



Manchester

Heritage Buildings Network

Evaluation Report



THE ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE FUND



Historic England



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



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Introduction

The Heritage Building Network (HBN) is a partnership and project of: Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) North West, working with English Heritage (EH), the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), Manchester City Council (MCC) and Macc. HBN delivered a year-long programme of workshops to not-for-profit community based groups in Manchester responsible for, or with aspirations to, own or manage a heritage building and/or run projects linked to heritage buildings. The target audience was expanded to welcome Greater Manchester groups.

It was recognised that the passion and energy of such groups needed to be matched with the necessary knowledge and skills. A proposal was developed in October 2015 by HLF (in conjunction with MCC, HE , AHF and Macc) to tackle these gaps by offering a series of workshops over 12 months. This Heritage Buildings Network (HBN) commenced with a launch event in March 2016 and is due to formally end June 2017.

The partners have brought heritage knowledge and experience and are key funders for heritage projects. They recognised the need to involve a capacity building agency in the workshops and, as funders, wished to maintain a boundary and not to issue invitations directly to groups. Macc is funded to provide infrastructure support to Manchester's voluntary sector and brought the necessary capacity-building experience to the project. Partners commissioned Macc to manage the project and to provide the admin support throughout.



Historic England, Canada House



Carver's Warehouse,
Heritage Lottery Fund

HBN could not have happened without the commitment, time, resources and funding of the partners involved. The total funding provided through the partners for the HBN programme was £4,000 + VAT (including the final event in June 2017). However, it is important to note that significant investment in this project has been in the form of partners' time and expertise.

HLF initiated the project but needed the help of Macc to really get the project off the ground. The HBN project was achieved through the commitment of all partners attending regular programme planning meetings and delivery planning from October 2015 to June 2017. Each partner undertook further planning and preparation for the sessions they were responsible for leading on and Macc provided the ongoing administration support and project management in addition to its capacity building support offer.



Manchester Town Hall,
Manchester City Council



Swan Buildings, Macc

Summary

Overall, the Heritage Buildings Network has been successful and of significant benefit to the groups who participated. Valuable information, learning, contacts and resources have been delivered and it has created social capital and networking between groups and also increased the level of joint working between the partners. Groups have increased their knowledge and understanding of managing a heritage building, capital projects and funding.

‘I’ve found the speakers interesting and relevant and would like to thank all the organisers for their hard work in presenting useful and informative workshops’

‘You can read about these processes but it’s talking to people, the random conversations, the dialogue, us talking to each other. It’s amazing the variety of projects; you tend to think of it as a one-track field but there’s lots of different methods of using the building and developing, inventing imaginative projects’

‘We have been given a framework for delivering our project’

‘The sessions are always consistently good. I hope other areas of the country are benefitting from similar presentations’

Aims

The aims of the Heritage Buildings Network project:

1. **Groups are more knowledgeable about what is involved in managing a heritage building**
2. **Groups have a better understanding of how to plan and deliver a capital works programme, including how to source funding**
3. **Skills, knowledge, expertise and volunteers shared within the network**

Method

The programme consisted of a Launch Event followed by a series of 4 workshops over a 12 month period from March 2016 to March 2017. All partners were involved in aspects of planning the workshops and each partner delivered on their own area of expertise in the relevant workshops (lead partner shown in brackets). As the programme developed, 2 additional workshops were added to further meet the needs of the group (see 3 and 7):

1. Launch Event (Historic England, all)
2. Gearing Up (MCC and Macc)
3. **VAT Workshop** (Macc & HMRC)
4. The Vision (AFH)
5. Paying for the Project (HLF)
6. Delivering the Project (HE)
7. **Pulling it all Together** *a final workshop included evaluation focus groups* (Macc)

Thanks to all of the Case Study Speakers: Francis Galvin, Manchester Historic Buildings Trust; Andy Jackson, Heeley Development Trust; Anne London, The Florrie.

N.B. Partners are currently also planning one further, final event for June 2017. This will be to celebrate the programme to date, provide a further networking opportunity for the groups and a wider audience; give momentum to the network sustaining itself in the future (however informal the network may be), share resources and showcase the programme with a view to encouraging similar provision in other areas.

