

## COVID-Historic Environment Resilience Forum (CHERF)

### CHERF 3 – Civic Scotland & Volunteering

22nd/June/2020

For further information on CHERF please click: [CHERF](#)

Overarching	COLLABORATION & WAYS OF WORKING				
	SKILLS				
	ADVOCACY				
Meeting Strands	STATUTORY & POLICY	VENUES & DESTINATIONS	CONSTRUCTION & CONSERVATION	EDUCATION & RESEARCH	CIVIC SCOT & VOLUNTEERING
Integrated	consider CLIMATE to be mainstreamed				
Informed & Informing	NATIONAL & LOCAL: AGENCIES, ORGANISATIONS, GROUPS & COMMITTEES Scottish Government (observer)				
Outputs	OUTPUTS & ACTIONS ALIGNED TO PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY supporting Green New Deal/Green Recovery Just Transitions and developments towards Wellbeing Economy				
Pillars of Sustainability	ECONOMY	SOCIETY	ENVIRONMENT	CULTURE	
Sector Intelligence Informing	<i>Route map of medium and long-term actions to grow sector resilience, sustainability, and evidence of sector as a beneficial participant in Scotland's national recovery</i>				

Page | 1

Chaired by Professor Ian Baxter, opening remarks were provided by Euan Leitch, BEFS Director. The workshop was enabled by BEFS, and by Maya Hoole of Historic Environment Scotland. Over 50 professionals from across the sector participated.

Speakers included:

- Susan O'Connor, [Scottish Civic Trust](#)
- Ian Leaver, [Development Trusts Association Scotland](#)
- Natalie Milor, [Museum Galleries Scotland](#)

Participants raised the following issues in relation to the CHERF key questions:

- **What is the threat to heritage?**
  - Age demographic of volunteers
  - Responsibility felt to communities and places in regard to re-opening
  - Potential for inappropriate transfer of responsibilities/services to community/heritage groups
  - Futureproofing: funding and planning
  - Concerns around digital inclusion
- **What contribution can heritage make to the country's recovery?**
  - Potential for greater collaboration
  - New connections and approaches
  - Retaining and training volunteers
  - Micro-volunteering opportunities
  - Black Lives Matter (BLM) and inclusivity

**What is the threat to heritage?**

- **Age demographic of volunteers**

Volunteers within the heritage sector are often from an older demographic, and many may have been in groups considered more vulnerable, and perhaps shielded, during lockdown. Many will not be able or willing to return, which will have an impact on the sector. It was considered vital that a supportive, encouraging, empathetic and flexible approach was adopted by those managing volunteers for the foreseeable future. Appropriate training in both digital technology and health and safety should be made available to volunteers.

Younger volunteers are being considerably impacted by lack of employment and skill-gaining opportunities. Building intra-generational support networks between older and younger generations in volunteering roles was a suggested solution. This could help tackle both the potential digital challenges technology may present for older volunteers, and provide skilling opportunities for younger generations.

- **Responsibility felt to communities and places in regard to re-opening**

Organisations can feel a responsibility to re-open as their properties often play a role as community hubs. This pressure suggested that they may re-open before they were ready to do so. There is a need for leading sector organisations to acknowledge those fears, offer reassurance, and support smaller volunteer led organisations. It was proposed that Historic Environment Scotland or CHERF could provide a model Risk Assessment to smaller organisations.

*...we contacted small community groups that care for their church that is no longer in use for worship. The vast majority of these [groups] are not associated with any kind of heritage network. I worry for these groups, as they are out with the normal support networks. We don't have a capacity to reach out to these groups, who are responsible for large part of our built heritage. **Victoria Collison, Historic Churches Scotland***

There was a mixture of concern and optimism where there had been no response from community groups. They may be struggling and don't know who to reach out to or, on the other hand, they may be weathering the storm, they may have accessed resilience funding, or are taking a 'wait and see' approach.

- **Potential for inappropriate transfer of responsibilities/services to community/heritage groups**

There were concerns around how organisations will be able to continue to deliver the new responsibilities they may have taken on (from community services, to food bank provision), as well as the projects that have been postponed. There is concern that something will suffer, and many are worried it will be the projects (fulfilling a need) which existed originally. The redirection of funding in relation to COVID, may result in cuts to the very projects which were the reason many small voluntary organisations were set up.

Assets or responsibilities may be passed to organisations which may become more of a liability in the longer term. Taking on unsustainable workloads may cause irreversible damage to communities, volunteers and associated organisations, especially without the skills or resources in place to support them.

*...services which are going to be more acute - and higher level of demand in years going forward. Trying to be clear about what these organisations can offer in sustainable way. Concerned about possibility of what ... community organisations are taking on... **Andy Milne, SURF***

In the weeks after lockdown began there was a rapid increase in demand for services in relation to mental health issues created by redundancy or furloughing. With higher demand on existing services people seeking emotional and mental health support often had nowhere else to go and turned to local community groups.

