

**Chatham World Heritage Partnership – Response to DCMS Consultation.  
“World Heritage for the Nation: Identifying, Protecting and Promoting  
our World Heritage”**



‘Chatham Dockyard and its Defences’ is on the original tentative list drawn up in 1999 and since 2007 has had a full time project manager in post, supported by a steering group of stakeholders and landowners. A management plan is already in the process of being prepared, and is currently in draft form, and a successful bid for funding from CLG Parklands is leading to significant improvements to the Great Lines Heritage Park, an integral part of the proposed World Heritage site.

Community engagement is an important aspect of Chatham’s preparation for nomination and a Partnership has been established to ensure community involvement at all stages of the process. This Partnership now has over 500 members, a number which has grown significantly over the last year. The membership includes individual local residents and representatives from business, education, local government and community groups; it covers all sectors and age groups. The first Partnership meeting was held in June 2007 and it has met 5 times since; meetings are well attended, averaging 120 attendees. The meetings are always held in venues that form part of the proposed site and they provide an opportunity for genuine involvement. For example the Partnership has been consulted about the issues relating to the management plan, the draft plan itself, the boundary of the proposed site, the master plan for the Great Lines Park, and was responsible for choosing its name, now ‘Great Lines Heritage Park’

The Partnership provides a vehicle for community involvement in its heritage and for increasing awareness about this heritage. A number of projects have been undertaken in relation to this including competitions, and research projects with local University students. A Partnership fund has also been set up to support community projects related to the proposed site and this has so far funded a youth project, improved communications in Brompton village, an exhibition of local art related to Chatham’s heritage and support for the Friends of the Admiral’s Gardens who are increasing awareness of the Lower Lines park (the first phase of the Great Lines Heritage Park). The project has also funded free entry to Fort Amherst throughout summer 2008, which has considerably increased local interest in the Fort and Chatham’s Heritage.

The Partnership communicates not only through its meetings, but through a regularly updated website and direct mail to partners. There is great deal of support and indeed passion for Chatham’s heritage and for its nomination as a World Heritage site. In response to the Consultation partnership members were asked to respond with their views on the future of World Heritage sites and in particular Chatham’s proposed nomination, these are a selection of the responses:

*“We would be keen to support the partnership and would obviously support the continuation of ongoing nominations...As plans have developed our understanding and knowledge of the area has improved as has our pride”*

**Adele Fairman, local resident**

*“Our employees have long been proud to work in the tremendous historic setting of the dockyard, but this has been boosted – and I am sure will continue to be boosted – by our increased awareness of Chatham’s contribution to world history. It provides an interesting talking point with our customers, a great number of whom are surprised and interested to learn more about the local area”*

**Fiona Colbourne, Netsite Ltd**

*“The bid has been instrumental in giving our community (Brompton Village) new unity, identity and impetus. It continues to provide an underlying vehicle with which members of the community can work to create initiatives and events that increase inclusion and cohesiveness across the very diverse range of housing and business in the village. It is doubtful that any of this would have occurred in the very dynamic way it has without the bid, nor would it have been capable of sustainable development with all sectors of the village having an input”*

**Victoria and Mark Dennis, local residents**

*“Chatham, with other UK applications, are vital for the correct preservation and interpretation of World History.....We need to continue applications at the existing rate as fast as we are allowed to do so. Our sites show what has been done in this country over the last 500 years or so in developing Parliamentary Democracy, the industrial revolution and Pax Britannica”*

**Alan Garth, local resident**

*“The Dockyard provided a place of education and training for centuries of young people. MidKent College is proud and delighted to have a brand new college within the boundary of the proposed World Heritage site, where this history of education can be continued. It is important for us that young people studying at this site gain a sense of history, heritage and place, which will develop a pride in Medway crucial to social cohesion and development. The nomination of Chatham as a World Heritage Site is a central aspect of this”*

**Stephen Grix, Principal, MidKent College**

*“I support the nomination of Chatham Dockyard and its Defences... I joined Chatham World Heritage Partnership because I am passionate about Medway and wish to preserve our heritage. Since joining I have developed a greater interest for my local environment and joined a number of local forums, this has had the effect of increasing my historical and geographical knowledge and driving me to learn more...I would much prefer to continue with ongoing nominations.”*