The method of delivery was designed to provide practical knowledge and information and learning to groups at paced intervals on each area of expertise by the partners. Groups had recourse to all of the resources provided in the sessions via email links and attachments and also through the webpage.

The content of each main workshop is summarised below:

1. The Launch

A group list was compiled of those who owned or managed a heritage building or who had projects/activities linked to/in a heritage building. These groups were invited to attend the Launch event in March 2016. There was scope for additional groups to attend the programme subject to agreement of suitability between the partners. The majority of the groups were City of Manchester based but the partners agreed to include Greater Manchester groups where relevant and where there was space to do so. This theme has continued throughout for the workshops (for 1:1 Capacity building support, this is only available to City of Manchester groups due to funder's restrictions to Macc).

The Launch event was designed to introduce the partners, the upcoming programme and to inspire groups by using real case studies. It also offered groups an opportunity to shape some of the content of each workshop through their participation in a questionnaire and facilitated table discussions based on the questionnaire. The information gathered was used to further develop and tailor the content of the workshops and resulted in the addition of a VAT workshop.

Macc co-ordinated and compiled a brochure of organisations' buildings with a photograph and brief history for each. These were used as part of the Launch and each group received a paper and an email copy of the brochure. A second document was also produced and distributed to introduce and explain the role of each of the partners. A webpage was created to give an outline of the programme and to hold resources and information from each of the sessions: <http://bit.ly/2oq1dl8>



A total of 24 groups were invited to attend the Launch but a further 3 groups were later invited or themselves requested to join.

The 27 groups are listed below:

Agecroft Cemetery Chapel Restoration Group
Ancoats Dispensary Trust
Beekeepers
CEDE Foundation
Chadderton Together (CIO) and Chadderton Building Preservation Trust (Ltd Co.)
Clayton Hall (Friends of Living History Museum)
East Lancashire Railway
Friends of Alexandra Park
Friends of Heaton Hall
Friends of Hough End Hall
Friends of Philips Park
Friends of Stretford Public Hall
Friends of Wythenshawe Hall
Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum Trust
GMCVO
Manchester Transport Museum Society Limited (Heaton Park Tramway)
Heritage Works
Levenshulme Old Library
Love Withington Baths
Manchester Cathedral
Manchester Histories
Manchester Jewish Museum
New Testament Church of God
Pankhurst Trust Women's Aid
Save Salford Victoria Theatre Trust
Stockport Buildings Preservations Trust- Woodbank Hall
Victoria Baths Trust

2. Gearing up

- Getting the right legal status
- Board skills / experience / expertise
- Involving your community
- Working with your local authority (planning permission; strategic support; wider plans for the area)

3. VAT

- Check basic understanding of VAT with regard to charities
- Clear understanding of if/when a building should be registered for VAT

- Estimating proportion of capital works exempt from VAT and HMRC approval required
- Which services are VAT exempt for charities
- Knowledge of VAT treatment for building and heritage projects

4. The Vision

- Evidencing the need for the project
- Arriving at the right end-use for the building (identifying and appraising options; testing feasibility)
- Arriving at a shared vision
- Working with constraints (listed building consent; planning permission)

5. Paying for the project

- Costing the project
- Identifying funding options & 'stepping stone' projects
- Longer-term sustainability
- Business planning

6. Delivering the project

- Working with professionals (preparing tenders and briefs; choosing the right person, managing the professionals)
- Managing the work (keeping hold of decision-making)
- Sustaining momentum and enthusiasm (internally and externally)

