Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)

Guidelines

1. Guidelines for Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)

Introduction

- England's preserved publicly accessible industrial heritage sites include **mine sites, ironworks, water and steam-powered textile mills, waterworks, glassworks, potteries, railways, breweries, maltings, roads, bridges, ports, harbours, gas works, workers housing and more**.

- These 'historic entities' often include the building, structure, their contents and sometimes associated, working machinery. They represent the public face of much of England's industrial heritage, and are a major educational, leisure and tourism resource.

- Over two thirds of publicly accessible heritage sites are managed either by small to medium sized charitable trusts or by local authorities.
  While, this community and public investment is in many ways a good news story, there is an urgent need to support the volunteer effort which is the mainstay of many sites, to address increasing pressures on funding and organisational sustainability, and to encourage improved conservation and management best practice.
  Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs) are being established across England to help facilitate this.

- The above logo has been created to support the development of the networks.
  In addition to the above logo, each network will also receive a **regional logo** with the name of the region outlined below 'Networks'.

- **The IHNs' symbol** represents two aspects of industrial heritage: a cog wheel and a decorative tile. This combination showcases the diversity and the wide range of industrial heritage sector.

1 WHAT are the Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)?

- **Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)** are regional, **umbrella organisations** which provide a platform for **free peer to peer** support for industrial heritage sites and organisations together with their staff and volunteers.

- IHNs are groups **of like-minded individuals** who care about preserved, publicly accessible industrial heritage sites and their future.

- The networks are **open to everyone** with interest in, and the passion for industrial heritage, with a focus on those who own, manage or operate preserved industrial heritage sites that are publicly accessible. Some have been preserved as monuments and others are open as museums, whereas museums with industrial collections may also wish to join the networks where there are common issues.

- **IHNs** are supported by England's Industrial Heritage Support Officer (**IHSO**), whose post is funded by Historic England, managed by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, and supported by the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA) and Association of Independent Museums (AIM).

2 WHERE are the IHNs?

The IHNs are **regional**.

The following IHNs are already in place:

- IHN **North East**
- IHN **West Midlands**

Currently, the below networks are managed by the regional Museum Development Officers (national project funded by Arts Council England):

- North West Industrial Heritage Network
- Yorkshire Industrial Collections Network

The following regions will have IHNs developed over the duration of the IHSO project:

- **East of England**
- **East Midlands**
- **London**
- **South East**
- **South West**

The regions provide a structure for the IHNs, however members are free to attend meetings across regions and join online communities as they see fit and beneficial to them, their sites or their organisations.

3 WHY are the IHNs being created?

The **purpose** of the IHNs is to help ensure sustainability of preserved industrial heritage sites across England.

To help achieve that goal, the IHNs' members focus on delivering the following five aims:

- **Improving Communication**
  Members communicate with each other by attending two meetings a year but also, and more importantly, by staying in touch throughout the year either virtually via the online platform, or by meeting more regularly on a smaller scale.

- **Working in Partnerships**
  By joining an IHN members already show willingness to work in partnerships but there are more opportunities which members can explore between themselves focusing on common issues, targeting similar audiences together or creating more robust bids for funding.

- **Improving Skills and Knowledge**
  Members use the IHNs as a platform for analysing each other's experiences, good and bad, deciding the best ways forward, discussing and brainstorming to deal with common issues and learn from each other. Through that, members are able to determine gaps in the knowledge and ask for tailored training to be developed and, or delivered (the IHSO assists with the training provision and the delivery).

- **Staying Relevant**
  Becoming, and continuing to be relevant is perhaps the most important aim. Without the visitors, local communities and volunteers there is no interest, engagement and primarily, income. Members can look at how to become or stay relevant by, for example, analysing their audiences and establishing how they can keep them engaged, and determining what other audiences they have not engaged with yet.

- **Improving Awareness**
  Members increase awareness of their industrial heritage sites and organisations across their regions and nationally by showcasing those sites and organisations during the two yearly meetings, and through regular participation in online communications.

