# Bracken Hall Countryside Centre: Steering Group Meeting – pre-meeting notes (30 September 2020)

NB Each main heading, below, addresses an agenda item

## 1. Towards a COVID-19 secure reopening of BHCC – general ideas and interventions, Health & Safety, duty of care to volunteers, cleaning, Risk Assessments, etc.

1. Proposed process to lead to the (partial) reopening of BHCC:
	1. Proposed action plan to be drawn up – this document, plus input from Steering Group, plus advice from other local facilities to inform this – with associated check list, floor plans, etc.
	2. Risk Assessments to be completed (see below) and approved by BTC Clerk and health and safety consultants
	3. Extraordinary meeting of BTC Environment Committee may be needed to approve the reopening of BHCC (hopefully in mid-October)
	4. All volunteers, third-party leaders, and occasional visiting experts to take part in briefing session via Zoom run by BHCC Manager
	5. One or more special events to be held during October half-term holidays (last week of October)
	6. Review and reassess this partial reopening, with a view to further open days or events in the period up to Christmas
2. Bracken Hall Countryside Centre (BHCC) has been closed to all users since mid-March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic
3. In June 2020 it was proposed to develop ideas for the partial reopening of the Centre, viz holding events in the wildlife garden. At that time, BTC concluded that the more complicated reopening of BHCC would be explored after the Northgate public conveniences and Baildon Library had been successfully reopened
4. Several attractions and public facilities (e.g. Baildon Library, Northgate public toilets, Bradford Industrial Museum, Baildon Community Link, St John’s church hall) have reopened recently with appropriate safeguards in place to protect users, staff, etc. Each of these locations have had their own challenges.
5. BHCC has the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others, and to reopen for various user groups (e.g. general public, educational visits, third-party groups), despite being a relatively small and relatively complex site. Key things to address (and proposed interventions) include:
	1. Risk Assessments to be completed for BHCC site infrastructure as a whole, for its various components (i.e. Exhibition Room, wildlife garden, Classroom, and toilet block/office, and for the various possible uses and/or events (e.g. for outdoor events, for access to the Exhibition Room, for third-parties using the Centre). BHCC site COVID-19 risk assessments to draw on those used at other local sites
	2. Risk Assessment to be completed for BHCC volunteers and staff
	3. Control numbers at public events (e.g. pre-booking on-line via BTC website for a designated timeslot, or signing up at BHCC if timeslots are available at a particular open day, or single group on site at any one time)
	4. Ensure social distancing (e.g. signage/floor markings/one-way system/single group entry/socially distanced work stations for activities in place to ensure single household/bubble groups remain apart)
	5. Provide a safe place to visit (e.g. appropriate cleaning of BHCC when closed to the public, and appropriate ongoing cleaning of regularly handled surfaces; suitable ventilation; readily available hand sanitizer at various places on the site (i.e. at all building entrances/exits and around the wildlife garden/activity stations) when required; clear safety guidelines and facilities for the use of and cleaning of the public conveniences; removal of potential hazards (e.g. hands on activities in Exhibition Room)
	6. Restrict the use of certain parts of the building (e.g. public to use only the accessible toilet – with socially distanced queuing outside, and with ladies’ toilet reassigned as staff/volunteer toilet only with access for one person at a time)
	7. Change in provision (e.g. decommission hot air hand dryers and replace with paper towel dispensers; all bins to have no lids and to use liners)
	8. Track and Trace provision (several easily workable methods exist)
	9. Safe place to work/volunteer (e.g. consult with staff/volunteers and brief them on procedures, and address their concerns if practicable; volunteers to work in bubbles or designated places; volunteers to be discouraged from spending extended amount of time with visitors)
	10. Third-party users to comply with BHCC regulations, and provide their own Risk Assessments for their activities
	11. Cleaning. Those areas of the Centre to be reopened will require a deep clean. On-going regular cleaning with particular regard to COVID-19 (e.g. specialist treatment using an anti-virus mister) will be required. The likely intermittent or occasional opening of BHCC when compared to the public conveniences or the Library poses its own challenge – how often should the Centre be professionally cleaned? Prior to the pandemic, the Centre’s floors, hard surfaces and toilets/sinks were washed every other week. Occasional other cleaning was done when required (e.g. floors mopped/swept after a wet/dirty day). The Northgate toilet block is cleaned every day as they are used every day – perhaps an ad hoc system with BHCC being cleaned before each opening day is the way to go, particularly if the Centre is typically open a maximum of one day per week
	12. There are many more issues to address, but the majority have already been resolved at other venues and simply need to be applied or adapted for the specific circumstances at BHCC.