7. Pulling it all together

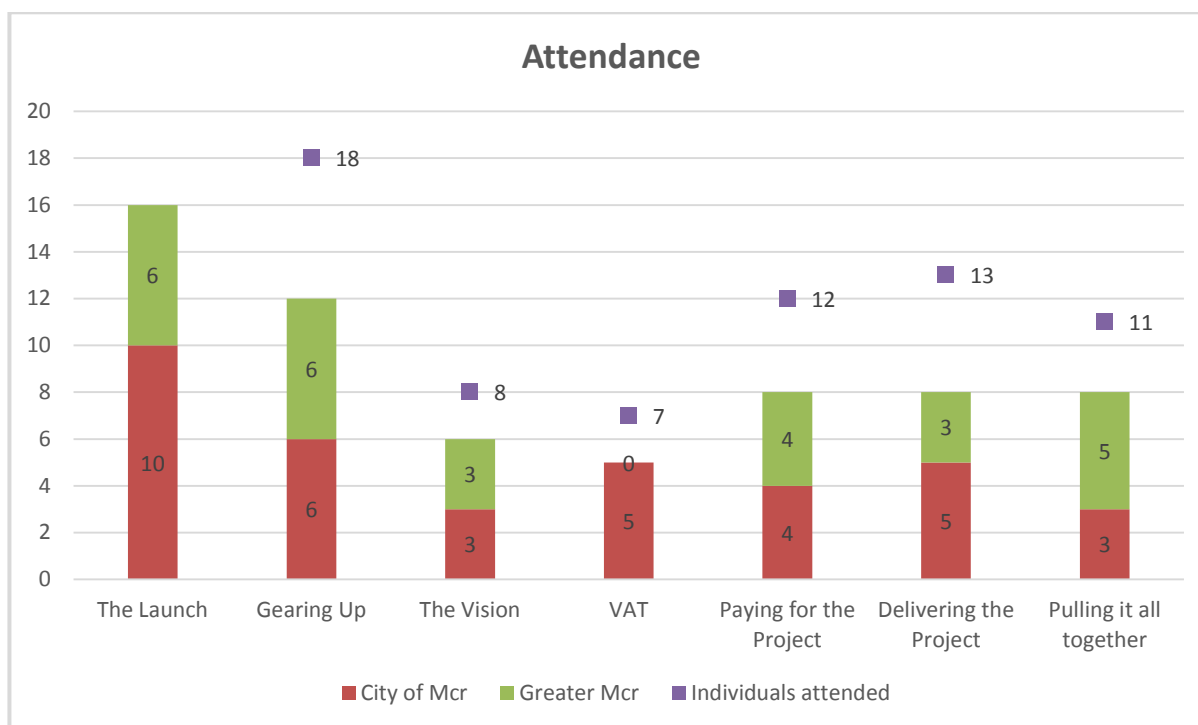
- Groups' self-assessment of progress to date
- Planning for success: identifying specific stepping stone actions
- Evaluation focus groups
- Asks and offers –skills and networking
- Further support and resources –Heritage Trust Network
- 1:1 support from partners

All of the workshops were a mixture of key speakers, presentations, interactive activities, and opportunities to ask questions. They provided opportunities for groups to think about their own projects and how to apply the information provided and aimed to encourage learning from the case studies presented.

Findings

Attendance

Of the 24 groups invited to attend, 16 groups attended the Launch event. The stacked bar graph below shows the attendance rate of groups at each of the HBN sessions and also how shows how many of these groups were from Manchester and how many from Greater Manchester (the squares indicate the total number of attendees):



HBN was planned with a City of Manchester focus, however, as the profile of the Launch and of the HBN Programme as a whole increased, Greater Manchester groups showed increasing interest and were welcomed to attend. With the exception of the VAT session, the numbers of Manchester and Greater Manchester groups were fairly evenly matched throughout the programme.

Groups commented that they enjoyed and appreciated this geographical spread and one group commented that they thought **the approach of the Local Authority (Manchester City Council) and the infrastructure support (Macc) to asset transfer was successful and that this was a key factor in attracting groups from outside of the area to attend the HBN programme.**

A total of 21 different groups attended at least one session in the Programme and for most of these groups, this was the Launch event. For subsequent sessions, the attendance ranged between (at the lowest) 5 groups and (at the highest) 12 groups. There was a core contingent

of 5 or so groups who attended the majority of the sessions and again, this reflected a fairly even split between Manchester and Greater Manchester groups.

