to the work of the Steering Group for at least 0.5 days per month. This is likely to include a mixture of working week, day time, formal Steering Group meetings (twice per year, or more frequently if required), informal meetings with Group members, stakeholders and the World Heritage Co-ordinator, evening social engagements, and potential attendance at meetings of national organisations such as 'World Heritage UK ', which would involve travel (principally within the UK).

The Chair will work closely with the WHS Co-ordinator, Telford & Wrekin Council who have responsibility for the daily management and co-ordination of the Site including provision of a secretariat for Steering Group meetings and managing implementation of actions.

The term of the appointment will be for three years, potentially renewable for a second term. The position is unremunerated and this post is independent of political or organisational ties.

4. Application Process:

Applications should consist of a C.V. and a short covering note (no more than 2 sides of A4), and be sent to WHScoordinator@telford.gov.uk by 5pm on 25 March 2024. Interviews will be held 8 & 10th April 2024.

For further details or an informal discussion, please contact Valerie Hulme, Development Management Service Delivery Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council valerie.hulme@telford.gov.uk, 01952 380380

5. Further details:

Ironbridge Gorge WHS: <http://www.ironbridgegorgewhs.co.uk>

World Heritage UK: <https://worldheritageuk.org/>

General information about World Heritage: <http://whc.unesco.org/>