## 2. Volunteer update

BHCC volunteers have been kept informed about progress with respect to the reopening of the Centre. They have also been asked to respond to ideas for partial reopening and suggest other ways that the Centre could be used. Volunteers were also asked (June 2020) to indicate their willingness to recommence some sort of volunteering role at BHCC, and about half (8) of the regular volunteers at that time indicated a willingness to do this in principle. Following the successful reopening of the BTC managed Northgate public conveniences and the partial reopening of Baildon Library, BTC’s attention has now moved to BHCC. Volunteers were again asked if and how they could see themselves getting involved. To date (29 September) only five volunteers have responded. Three are willing to volunteer indoors and outdoors; another is keen to volunteer outdoors, but not indoors at present, and is willing to help put together activity packs for visitors; the final one is shielding and doesn’t anticipate volunteering when the public are on site until a solution is found for the COVID-19 issue. We are confident that when firm proposals are on the table for specific events or open days that more volunteers will make themselves available, but there will be a significant number that will be shielding for the foreseeable future.

The current model has seen the Centre open every Saturday and Sunday, with a minimum of two volunteers on site. However, this seems unfeasible with the limited number of volunteers available and, with the likelihood that 3, 4 or more volunteers may be needed to safely open and manage visitors safely, other more targeted modes of opening the Centre need to be explored (see agenda items 3, 4 and 6).