4 HOW do IHNs operate?

- ### Self-sufficient

  The goal is for the IHNs to be **self-sufficient and not dependant on external funding**. This is crucial for ensuring they are sustainable and continue to operate whether financial support is available or not. Members manage each network and are responsible for its operations.

  The IHSO will maintain support for the established networks and support the development of the new networks until in post, or each network has successfully adopted an Operational Model.

  The IHSO helps with bringing members together, organising meetings and promoting the IHNs.

  The following organisations are proposed as core members: the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA), Historic England and Museums Development Officers, together with a close working relationship with the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Route of Industrial Heritage.

  With the development of each network, the IHSO will invite appropriate staff members and, or volunteers from the above organisations to join the online platforms and the biannual meetings in their corresponding regions, or ones they find might relevant.

- ### Biannual Meetings

  Each IHN organises **two meetings per year**. Each meeting is hosted by a different **host site**, or **host organisation**.

  All-Year-Round communication is provided via the online platform – **Trello** (please refer to 'Online Platform' section below).

  Members can **volunteer** to be a host site or host organisation.
  It is recommended **hosts swap** for each meeting to allow showcasing and inclusivity of industrial heritage across the region.

  Hosting will usually involve offering to provide facilities for the meeting (catering is optional); it can also involve co-ordinating the date of the meeting and the agenda (please refer to the 'Operational Model' section below).

- ### Agenda and Actions

  Items on the agenda are **flexible** and to be agreed with the members. They can include talks presentations, brainstorming and discussions.

  Members are encouraged to share their successes, voice their worries, suggest improvements and present new ideas and developments.

Industrial Heritage Networks | **Ironbridge** BIRTHPLACE OF INDUSTRY

Anyone can ask to be added as a speaker or ask to include a discussion on a specific topic to be covered as a group.

It is recommended the agenda includes a **site tour** of the host site, or if the meeting is not hosted by a specific site, an **organisation presentation**.

Trello (the online platform) can be used for creating the agenda – members will be able to post their ideas and decide together what should be included during the meeting.
Any actions that are identified during the meetings will also be posted on the IHN's Trello.

▪ **Operational Model**

Each IHN's members are free to decide what their operational model will be according to what works best for their network and ensures sustainable operations.

Operational Model can change from meeting to meeting depending on the capacities of the host site or the host organisation.

The **two models** outlined here are suggestions and can be adapted or readapted according to each IHN's needs.

Full management: the host site or host organisation circulates the date of the meeting, creates and distributes the agenda, provides facilities on the day of the meeting (catering is optional) and distributes actions/minutes after the meeting via the online platform.

Split management: the host site or host organisation provides facilities on the day of the meeting (catering is optional). However, the date of the meeting, the agenda and actions/minutes are co-ordinated by a selected member of the network, a volunteer. This can be a different member for each meeting, or the same member for each meeting until foreseeable future.

▪ **Online Platform (Trello)**

Trello is a project management cloud-based platform available to **join for free**.
It will deliver and sustain all-year-round communication between all IHNs' members.

The **joining instructions** and an invitation to join via email are available via the IHSO.

Trello offers the following:

Directory of all the IHN members with details of their expertise and clarification of what help they can offer to other members.

Forum where members can post questions, information and ads; voice any issues or concerns they might have and ask for support.

Targeted Communication without involving every member of the network if the discussion is not relevant to them, or they are not keen to take part in it.

Unique Login for members of the IHNs only ensuring their privacy and exclusivity.

5 HOW can we JOIN?

- If you, your site or your organisation would like to join one of the IHNs, have any questions or would like to share thoughts and offer suggestions please direct all enquiries to:

  Joanna Turska, the IHSO
  joanna.turska@ironbridge.org.uk
  0787 148 9534

- To join as a site, an organisation or an individual all is needed is to let the IHSO know either by email, or telephone that you are interested. The IHSO will then add your name or your organisation's name to the list of members.

- This means you will then be informed about your regional IHN meetings and developments, and join Trello to communicate with other network members between meetings.