These core groups clearly benefitted from the programme and from their commitment to regular attendance. This is reflected in their evaluation comments at the end of the programme of which a sample is given below:



‘We have been given a framework for delivering our project’

‘Looking at the planning tool this morning [last HBN session], we’ve already moved down that road of structure, skills audit, vision. We’re about to get to the planning application stage. Now less daunting. We’re at the end of a stage –great confidence boost. I don’t think we’d have picked that up unless we’d been here. We’ve developed it through the programme, the knowledge that we needed to do it and that these were the stepping stones. Programme has given us a framework’

‘Overall it helped to balance the larger version with detailed planning’

The Launch attracted a good attendance and received positive feedback throughout; as one group described it:

‘The launch was inspirational’

It is not clear why so many groups did not go on to attend subsequent sessions. It is worth noting, however, that most groups who *did* attend the Launch and also the next session, Gearing Up, went on to attend all of the sessions.

Some anecdotal evidence points towards capacity being an issue for attendance: some groups were not able to spare volunteers or workers to attend the sessions.

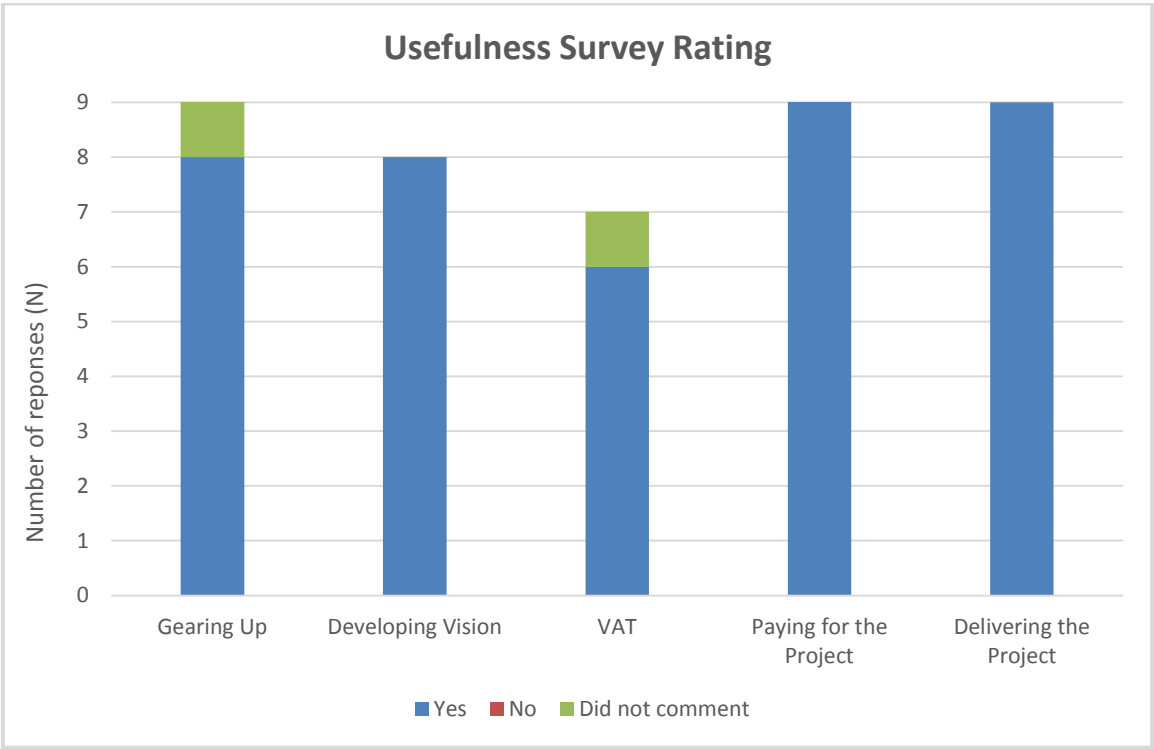
Some feedback highlighted that more networking time would have been useful at the Launch –these were groups who did not attend later sessions. If running this programme again, in Manchester or elsewhere, it would be of value to factor in networking time at the very first session as a taster of what future sessions and benefits. Networking time was a strong feature in later sessions and was highly valued by the groups.

Further investigation would be needed to ascertain the main factors affecting attendance and drop-out rate from the Launch to the following sessions.