Discussions were had around the role the heritage sector can play in terms of wellbeing. Both volunteers and staff are often trying to help, but do not have the skills or training to do so. There is a danger of pivoting beyond what we as professionals can deliver; we need to utilise resources, support and engage with other professions who do have the required skills.

- **Futureproofing: funding and planning**

There was recognition that reliance on funders was going to be difficult going forward; proposed larger scale projects were considered to be unlikely to receive financial support. There was concern that existing funding, such as to town centre renewal projects, would be threatened by staff furloughing as numerous critical months of planning have been lost and as such will make project delivery very difficult. There was also a recognition that funders were themselves going to have to scale back.

In terms of planning, most community or voluntary organisations are trying to make time to think about future capacity - if they have currently have staff able to do so. However, many are only able to focus on short term survival strategies and dealing with increased day to day pressures. With many staff on furlough they do not have the capacity to plan for the longer term.

- **Concerns around digital inclusion**

Whilst digital technology has been invaluable throughout lockdown for many, it isn't a panacea. Digital inclusion presents challenges around access, capacity and skills, and its use excludes many individuals, including volunteers. Whilst a number have embraced it, many smaller organisations are hesitant to engage with the creation of digital content. There's a need to signpost appropriate training across the wider sector, especially for volunteers. In contrast, the appearance of extensive digital content and online activities has provided access to heritage spaces for individuals who were previously restricted.

There was discussion around virtual tours, with the assumption that a physical visit will be the preference of most visitors. Some venues have expressed concerns that digital tours increase security issues, others that long-term physical visitor numbers may decrease if a virtual experience is available. Venues who felt they may not be able to remain open long-term were considering digital experiences as an opportunity to continue to allow engagement. [Guidigo](#) was shared as a user-friendly platform for create virtual tours. Both [Digital Doors Open Day](#) and the Digt! [Scotland Digs](#) projects were highlighted as innovative approaches.

### What contribution can heritage make to the country's recovery?

- **Potential for greater collaboration**

When lockdown began there was a rapid response from volunteers to support local communities. In some instances, there were more volunteers than were needed and the challenging was volunteer management. It is anticipated that this increase in community collaboration is not a temporary change:

*People have been saying... 'we wish we'd known you were here before; what can we do when all of this is over'. Ian Leaver, Development Trusts Association Scotland*

There were examples of unlikely groups combining efforts and successfully collaborating throughout the crisis. This was commented on by Scottish Government who later launched the [support for communities](#)

[scheme](#). Smaller, agile organisations were able to tap into this funding and to respond quickly and, in many instances, provide support earlier than the larger bodies.

- **New connections and approaches**

The increased number of people engaging with services has offered useful information about needs within communities. This has indicated where projects have failed to engage or where they were perhaps originally incorrectly pitched. It has encouraged self-reflection and a recognition amongst many groups of a need to re-examine their business models and offer. Several organisations with an existing focus on buildings have recognised that going forward they need to be more people focused.

George Thomson, CEO of Volunteer Scotland, has said they have had 35,000 newly registered volunteers from across the societal spectrum over the last few months. It was proposed that this was a great opportunity to involve different voices in heritage.

*It is a difficult time to think strategically, but if there were specific ideas that we could start to share and funnel, we could potentially engage different communities who don't normally get involved with heritage.* **Jeff Sanders, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland**

- **Retaining and training volunteers**

Natalie Milor, Museum Galleries Scotland, spoke about the project they are working on to provide opportunities for both museums and their volunteers by providing training. The training includes an SVQ qualification in [Museum and Gallery practice](#) for volunteers and a course to train to be an [SVQ assessor](#) for staff. The qualification allows volunteers to develop an understanding of the museum sector and demonstrate that knowledge through a practical qualification. The hope is that the attraction of the qualification will encourage greater numbers volunteers and will allow them to undertake more complex tasks. As the qualification takes time, volunteers are more likely to stay long term ensuring a good return from the investment of the host organisation.

*The new opportunities that are available, as highlighted by Natalie, could bring new and different people to volunteering. We are seeing people with different socio-economic values coming forward to volunteer... perhaps need a carrot to stay for longer.* **Susan O'Connor Scottish Civic Trust**

People have different motivations for volunteering: providing a diversity of opportunities will likely see a diversity of volunteers. This will only be successful if volunteers are supported and the work of volunteer coordinators is valued.

- **Micro-volunteering**

The most popular topic for the future of volunteering was micro-volunteering, where volunteers work on a small task for a couple of hours in a non-regular basis, such as: remote cataloguing, transcribing, or contributing to a database of information. These tasks could be achieved remotely and were therefore also more suitable to the COVID-19 situation. It could be an access pipeline for volunteers, perhaps those who could not commit a lot of time at an early stage, but who may commit more longer-term and develop their role within the organisation. Evidence suggests there is a better age spread for micro-volunteering, and it was proposed that it could be used to build intra-generational networks. Templates for micro-volunteering were requested.

