

We Are Bristol History Commission – Meeting Summary

Time and Place: 15:30-17:00, Tuesday 31 August 2021, Zoom meeting

Attending: Tim Cole, Estella Tincknell, Nigel Costley, Joanna Burch-Brown.

Officers: Jon Finch and other officers.

Guests: Annelie Kops.

Apologies: Shawn Sobers, Madge Dresser, Helen Godwin, Edson Burton.

1. Welcome and apologies

- TC reported DO has stepped down and will now be a friend of the Commission. TC thanked DO for his support of and work with the Commission.

2. Previous minutes and action log

- Members reviewed previous meeting actions, all were completed or addressed in the meeting, except for the 2023 Bristol Anniversary discussion between JF, TC, ET and Bristol Ideas, which is ongoing.

3. Western Harbour

- Officers outlined the Western Harbour Vision.
- They are working on a way to engage the community and the city to make this a fantastic part of the city. Identifying the themes and needs that are most important to the cities people.
- Officers will use the engagement feedback to develop the guiding principles for what should be embedded, the hopes and aspirations of the people, reviewing what's not working in the way the city represents its history. This will inform the master planners.
- Officers advised the key drivers for this development are:
 - The road network is coming to the end of its life
 - The flood defences need improving
 - The housing crises
 - The climate emergency
- The vision will not provide all the technical answers for how the area will work, but it will detail the type of place the people of the city want to create.
- Officers asked members:
 - Is the best way to convey history still in the form of monuments and buildings?
 - Could the archive building be an element of the new masterplan? A source of knowledge that displays historical research so what you see in the public realm is not fixed and static but alive.

Members discussed:

- Trails relating to Bristol's involvement in the Transatlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans e.g., taking you around the harbourside, various points of interest along the way and ensuring accessibility.
- Possibility of Legacy Steering Group to feed into the project.
- Members suggested the British Commonwealth archives currently held in the Bristol Archives could be utilised.
- Members agreed to discuss the historical concepts, ways to create a public realm of the future that is engaging and interactive and to feedback to Officers at a later date.

- Officers would like members to inform them of harbour history projects that are underway, investigating how they deal with our history in the future. Officers would like to develop a 7-year approach, getting people to look back 3 generations and forward 3 generations.

ACTION 1: Officers to send plans for Western Harbour.

ACTION 2: Western Harbour Officers to attend a future meeting for further discussion.

4. Legacy Steering Group Update

- Officers advised there have been 2 key areas of progress:
- Update on the community engagement led by Black South West Network and development of Project Truth report. And the securing of funding to investigate slavery legacy and implement findings of the report. The Project Truth report will be important for the Steering Group and for the History Commission.

ACTION 3: JF to invite members of Legacy Steering Group to the next meeting.

5. Timetable for Survey report

- Officers advised that the Mayor has requested the History Commission review the Colston display survey results.
- Members and officers discussed resourcing options to review the qualitative survey results.
- It was agreed the report to the Mayor will focus on suggested actions and goals from the survey results.
- Officers noted that the appeal for the Jen Reid statue on the plinth was denied.

ACTION 4: TC to review tying in the results from survey with Western Harbour plans.

ACTION 5: JF to circulate Jen Reid appeal letter.

6. Question 2: Migration Stories

- TC opened the discussion looking at where we have come from? What does it mean to be Bristolian? What does it mean to belong to the city, and do you have to have grown up here?
- Thinking about how to work effectively with partners, e.g., museums and libraries to be inclusive.
- Members discussed linking the Bridging Histories website and connecting with the People's Gallery.
- Looking at language, how the Bristolian language has changed in the past 20 years.
- Officers suggested working with the neighbourhoods and communities' team and having regular correspondence with them.
- Intergenerational conversations, Race, Class, Education.
- Discussed using the 8:80 theme, working with schools and smaller groups to find out what they think it means to be Bristolian.

ACTION 6: Members to think about ways to move conversation forwards and how to engage with people from all over the City.

ACTION 7: TC to look at funding options around projects and linking them up.

ACTION 8: Members to think about ways to work together with People's gallery programming at M Shed.

7. Bridging Histories Update

- JBB shared news stories of Bridging Histories reaching as far as the USA.
- The London team are doing interesting work; the Mayor's office and Community Engagement Cultural team are putting out to tender projects for smaller groups.
- Presentations are being put together for Bristol Futures and Bristol Beacon will be running workshops in October. Barton Hill history group have been in touch to work collaboratively.
- Officers and members discussed the value in running workshops in the Archives and Libraries.

ACTION 9: JBB, TC and Head of Libraries to meet and draft how to work with archives and libraries.

8. AOB

- Members raised democratic process; is there a way to report regularly to councillors. A forum to give a small report on what the group are working on and get their feedback.
- JF agreed to raise this with Councillors Craig and Cheney.
- Members discussed having an open call to invite two new members with expertise in economic migration history to work on the next theme/project.
- Members discussed holding an engagement event; network gathering of history groups. Linking up informal and more established groups.

ACTION 10: Open process for 2 members to join for next piece of work.

ACTION 11: Look into Zoom event to bring groups together including Legacy Steering Group, could lead to in-person gathering when Covid restrictions allow.