Evaluation of the Workshop Sessions 2 to 6

Starting with Session 2: Gearing Up, step evaluation in the form of a paper questionnaire took place at the end of each of the main delivery sessions. The impact of the training was evaluated by asking a series of set questions at each of the workshops. Groups were consistently asked ‘Was the training useful to you: Yes or No?’.

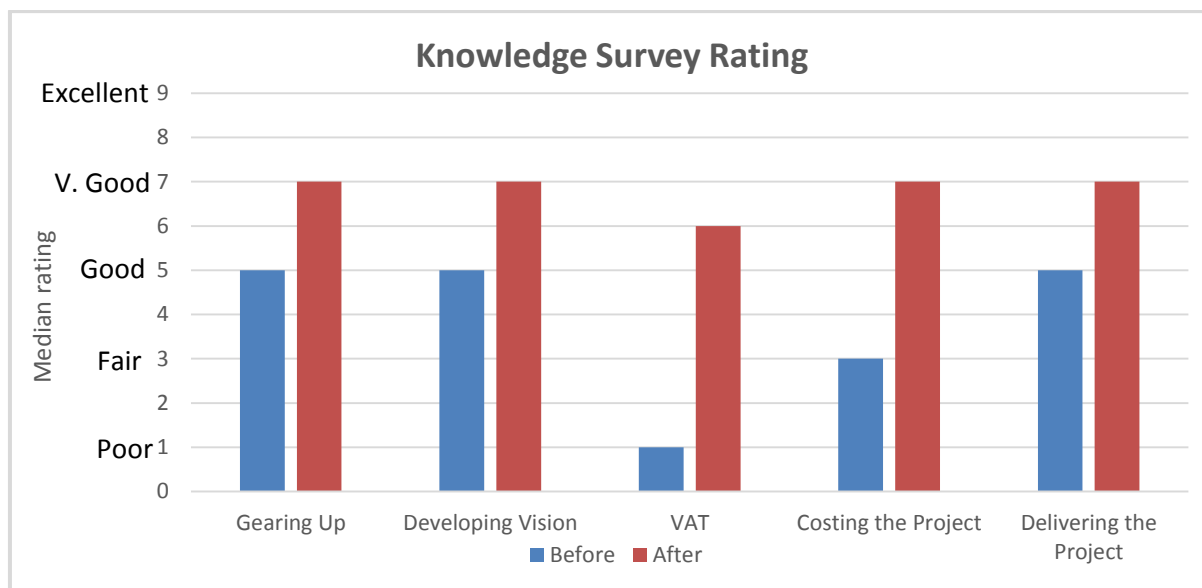
The graph below demonstrates that groups consistently found the training useful each time, with a small number of groups who did not comment either way:



A series of ‘before and after’ questions were tailored to the content of each workshop to gauge the impact of the training. Options were provided: groups were asked to rate each option before and after as one of the following: ‘Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good or Excellent’. These options were then scored 1 to 9 with 1 being ‘Poor’ and 9 being ‘Excellent’ and the median taken.

The Knowledge Survey Rating graph below shows that each group evaluated shows a marked improvement in knowledge as a direct result of the training each time a session took

place. This was also supported by anecdotal evidence provided to partners at the end of the sessions and during contact in-between sessions.



Session 2.Gearing Up

Groups benefitted from information provided about legal structures and good governance and went on to apply their learning to their own situations, including making changes to legal structures and increasing skills of the governing body.

There was high quality engagement with the Urban Design & Conservation Officer and Development Surveyor from Manchester City Council on the subject of conservation and listed buildings. Groups asked numerous pertinent questions and were well-informed by the end of the session particularly in relation to identifying designated buildings, heritage significance and curtilage. Groups said they found useful:

‘Information about appropriate legal structure’

‘Networking with other participants and practical areas -made a key link for us’

‘Understanding skills required by Board and how to identify them’

‘All of it! Particularly around listed buildings, heritage, and LBC’

‘Roles and Responsibilities. As a group we need to do a check and evaluate the workload on individuals.’



Session 3: VAT Workshop

The highest impact depicted through the Knowledge Survey Rating graph relates to the VAT and Paying for the Project training sessions.