## 3. Reopening BHCC for specific purposes: outdoor events in the wildlife garden

* Outdoor activities are recognized to present a much lower coronavirus transmission risk than indoor activities
* Many of the interventions required for opening the garden to the public are also applicable to visitors/groups using other parts of BHCC
* The following are some of the key aspects being addressed:
	1. Use of key safe: volunteers will need access to the key safe. Keys and safe to be sterilized after use
	2. Alarm control panels: volunteers should sanitize their hands after use
	3. Hand sanitizer: This will be available at several positions in the garden, and will have official notices displayed indicating its appropriate use and hazards (e.g. flammable liquid)
	4. Sanitizing spray/wipes: Volunteers will be issued with a spray bottle/wipes which they will be responsible for during their shift. Volunteers will be briefed to regularly sanitize the heavily used areas (e.g. door handles, front gate, storytelling chair, minibeast trapdoor)
	5. Front gate to be kept closed, with signage indicating whether access to the site is possible
	6. Admission to outdoor events restricted to prebooked individuals, households or support bubbles only. Entry will be for a specific entry timeslot. Bookings done via the BTC website, or by making an enquiry at the BHCC event reception point. Any vacant timeslots will be advertised at the front gate/on information board on Brackenhall Green – if no slots are available, this will be clearly displayed to avoid people coming on site
	7. Appropriate signage at entrance to grounds, at reception, and around the site indicating the responsibilities of visitors
	8. Reception point located near the front door of Exhibition room – under a new, small gazebo. Floor markings will ensure social distancing for visitors and volunteers whilst checking in
	9. Visitors will be briefed about their responsibilities (including keeping children under control)
	10. Track and trace to be completed on arrival. Guests with NHS track and trace app to sign in; those without to complete paper slip which is secured in a sealed bag
	11. Face coverings/masks are obligatory for volunteers and visitors unless exempt (e.g. due to being very young or having a valid medical exemption). Volunteers can bring their own or will be provided with disposable masks. Disposable masks available to the public if required
	12. Activity packs for use on/off site. If available, sterile activity packs will be sold to visitors on arrival. These will be self-contained with all necessary equipment (e.g. colouring pencils, sharpener). Returning visitors may bring their own equipment to receive a discount
	13. Two or three folding tables (with chairs) can be prebooked, or reserved on arrival if available for use with the activity packs. Each table to be available for 45-minute slots, with 15-minute sterilizing slot reserved after each use. Each table’s schedule will be displayed on it
	14. Direction signs on paths around the site, with one-way system in place
	15. Where unavoidable bottlenecks exist, appropriate signage will be displayed encouraging visitors to be patient and courteous
	16. Use of gazebos. Two large gazebos are on site (one is Friends of BHCC’s). Both require 3 or 4 relatively fit people to put up/take down. Appropriate social distancing must be maintained. Gazebos to be used either on grass, or on paved areas. It is desirable to acquire a number of smaller gazebos for the individual activity tables
	17. Toilet. Access will be provided to the accessible toilet only for visitors. Ladies’ toilet to be reassigned to volunteers/staff. Doors to the toilets will be clearly labelled. Engaged sign (or lock) to be installed on volunteers’ toilet door – one person allowed in at once. Hand dryers to be decommissioned and replaced with paper towels. Instructions on handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer to be displayed. The water supply to BHCC is spring water that is treated by uv. Water is drawn off for a couple of minutes at the start of each shift to ensure that water in the pipes is flushed out
	18. Refreshments for visitors: no refreshments will be available to the public. They will be directed to the Old Glen House pub or tearoom
	19. Indoor space for volunteers:
		+ The Classroom will be reserved for volunteers to have their own refreshments and to store personal equipment. The Classroom will be kept locked when not in use, which will be for the majority of the time during garden-based events
		+ The kettle, teabags, milk will be available. Clear signage will indicate the requirement to use hand sanitiser before and after handling any of this equipment
		+ Individual tables with chair will be laid out and assigned to each volunteer to ensure social distancing. Volunteers to sanitize the table and chair they have used at the end of the shift
		+ Ventilation: The introduction of fresh air/removal of stale air is an important way to reduce the risk of coronavirus infections. It is not practical to have the Classroom’s external door open to the elements in poor weather due to the prevailing wind driving in the rain. However, someone entering or leaving the building will introduce fresh air. The ceiling in the Classroom slopes steeply so the volume of the room is quite large, thus reducing the risk of coronavirus infections by dilution
		+ Heating. The main source of heating is an overdoor electric heater which heats the air that is already in the room. Q Does this pose a COVID-19 infection risk?

## 4. Reopening BHCC for specific purposes: reopening the Exhibition Room to the general public

Reopening the Exhibition Room is a natural extension of the interventions already discussed in item 3, above. The following relate specifically to the use of the Exhibition Room and should be seen as being in addition to the points addressed in item 3, above:

1. Reception point. If the Exhibition Room is part of a visitor’s experience, the reception point will be set up inside the front door on the main counter. A sign outside will instruct visitors to wait to be welcomed into the Exhibition Room to sign in, etc., with queuing/social distancing instructions if relevant. Track and trace, etc., will be completed as above
2. Ventilation. It is not practical to have the Exhibition Room’s external doors open to the elements in poor weather due to the need to protect exhibits. However, someone entering or leaving the building will introduce fresh air, and the building itself draws air through it when the prevailing wind is blowing. In addition, an electric extractor fan can draw fresh air into the room, or blow stale air out
3. High ceiling with circulating fan. The volume of air in the room is large and should help dilute the risk of coronavirus infection
4. Dehumidifier. This room has an electric dehumidifier. This will remove moisture from the air but will blow dry air out of it. To reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus, the filter will be replaced regularly
5. Controlling numbers in the Exhibition Room: Entry will be by timed, pre-booked slots. Only one group will be in Exhibition Room at any one time, plus a volunteer. Entry will be in 20-minute slots giving each group at least 20 minutes in the Exhibition Room. Each group may also book an activity table outside for a 45-minute session, as described above
6. Physical changes in the Exhibition Room:
	1. Hands-on exhibits will be decommissioned (e.g. by pinning white sheets over the ‘who lives where?’ panel; hand specimens may be put on display in museum display cases)
	2. Remove unnecessary bottlenecks (e.g. the sales items, leaflets, library books by the front door)
	3. Sales items to be displayed in a sealed display cabinet if space permits – enquiries dealt with by volunteers
	4. Clear one-way system in place with arrows on the floor, appropriate signage, etc.
	5. Exit will be by the back door