- **Black Lives Matter #BLM and inclusivity**

There was extensive discussion about the impact and importance of the Black Lives Matter movement.

*People are engaging with the role of slavery in Scotland's past. We tend to look at, and protect, beautiful things that have horrible roots, without talking about money that created them. We need to engage with this topic and the audience on their terms... History is messy and dirty; there are lessons we can learn from that today. Our wilful ignorance of how we consume is parallel with our purposeful ignorance of slavery in the past... Heritage should be relevant to current and local affairs.* **Euan Leitch, BEFS**

There is an opportunity and a responsibility to engage volunteers with the BLM movement, but it must be done in an honest and self-reflective way. The statue debate has revealed passions surrounding heritage, place, and memory. By engaging with these types of topics, heritage can be made more relevant to traditionally harder to engage volunteering groups.

*I think it is important to highlight the contribution of the Black communities of past and present to both tangible and intangible heritage, without necessarily pushing the slavery narrative. I spoke to a father, who made the powerful point that he didn't want his kids to think they are only relevant because they came here from slavery.* **Hana Morel, University College London**

There was also recognition that the sector needs to provide inclusive routes into the profession to embrace the change highlighted by these types of debates. There is a need to focus not only on history, but also on the current context in relation to heritage projects, diversity and accessibility. The [Colourful Heritage](#) project was mentioned for its work recording the stories of older members of the Asian community in Scotland.

In more general terms, there was a discussion about terminology and which words act as barriers to inclusivity, and to volunteering, in the sector: 'heritage' was highlighted as one of these terms.

*[We] don't mention heritage in our literature, it's a barrier. It's something that other people do. Talk about buildings, architecture, places to visit, instead.* **Susan O'Connor, Scottish Civic Trust**

**CHERF** - Dates for future CHERF workshops and previous workshop reports, can all be found [here](#)

**BEFS : Funding Information, Sector relevant Advice, and Sector Organisation updates in relation to COVID19:** <https://www.befs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Covid19-Funding-Advice-Table-1.pdf>

### CHERF 3 - Key references and documents of note:

Dynamic List will be updated as more information is released in relation to Volunteering and Civic Scotland

Organisation	Link
AGER report	<a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/</a>
Bannockburn House online Lecture Series	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2DDxO90FDPUCHj3uCvBB7AG8y87o2H1U">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2DDxO90FDPUCHj3uCvBB7AG8y87o2H1U</a>
Colourful Heritage	<a href="https://www.colourfulheritage.com/">https://www.colourfulheritage.com/</a>
Digt!	<a href="https://www.digitScotland.com/scotland-digs/">https://www.digitScotland.com/scotland-digs/</a>
DTAS	<a href="https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/resources/coss-publications/involving-your-community">https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/resources/coss-publications/involving-your-community</a>
Guidigo	<a href="https://www.guidigo.com/en">https://www.guidigo.com/en</a>
Historic Landscapes and Mental Wellbeing	<a href="http://www.archaeopress.com/ArchaeopressShop/Public/displayProductDetail.asp?id=%7BEEA08FF4-B364-4615-9743-1C5770C73BCE%7D">http://www.archaeopress.com/ArchaeopressShop/Public/displayProductDetail.asp?id=%7BEEA08FF4-B364-4615-9743-1C5770C73BCE%7D</a>
Industrial Museums	<a href="https://www.goindustrial.co.uk/our-blog/blog-post/guidance-for-reopening-your-museum">https://www.goindustrial.co.uk/our-blog/blog-post/guidance-for-reopening-your-museum</a>
Interface	<a href="https://interface-online.org.uk/">https://interface-online.org.uk/</a>
Knowledge is Power report	<a href="https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5943c23a440243c1fa28585f/t/5bfd636c40ec9ab45fa75ac8/1543332736627/Knowledge+is+Power+May+2018.pdf">https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5943c23a440243c1fa28585f/t/5bfd636c40ec9ab45fa75ac8/1543332736627/Knowledge+is+Power+May+2018.pdf</a>
Locality	<a href="https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/We-were-built-for-this-Locality-2020.06.13.pdf">https://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/We-were-built-for-this-Locality-2020.06.13.pdf</a>
Museums Galleries Scotland	<a href="https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/">https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/</a>
Research into Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland	<a href="#">"Community Asset Transfer in Northern Ireland." Policy and Politics 43, no. 2 (2015): 225.</a>
SCT Doors Open Day - Visiting	<a href="https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/visiting/digital-doors-open/">https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/visiting/digital-doors-open/</a>
SCT Doors Open Day – Digital Guidance	<a href="https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/hosting/digital-guidance-2020/">https://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/hosting/digital-guidance-2020/</a>
Scottish Government National Volunteering Framework	<a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/volunteering-national-framework/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/volunteering-national-framework/</a>
SVQ in Museums and Galleries Practice	<a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74396.html">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74396.html</a>
Waterloo Uncovered Project	<a href="https://waterloouncovered.com/">https://waterloouncovered.com/</a>