The VAT session was an additional session created and added to the programme in direct response to groups' request for further help and information on this area following the Launch and Gearing Up. Groups were invited to indicate which specific areas of VAT or queries they would like to address in the session. This was a successful session with very positive feedback:

'The ability to ask specific questions relating to individual situations allowed for information to be applied usefully for each group I believe'

'Very good practical information and explanation of taxable supply and exemption. Specific questions were answered for each group. Thank you'

'Delightfully practical – excellent'

4. The Vision

This session was particularly useful as it highlighted gaps in groups' planning but provided them with information and tools to use to address these and to develop project briefs. Groups particularly enjoyed the architect's presentation and interactive session and also the presentation on working harmoniously with a listed building and understanding heritage significance.

Lots of information on how to take a project forward and I was applying it to our project in my head all the way through

'Lucy's session -concise and useful'

More understanding of the importance and benefits of the community audit



5. Paying for the Project

The information provided in Paying for the Project was key to encouraging groups to develop relevant, smaller scale manageable projects whilst not losing sight of their overall vision for the building or project. Groups came away significantly encouraged and challenged to achieve their aims and armed with the key idea of 'stepping stone' projects.

'Anne [Lundon, The Florrie] gave a wonderful demonstration of how to retrieve difficult situation very successfully.'

'Maya did a great job in showing that stepping stones are vital. A checklist of what to do -our organisation got most of it wrong!! Very good day.'

'The work for sustainability of the project'

'Discussion of Florrie as an actual project and how they turned it around'



6. Delivering the Project

This session offered very practical advice and information on interior and exterior angles of a heritage capital project. Professionals involved in major heritage restoration projects helped groups understand the importance of surveying early on to inform understanding of the issues; adopting a phased approach to restoring a site, with a focus on the most important elements first; engaging in lots of consultation with the surrounding community; seeing success as more than just saving the building; engaging the necessary range of experts and consultants in delivering the project –not just one contractor or architect.

'Seeing presentations from other people who have already completed projects. Great motivation to prove things can be achieved'

'emphasis on planning for your team and details of project costings, allowing contingency and good management'

'Fascinating insight into all aspects of our project worth pure gold'

Did HBN successfully meet its main aims?

1. Skills, knowledge, expertise and volunteers shared within the network

In short, yes; this was a key area of achievement of the HBN project and highly valued by the groups.

Groups significantly increased their skills, knowledge and expertise in relation to managing heritage buildings and their projects. This was achieved through the input and delivery of the partners, tapping into their areas of expertise, but also through the key speakers from various heritage building projects across the North West. Groups also shared their own learning and areas of expertise within the sessions.

In terms of volunteering, the HBN Partnership is not aware of any direct sharing of volunteers as a resource between the groups so far. However, the programme has offered opportunities for groups to share contact details and skills and knowledge in the form of 'ask and offer' activities and this may be something that groups will act on in the future as and when they require those particular skills sets or information. With hindsight, it may have worked better to set up a simple sharing format at the first session which could be added to during the lifetime of the programme as groups grew in trust and confidence with each other. The difficult is in managing this in a way that encourages groups to be proactive and does not place an ongoing administrative burden on the partner organisations.

Partners repeatedly received feedback from participating groups as to how valuable and useful the networking element of the programme has been. Across the step evaluations and end of HBN focus group evaluation, groups extensively referred positively to networking and expressed a desire to see this continue beyond the project lifetime.

Partners ensured networking opportunities between groups, key speakers, funders and infrastructure support were available over lunchtimes and through in-session table activities. Groups were often asked to move around during a session to ensure they engaged with groups that they didn't already know.

The HBN Partnership is now working with the Heritage Trust Network to provide a final event in June 2017. One of the purposes of this event is to ensure the continuation and widening of the network created through the HBN project and to ensure groups are aware of and can access Heritage Trust Network resources, support and membership and to encourage the establishing of a more formal network in the North West.