## 5. Reopening BHCC for specific purposes: reopening BHCC for third party use (e.g. educational visits)

Third-party leaders must agree to:

1. Attend a BHCC COVID-19 security briefing via Zoom
2. Read a copy of the BHCC building and garden general Risk Assessments, and then expand these to suit their own group, and supply a copy to the BHCC Manager
3. Ensure their participants adhere to relevant precautions (e.g. social distancing, etc., that apply to their clients (e.g. school group)). Of particular importance is the number of people that can be accommodated in the Classroom or Exhibition Room and rules on school bubbles, etc.
4. Compile their own track and trace data for their group
5. Sterilize hard surfaces and door handles before and after their session
6. Sterilize any equipment after use
7. Specify in advance what equipment (e.g. tables in Classroom, field equipment, etc.) they require
8. Specify which areas of the Centre they will use – Classroom, garden, Exhibition Room, Accessible toilet

Ordinarily, the Classroom is laid out with tables, chairs, and lots of craft materials and books. However, to increase the capacity of the room and comply with social distancing requirements, much of the furniture and equipment will need to be temporarily removed. The office is likely to be partly decommissioned and some equipment will be stored in the office/loft and part of the ladies’ toilet.

## 6. Proposed example events, including October half-term

Some ideas for events:

* Wild Wednesdays – reimagined. How will numbers be controlled? Prebooking only? How will children be prevented from mixing with each other?
* Halloween lantern trail (no activities?) – just something to give the public the chance to get out and about after dark?
* Apple day in some form?
* Spongetree event?
* Reindeer workshops on a small scale?

## 7. Update on funding proposal for Multi-functional Hub (including ideas of what to do for the different “what if…?” scenarios)

\*Update to be provided by Eddie Nash during meeting\*

Further comments from Eddie:

Hi Richard

Having now submitted the grant application I'm sure you would agree that BH is at a junction in its future pathway. Having expended so much time and effort on the bid I am hoping for a successful outcome although I am not so naïve as to assume it's a foregone conclusion and we have to be prepared for a rejection. I therefore see us with three options for the future;

