



Industrial Heritage Networks (IHNs)



Guidelines



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.
- IHNs are **open to professionals** (staff and volunteers at all levels) with interest in, and the passion for industrial heritage, with a focus on those who own, manage and operate preserved industrial heritage sites that are publicly accessible, together with other bodies and organisations who can provide support in management of those assets.
- **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 Cornwall & Devon (IHNCDD)
- IHN Hampshire (IHNH)
- IHN London (IHNL)
- IHN North East (IHNNE)
- IHN North West (IHN NW)
- IHN South East (IHNSE)
- IHN South West (IHNSW)
- IHN West Midlands (IHNWM)

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

- East of England
- East Midlands
- Yorkshire

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.



Full lists of members in each region are available on the IHNs website:

<https://industrialheritagenetworks.com/>

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 can 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 bi-annual meetings, and through regular participation in online communications.





4 HOW do IHNs operate?

▪ Self-sufficient

The goal is for the IHNs to become **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 until 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 National Lottery Heritage Fund and the 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 might find relevant.

▪ Biannual Meetings

Each IHN organises **two meetings per year**. Each meeting is hosted by a different member.

All-Year-Round communication and information sharing is provided via an online resource – **this is currently being developed** (Trello had been implemented initially, however needed to be removed as the developer introduced usage fees).

Members **volunteer** to be a host. **Hosting offers** an opportunity to talk about and showcase your site, your operations, successes and achievements, and gain insights from other members about any issues you might be experiencing.

Hosting involves choosing the date for the meeting, choosing the theme for the day and offering facilities (catering is optional and not a requirement). Host chooses a theme based on a success they have achieved and would like to share, or an issue/challenge which they would like to discuss with other members.

▪ Agenda

Items on the agenda include a talk from the host, discussions and workshops focused on the theme for the day, updates from members and a site tour. Meetings are interactive and members are encouraged to share successes, suggest improvements and present new ideas.



▪ 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.

Suggested model:

- The host chooses the date for the meeting and advertises it via the online resource (via the IHSO at the moment).
- The host chooses the theme for the day based on their recent successes, operational challenges or any industrial heritage related topic that they believe will be beneficial to address and discuss with other members (examples of themes are available on the IHNs website).
- The host provides meeting facilities on the day. Providing lunch is not at all necessary, however free tea and coffee is appreciated.
- The host writes a blog/meeting summary about the theme for the day and the discussions around it. This can be a great development opportunity for a staff member or a volunteer looking to grow and improve their skills (the IHSO writes this at the moment).

▪ Online Platform/Forum

Once implemented, the platform will deliver and sustain all-year-round communication between all IHNs' members.

The online resource will offer 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 would like to join as a representative of your site or your organisation, 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 representative of a site/organisation contact the IHSO either by email, or mobile. The IHSO will then add your name and your site/organisation's name to the list of members.
- This means you will then be informed about your regional IHN meetings and developments, and once established, join an online resource to communicate with other network members between meetings. Currently, members can communicate via the IHSO and the IHNs website.