Networking featured strongly across the feedback on all sessions. Here is a sample of what the groups said:

‘Meeting funders, colleagues, peers –experience sharing, a sense of solidarity –there was a feeling of isolation before’

‘brought together a disparate group of people’

‘Networking with other participants and practical areas -made a key link for us’

‘The interactive session enabled us to learn from other groups’

‘Great benefit identified in sharing information, sharing skills, supporting other projects where possible and receiving support’

‘more confident now talking to other people about our project’



Partners observed networking taking place in the sessions:

‘[I saw] groups talking and exchanging ideas and contact details at the sessions and I was pleased to overhear groups encouraging each other in their projects. There was a nice atmosphere of mutual support.’

Presentations by key speakers from case study groups were also highly valued by the groups attending. This element of the programme added another layer of networking and furthered the sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise within and beyond the Manchester area. It also created opportunities for groups to revisit these links and to their benefit:



‘Some groups visited Andy Jackson at Sum Studios in Sheffield. Others were intending to visit The Florrie after a talk from Anne.’

Partners were already liaising on heritage projects to some extent but often at a more senior level. As a result of the HBN programme, partners now have stronger links and are more confident to raise specific issues with each other and better equipped to know how to support organisations and link them to the appropriate support.

A new relationship is developing with Heritage Trust Network (HTN) as a result of the programme and HTN are involved in planning the last event of the programme and in offering valuable support beyond the programme through their membership offer. Membership benefits include active networking of similar projects and groups across the country.

Evaluation Film

Groups who attended most or all of the HBN sessions provided their view of the project as an evaluation film in response to the question ***‘What difference has being part of the Network made to you?’*** The film can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/wytBSIYwEoU>



2. Groups are more knowledgeable about what is involved in managing a heritage building
3. Groups have a better understanding of how to plan and deliver a capital works programme, including how to source funding

The progress of groups was to some extent dependent on their situation at joining the HBN project. Some were at the start of projects and were therefore positioned to be able to apply all of the learning as their project developed; others were further on. The majority felt they were in a much better position to undertake or manage a major heritage project post-HBN:

Planning tools today (final delivery session) gave realisation that group has moved forward and completed some stages. This was a great confidence booster...the programme has given a framework for groups to identify where they are.'

Knowledge and understanding of financial and organisational risk improved overall. Most groups felt in a better position to undertake or manage a major heritage project. Some groups made changes to the governance of their organisation as a direct result of learning from the HBN sessions. Groups said:

'Discussion is ongoing but we recognise different and new skills are needed for managing a building'

'Trustees and directors each now have a specific area to cover -are a lead for each area- e.g. project delivery.'

'After Session 1 [Gearing Up] we became a community benefit society as we realised that after the first session that we may not get funding'

'[We] identified skills and roles and at the AGM last year recruited with these in mind.'

'We needed help – I joined the group at a point when morale was low and new direction was needed –we have recently made some progress with our aims and morale is boosted by new information coming to light thanks to the workshops and the opportunity to network.'

'The planning session opened my eyes about the scale of the task, the benefit of using planning tools and identifying team skills'

'Identified a need to look a governance status'

'Given better understanding of risks and how to manage [these]'
'Perception of risk can change to realism when have framework to work within'

An outcome of the HBN project is that groups have developed better knowledge and understanding of each partner and their support offer. In particular and importantly, this has increased groups' confidence to speak to funders and to make stronger applications:

'Knowing the faces of organisations like HLF is a great incentive. We know who they are and it helps makes connections and gives [me] more confidence.'

Information on funding streams was helpful –feel more knowledgeable and in a stronger position to write a bid and know support is out there.

'Now considering funding application to include a paid staff role as part of overall project costs.'

'View of funding organisations has changed – more confident to approach / discuss project. Feel welcomed and valued'

A group which completed two applications during the programme said of these:

'They've been successful because I've been attending this –professional language that has been conveyed has helped in terms of putting a bid together'

'It's changed my perceptions [of the Lottery] – you're a much more approachable organisation than I thought!'

PARTNERS observed:

'Groups became more familiar with the funding on offer and their involvement...made them feel less overwhelmed by the depth of information needed to carry out a capital project. It strengthened their confidence.'