        1. Successful grant bid and implementation of its content.

        2. Unsuccessful grant bid but embrace principles of the bid and implement more slowly.

        3. Unsuccessful bid but stay as is and do nothing.

Other than option 3 many of the actions we now need to start implementing are similar if not identical. [Below] is a list, off the top of my head, as to what many of these tasks comprise. This list is not in any priority order nor exhaustive, but a starting point and I haven't bothered assigning tasks to different options.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Construct Information Board at BH
 |
| 1. Establish Way Forward BTC
 |
| 1. Set clear focus future aims/objectives
 |
| 1. Establish Mangement Team
 |
| 1. Recruit new Volunteers/induction manual
 |
| 1. Create a working office/volunteer area
 |
| 1. Organise storage facilities
 |
| 1. Decide on layout/operation of classroom
 |
| 1. Sort out Electrical Switchroom
 |
| 1. Complete design of exhibition room and implement
 |
| 1. Permanent and temporary exhibits
 |
| 1. Plan outdoor area
 |
| 1. Produce/complete operational proceedures manuals
 |
| 1. Charging policy - courses, admission etc
 |
| 1. Sort out Website- FOBH transferred to BH
 |
| 1. Inventory of assets
 |
| 1. Financial control and stock management
 |
| 1. Monitor visitor numbers
 |
| 1. Start Planning annual Programme
 |
| 1. Devise New programme activities
 |
| 1. Start Planning/Devising Courses
 |
| 1. Design footpath signage & content
 |
| 1. Fix House style & logo (uniform?)
 |
| 1. Construct Hub
 |
| 1. Decorate all four buildings at BH
 |
| 1. Construct Footpaths
 |
| 1. First New Event Activity – Halloween
 |
| 1. Xmas activities
 |
| 1. Start of first year of New Programme
 |
| 1. Booking online
 |
| 1. Data analysis
 |
| 1. Communication system - newsletter, rotas etc.
 |
| 1. Ongoing task list
 |
| 1. Cleaning
 |
| 1. Catering
 |
| 1. Health & Safety
 |
| 1. Advertising / Publicity
 |
| 1. Liaison with Tramway, Saltaire, City of Culture 2025 etc.
 |

Whilst I fully understand the COVID restrictions, we have to start doing something. If the bid is successful I have identified that our first activities under the new programme will start in October 21. This may seem a long way off but when you look at the task list we should have already started ticking things off. You will notice that some of these tasks are basic fundamental items, but these are essential if we are to operate in a professional manner which the proposed new programmes and activities will necessitate  us to do. Whilst it would be great to open the doors to the public we need to use the down time we have  to  start and plan and have systems ready and running when the doors finally open.

I have spoken with a few people who would be prepared to be part of a management team, take on tasks and start to move forward. Surely there must be some 'Safe ' way for us to meet at Bracken Hall and start things moving.

Regards Eddie

## 8. Future tourism and educational development – BHCC’s and BTC’s role in the wider community and third-party projects

The first entry below is from the BHCC Manager’s Report of July 2018, following a meeting of interested local parties. Several aspects have begun to be engaged, and others have come to light (e.g. the Bradford 2025 bid that will involve Shipley Glen if the bid is successful). The information below is included to get us all thinking about the possibilities that were identified back then and to think about what new opportunities are presenting themselves. Joe Ashton has recently provided some thoughts on possible collaboration partners – his ideas are included below. And at the bottom is an advert for a new grant scheme for post-COVID rural recovery – perhaps that could fund many of the ideas for Shipley Glen/Baildon/etc., tourism?

#### Towards a co-ordinated Shipley Glen Experience

Dialogue is on-going with various interested local parties, and a general meeting of most of these was convened at BHCC in early July.

Those involved to date: Shipley Glen Tramway; BHCC; FoBHCC; Alan Cattell (local history author – see below); Richard Perham (Bradford Countryside Services); Baildon Local History Society; Bill Slessor; Bracken Hall House B&B; Old Glen House pub; Old Glen Tearooms; Bradford Ornithology Group; Friends of Baildon Moor; Friends of Roberts Park; Bradford Urban Wildlife Group; Ice Cream Van Man (Tibor).

The concept of the Shipley Glen Experience is to work together for the benefit of all who are involved in the tourist potential of the area. This is complimentary to Bill Slessor’s work on this, e.g. <http://www.shipleyglen.co.uk/> and draft publicity leaflet, which has been presented to BTC in various forms, and is intended to be complimentary to that of all those listed as potential partners.

Specific aspects discussed: Shared publicity; Closer partnerships on developing, timetabling and running events; New tourist trails (on paper or as smartphone apps), activities, nature trail, orienteering trail (to be set up by Airienteers orienteering club?), etc.; New display materials/posters etc., that can be used by partner organizations; External opportunities (e.g. working with Bradford Council on large events on Brackenhall Green); developing a Shared web presence; Publicity – don’t forget the newspapers; The location/role of Shipley Glen as a ‘crossover’ site – not owned by any one party with its jurisdiction falling on at least 2 authorities, and the opportunities this presents (e.g. working with the Bingley Town Council).