**Peter Reed, Regeneration Ambassador**

*“The Brompton Conservation Association has identified a number of outcomes that, for them, demonstrate that the bid process, in itself, is valuable. These include: a programme of events incorporating a diverse range of people from all ages and backgrounds participating in social, sport and cultural events that encourage interaction and pride in community; a greater integration between the military and civilian community; responsibility for the upkeep of the local area e.g. litter picking; increased involvement of local councillors; a website and other communication activities; increased links with the local police.”*

**John Jones, Chair**

*“Of the three options offered by the Government we totally support continuation of nominations for World Heritage status at the current pace of one a year. Chatham Dockyard and its defences should be the **next** nomination...We represent many organisations and Friends Groups associated, not only with our local parks and green areas, but also local history, heritage and leisure. We fully endorse all the past and potential benefits, such as; being able to explore Fort Amherst, meeting people and exploring history and heritage at Partnership meetings, contributing to the new future of the Great Lines Heritage Park, benefiting from the Partnership Fund, being reassured that Chatham’s outstanding history is an important part of Medway’s regeneration, feeling proud that Chatham’s World Heritage will get the recognition it deserves”*

**Mark Agate, Chair, Medway Urban Parks and Green Spaces Forum**

*“...Over the last 3 years I have increasingly used the Historic Dockyard, Fort Amherst and the Great Lines as venues for management and staff personnel development activities. The sites represent excellent value for money, provide a stimulating setting and also enable staff to immerse themselves in local history. Many of the staff have since revisited these sites with their family and friends and been overawed at what lay on their doorstep. None of this would have been possible without the work and dedication of the partnership. Gaining World Heritage status would only enhance the opportunities available and enable these sites to reach their full potential”*

**Ashley Verall, Learning & Development Manager, Charities Aid Foundation.**

The above comments are representative of the very many that I have received that demonstrate the passion and enthusiasm that members of the Partnership have for Chatham’s heritage, for its preservation, and for its nomination as a World Heritage site. The PwC report identifies that it is difficult to assess direct financial benefits accruing from World Heritage status. It does however conclude that less tangible benefits such as civic pride, community cohesion and learning and engagement do accrue to World Heritage sites; this is clearly the experience of Chatham so far.

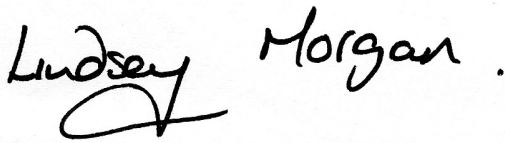
The role of World Heritage Status in recognising unique and globally significant sites across the world is vital; not just for their conservation but for our understanding of our world as it is today. This cannot be limited to boundaries set by countries or continents but must be judged on genuine and unique significance.

The Chatham World Heritage Partnership therefore supports continued nomination of UK sites, and overall the view of the membership is that this should continue to occur annually. The Partnership would also like DCMS to consider the situation of those sites on the original tentative list who have yet to obtain a nomination, or a proposed date, but who are actively preparing for nomination. Chatham's preparation for nomination is secure and well advanced and, as identified, local support is enthusiastic and growing. We would like DCMS to consider the possibility of continuing the existing process for the remaining active sites, particularly given the importance of having a UK nomination, and hopeful inscription, in the year 2012.

The management of World Heritage sites and their protection will always prove challenging whether from manmade or natural impacts. In the UK the statutory recognition of World Heritage sites is to be welcomed as are the principals of a unified approach, opportunities for inclusion and involvement, and putting the historic environment at the heart of an effective planning system. The role of Partnership work and community involvement is likely to be an effective means of delivering this. A robust management plan has always been a crucial part of World Heritage nomination and this should remain so. In Chatham we are already well advanced in the preparation of a Management Plan, believing that this is perhaps the most challenging but important aspect of nomination. We already have a steering group comprising, amongst others, the major landowners, SEEDA and the Local Authority. As can be seen from the comments above the community is already beginning to take responsibility for aspects of the site and the pride that nomination would engender would serve to increase that.

To conclude, on behalf of the Chatham World Heritage Partnership I would like:

- to support continued nomination of UK sites, ideally on an annual basis
- to promote the readiness of Chatham Dockyard and its Defences to accept a nomination slot in 2011/2012
- to recommend that DCMS continues to support and promote robust management arrangements, especially for the sites that are focused on partnership and community.
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsey Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

*Lindsey Morgan*  
*Chair, Chatham World Heritage Partnership*