'Groups sought additional support from funding partners during the programme 'for potential grant applications to AHF and HLF'

'A number of participants have mentioned the idea of stepping-stone projects as something that they have taken away [from the sessions]'

'HLF received a few project enquiries towards the end of the project'

Recommendations

Groups were enthused by the sessions and the following sentiment was echoed by other groups during the project:

‘The sessions are always consistently good. I hope other areas of the country are benefitting from similar presentations’

The following recommendations are put together for the reflection of the HBN partners and participants but also with a view to assisting any future provision of this project in other areas. Focus Groups initially said they couldn't think of anything they would change about the programme or that could have been done better. Groups had to be persistently encouraged to provide constructive criticism and this did eventually highlight some common areas with suggestions for improvement, some of which were also identified by the partners. Most of the recommendations related to practical items which would have been useful.

Recommendations for partners:

1. Consider how to build in greater networking time
2. Don't forget practical measures like name badges for the groups
3. A shared overall list for groups of everyone who has attended and the group names
4. Allow time in the first event for groups to get to know each other
5. Consider whether budget and time allow for site visits
6. Consider sharing contact details and expertise of groups (with their permission) in a visual way and updateable way.
7. Trial resources where possible and capture feedback from groups during the project to ensure that resources are accessible.
8. Consider varying the timings of sessions, e.g. some evenings, some daytime.
9. The right partners are essential to success –this project needed support and investment from the funders, the Local Authority and the local equivalent of infrastructure support or Council for Voluntary Services (CVS).

The most often cited measure (by groups) for improvement was facilitated visits to other groups' projects. This was partly a tribute to the strength of the networking that was facilitated within the delivery sessions as groups became aware of and more familiar with other projects and realised the benefits of peer learning. It is hoped that groups created strong enough links through the programme to self-facilitate future visits, however, if budget had allowed, group visits would certainly have added interest and learning.

All of the focus groups at the final evaluation all said they would not hesitate to recommend the HBN programme to others

Recommendations for groups:

10. Investing time in training, peer support, networking and utilising resources will clearly put your organisation in a stronger position for the future.
11. Don't expect the same person from your organisation to attend each meeting; consider having two people who attend together or alternately.
12. Think about how you can share the learning with the rest of your governing body/committee.
13. Take time in-between sessions to absorb the session content and consider with your organisation how best to apply new knowledge and information.
14. Make use of the resources on offer and the connections to other groups with whom you can share your learning but also benefit from their expertise and problem-solving.

Step evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. The following are the comments received which suggest improvements to the training:

VAT Workshop:

'Skimming the areas not of relevant to the group to allow more time for the relevant areas (but not a major issue this did happen to some extent but could have been more)'

Gearing Up:

'A case study -someone who had done it and survived'

The Vision

'Shame that the number of delegates reduced from previous courses'

Paying for the Project

'I would like to have more understanding of the various strategies for capacity building. Skills audits which are meaningful.'

'More time to absorb the information'

'Breaks after each session to apply info shared to actual project'

Paying for the Project

'for the next session arrange for people at the HBN to talk about their own projects'

'good mix of speaker a little more time would have been helpful'

It was hoped that the HBN programme would encourage a more 'joined-up' approach by groups across the city to projects and funding applications; to work more in partnership. This is always an area of difficulty for groups and perhaps would have benefitted from a specific focus in a session at the end of the project facilitate ideas on this subject (by which time groups perhaps would have been comfortable enough with each other to share ideas').

Final Comments

HBN funders commented several times that the HBN project worked well because of the partnership approach of those involved: HE, HLF, MCC, AHF, HTN. It was also noted that the overall continuity and administration of the project relied on the ongoing involvement of Macc and that any future, similar programme would need the support and input of a similar infrastructure organisation or local CVS. As was noted and remarked on by participating HBN groups, Manchester City Council and Macc work closely together on asset transfer in the city and this approach has been noted and well regarded by groups within Manchester and Greater Manchester. It should be noted that 4CT and TS4SE have and continue to work very closely with the City Council and with Macc to support and improve asset transfer in Manchester.

Heritage Building Network Partnership 2017



From left to right: Sarah Whitelegg (Macc), Tracey Swann (MCC), Jess Steele (AFH), Michael Plane (MCC), Maya Sharma (HLF), Sarah McLeod (HTN), Karl Creaser (HE)