The Shipley Glen Experience could include/involve all the above stakeholders and locations plus: Trench Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest; Half Moon Café; Roberts Park; Saltaire World Heritage Site; Ilkley as a potential starting point of the Experience (and the walk across Ilkley Moor or Dick Hudson’s or the Acorn or Eldwick).

#### Joe Ashton has provided some thoughts on collaborative tourism promotion:

1. With regards to education and tourism in Shipley Glen and Baildon, I am keen to explore a possible joint working arrangement between Baildon, Shipley and perhaps also Bingley town councils, to work together to look at the mid-Aire Valley (e.g. Saltaire, the canal, the moors and woodlands, etc).  It would be good to invite Shipley and Bingley councils to send representatives.  They will each have their own networks of others who could be helpful.
2. In terms of specific people/representatives, the Baildon Walkers are Welcome committee members would have lots to offer - no doubt Eddie can advise.  The Saltaire World Heritage Education Association (AKA Saltaire Stories and the Saltaire Collection) and especially Maggie Smith would be worth inviting. Maria Glot as the main tour guide for Saltaire.
3. Is Bill Slessor still engaged?  I know he has produced a suite of educational materials.
4. Roy Lorrain-Smith has expressed interest previously as well as providing illustrations for us.
5. Perhaps somebody from Friends of Baildon Moor, the Aire Rivers Trust and the Canal & Rivers Trust.
6. Sheena Campbell, Richard Perham and Bob Thorp from Bradford Council.  Visit Bradford (Patricia Tillotson).
7. Somebody from Friends of Roberts Park, Higher Coach Road Residents' Group, Saltaire Village Society, Hirstwood Regeneration Group, Eldwick Village Society and Gilstead Village Society.
8. Perhaps representatives from the specialist groups such as Bradford Ornithological Group, Bradford Botany Group, West Yorkshire Geological Society, West Yorkshire Bat Group and RSPB Bradford & Airedale.  No doubt there are others.
9. I wonder if the authors of books about the local area would like to participate.  For example, Alan Cattall on Shipley Glen (and others) and Richard lee-Van den Daele and David Beale on Milner Field.

#### Advert received 30 September 2020:

**The Prince's Countryside Fund Opens for Applications**

The Fund is now accepting applications from locally-focussed, legally-constituted not-for-profit organisations who are working to create resilient rural communities across the UK in the wake of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants of up to £10,000 are available for up to one year. Projects must be completed within one year of their start date and no later than 31 March 2022. Some match funding is required.

The grants will cover revenue costs that are directly associated with projects that are helping rural communities deal with the negative effects of the pandemic.

To date the funding has been used to address and combat issues such as isolation, financial pressures, and issues with physical and mental health. Grants have supported a range of projects including a volunteer-run telephone helpline that supports local farmers, local transport to help rural residents access vital services, helping rural communities access and learn how to use online services, and the re-opening of a village shop in a remote rural community.

Groups are advised to apply early as a large number of applications are expected and the fund may close earlier than the published deadline.

**The deadline for applications is midday on 3 November 2020.**

[Click to view further information about this news alert](https://search.grantfinder.co.uk/Launch/News/ba5f9d4d80484545812b4bafcde00a9f/GRUKBP3%21N72559)

## 9. Future management and development of BHCC – proposed management structure/team, potential roles and stakeholders, etc.

Various options have been proposed over the years including creating roles for more volunteer involvement in running BHCC (e.g. volunteer recruitment, event planners, social secretary, schools liaison, wildlife garden manager, etc., etc.)

It also makes sense to consider inviting other interested parties to contribute (e.g. from the Tramway, treeplanting project, Saltaire, Aire River Trust, Roberts Park, etc.

\*Eddie Nash has discussed volunteer roles with some prospective candidates – please share with us in the meeting\*