



# **Communications and Outreach Strategy: 2016 - 2019**

*Formally adopted by IHBC Trustees on 2 March 2017*

# Introduction

This communications strategy has been developed to support the Institute's work, including member support, external influencing, and promoting conservation professional practice and skills. The strategy is for internal use, to guide the IHBC's systems and operations.

The strategy is in two parts. Part 1 comprises five strategic aims for communications and outreach. Part 2 comprises actions to achieve these.

The strategy is internal to the IHBC, but the aims and actions targets a range of audiences, including:

**Professional Members:** IHBC is a professional body, providing support to members, ensuring professional standards and promoting the interests of the profession.

**National Government:** A key part of the IHBC's work is in seeking to influence legislation, policy, and programmes.

**Local Government:** Raising awareness of the importance of professional teams with heritage skills is a key part of IHBC's work.

**National Organisations:** IHBC has links to and works with numerous other national bodies, including other professional bodies and membership organisations.

**Community Groups:** Community organisations are increasingly involved in planning for their area, directly delivering heritage projects and taking on heritage assets. Professionals have a role in supporting such bodies and achieving good outcomes.

**Developers and Property Owners:** Understanding the role of heritage specialists will help developers and property owners to employ the necessary professional skills.

**Heritage Bodies:** Part of the IHBC's role is explaining to national bodies the scope of building conservation professional practice, and seeking to ensure that their programmes and material are based on such understanding.

The Communications and Outreach Committee will monitor progress on fulfilling the aims and achieving the actions in this strategy.

# Part 1: Strategic Principles

## 1.1 Professional Practice

### **Promote understanding of the scope of professional practice.**

Promote understanding of professional practice as a multi-disciplinary, cross-sector activity, taking place against a wide social, economic and environmental context.

## 1.2 Value of the IHBC as a Professional Body

### **Promote the value of IHBC membership**

Promote the IHBC as a respected professional body, including through application of IHBC competencies and the professional code of conduct.

## 1.3 Heritage Values

### **Raise awareness of the values and benefits of heritage.**

Challenge misconceptions of heritage as a barrier to growth and promote understanding of the social, economic and environmental values of heritage, as an essential part of professional practice.

## 1.4 Promoting Conservation Skills

### **Promote awareness of the value of professional skills in building conservation.**

Promote awareness of the need to employ heritage specialists from the right professional disciplines for conservation work. Encourage local authorities to maintain skilled teams.

## 1.5 Influencing

### **Seeking to influence policy, legislation and programmes**

Promote recognition of the values of heritage and principles of good conservation to UK, national and local governments, national bodies and others involved in building conservation.

# Part 2: Delivery

The strategic principles above will be achieved by the following actions:

## 2.1 Professional Membership

### **IHBC Competencies**

IHBC's professional membership competencies define the value of membership. There is no need to revise the competencies; they remain fit-for purpose. However, the explanatory text supporting each competency should be updated from time-to-time, to recognise changes in the nature of professional practice (for example by recognising the relevance of heritage to health, sustainability and community empowerment.).

This includes considering the implications for professional practice and skills development arising from local government spending constraints, the Localism Act and associated Government programmes, including the expanding role of communities in scrutiny, direct planning for their area, community-led economic development, community-led development, asset transfer and other community action.

## 2.2 Member Support

### **Member feedback**

Use Survey Monkey to gauge the opinions of members on different issues, building on the survey carried out early in 2016. Use feedback forms from national and regional conferences and events as a means to continuing improvement.

### **Training and events**

To ensure maximum relevance and benefit of IHBC events:

- Put in place mechanisms to ensure the subject of the annual school focuses on current and relevant practice issues (for example housing, growth).
- Seek to focus training events and articles on competencies where the membership is weakest (for example, finance and economics).
- Continue to develop and deliver projects, programmes and events to develop building conservation skills and support networking and knowledge exchange.

### **Materials**

To support members:

- Develop concise, accessible and clear guidance, tools and materials to support members in professional practice and people seeking to join the IHBC (including reviewing existing materials).

- Ensure and monitor that our own publications reflect the IHBC's view of professional practice and give equal emphasis to the eight competencies.
- Prepare guide to conservation professional practice with the Historic Towns & Villages Forum, setting out the wide scope of professional practice. The guide is to be informed by recent digital media survey.
- Review IHBC materials to ensure they are clear, concise and accessible.

### **Digital and Social Media**

Digital and social media is of key importance to delivering this strategies aims, including:

- Develop the web site to give concise, clear messages, especially on home page.
- Refresh the web site (at least every 5 years).
- Continue with IHBC's successful social media and News blog.

## **2.3 Policy, Research and Influencing**

### **Benchmarking - IHBC Competencies**

The competencies should be used explicitly as a benchmark against which to consider our response to programmes, initiatives, consultations, white papers, select committees, guidance and policies developed by heritage bodies and Governments.

### **Policy**

Create internal procedures to link publicity with policy and consultations activities (e.g. press releases on consultation responses). Develop concise and clear core scripts for key areas of policy. This will help to provide clarity and consistency in influencing and communications activities and create a shift from a reactive to more proactive approach.

### **Promotion of conservation**

Seek to promote conservation, through research, advocacy and partnering with compatible organisations. It is especially important to develop evidence and promote awareness of the positive economic benefits of conservation.

### **Research**

Seek opportunities to undertake and publish research into the economic, social and environmental values of heritage, in particular to demonstrate how heritage supports innovation, enterprise and growth. Continue the periodic research on conservation specialist provision in local authorities.

### **Parliamentary Reception**

Examine the costs and benefits of holding an IHBC Parliamentary reception.

## **Sustainability**

Provide a focus on sustainability at the level of 'place', in addition to adaptation of buildings.

## **Legislation and policy**

Seek opportunities to make representations on the legal difficulties created by the discrepancies between the terminology used in planning legislation and policy (significance).

# **2.4 Operations**

## **National Team**

Look at options for providing skilled communications staff or consultants as part of the national team. This will help to recognise the strategic importance of communications and to provide the basis for effective handling of the press, parliamentary activities, and promotion.

## **Systems**

Review systems to create strong linkages between the IHBC's committees, including closer liaison between policy and communications. Put procedures in place to ensure all significant consultation responses are accompanied by a press release, setting out the IHBC's key positions.

# **2.5 Partnerships**

Partnership development will include:

- Seek to strengthen links with bodies with similar interests (e.g. chartered built-environment professional bodies, Civic Voice, Locality, AHF, HTVF, etc.). Recognise IHBC's common interests with place-making bodies.
- Seek to increase the occurrence of joint events with other built-environment professional bodies (for example the RTPI, RIBA and RICS).
- Consider joint policy and consultations work with compatible organisations.

*IHBC, March 2017*  
[www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)