

Dear Mr Barlow,

We are writing on behalf of the Cefn Mawr Business & Retail Community that invested into the THI Scheme funded by the NLHF between 2008 and 2016.

We believe that the NLHF provided £3.5M of funding for the whole project which we are grateful for and would like to formerly thank the NLHF.

This funding as far as we are aware came in 2 phases. 2008 to 2012 phase represented £2.5M and 2012 to 2016 represented a further £1M investment by the NLHF.

From this total we believe approximately £1.5M was spent on the Ebenezer as the lead building in the program. The Ebenezer and the THI Scheme was supposed to bring about the economic regeneration of our community at the centre of what had been designated Cefn Mawr Conservation Area, Article 4 in 2006.

Therefore, this means that £2M of NLHF funds was spent on other commercial property in the Cefn Conservation Area in support to Townscape Heritage Restoration and Regeneration.

From practical experience of working with WCBC in the THI Scheme for the restoration of The Holly Bush Inn in Cefn Mawr, Cefn Mawr's oldest pub on the opposite side of the street to the Ebenezer, we estimate that the current NLHF funding for this building represents approximately 30% at best. We are aware of the exceptionally high funding percentages so commonly quoted, but these are for limited aspects of the refurbishment works.

Please be aware that this is not a complaint, just a statement of facts to present the true picture of what has happened and what is happening.

Using the Holly Bush Inn as the working example, THI / NLHF investment was £200K and our investment to date is now in excess of £400K and therefore THI / NLHF is approximately 30%. Our case may be different from others that joined in because our investment also includes the purchase price of The Holly Bush Inn in 2013 for £100K. Please see:

<https://www.plaskynastoncanalgroup.org/the-holly-bush-inn/holly-bush-renovation-part-1/>

We would also like to point out that our £400K investment as quoted is for monies spent on purchase and restoration of the building only. Our business side of the Holly Bush Inn, Wet Sales is a fully functional operation which covers costs and does not require funding. Therefore, we are talking solely about investment into the Cefn Mawr Article 4 Conservation Area.

Since most of our Business Community that joined in with the THI Scheme already owned their respective premisses, their percentage contribution will not be as high as ours. So, for the sake of calculating total investment by our Business Community we use a reduced percentage and assume an equal percentage for THI / NLHF on their respective property. This then equates to a 50/50 ratio.

Therefore, if the NLHF has invested £2M into the other property in the Cefn Mawr Article 4 Conservation Area, this also means that our Business community has invested a similar amount, i.e. another £2M collectively.

We as owners of The Holly Bush Inn are probably the largest single private investor in the THI Scheme and Cefn Mawr Article 4 Conservation Area, but collectively between us, the Business Community of Cefn Mawr, our total investment will exceed £2M.

Therefore, we are by far the largest investors in the Cefn Mawr Article 4 Conservation Area and our combined contribution exceeds that of the NLHF.

We are not clear about what WCBC actual investment was into the Cefn Mawr Article 4 Conservation Area and invite WCBC to advise.

However, the main point of this email is to advise you of the fact that our Business Community, the main investor into the Cefn Mawr Article 4 THI scheme, to the tune of £2M pounds has not been consulted about disposal of the Ebenezer.

We find this very disappointing and a betrayal of our peoples' trust and significant investment.

However, we have been speaking to our business community who unanimously supported us in our 2015 efforts and have done so since. Local businesses were contacted regarding reopening the Ebenezer to bring tourism into our community in meaningful numbers to boost our local economy. We were pleasantly surprised at the level of support we received from our fellow businesses.

Please see the 2016 Petition on our website which all businesses in the Cefn Mawr Conservation Area signed.

<https://www.plaskynastoncanalgroup.org/app/download/5811947902/Cefn+Mawr+Business+Community+Petition+2016.pdf>

We are also surprised at the NLHF quoted response by WCBC.



Heritage Lottery Fund

Townscape Heritage

Grants from \$100,000 to \$2million

Application guidance

Part three: Receiving a grant

Terms of grant

If you are awarded a grant, you will need to comply with our terms of grant, which you can see on our website.

The terms of the grant will last for **10 years from the Scheme Completion Date**, or when all third-party contracts end, whichever is later, with the following exception:

- If your scheme includes buying a heritage item, land or building, the terms of the grant will last in perpetuity. If you wish to dispose of what you have bought in future, you must ask for our permission. We may claim back our grant.

You will be responsible for the full administration of the third-party grant scheme, including all stages of the process: inviting applications, approving them, inspecting the standard of the work, obtaining evidence of opening, making

Acknowledgement

We want people to know that the National Lottery has supported your scheme through HLF. If you are awarded a grant, you must acknowledge our funding using a grantees' acknowledgement logo, both during the delivery of your scheme and after its completion. We will give you guidance on this and can provide some acknowledgement materials free of charge.

Images

You give us the right to use any images you provide us with. You must get all the permissions required before you use them or send them to us.

The 2015 THI guidance document clearly states:

The terms of the grant will last for 10 years from the Scheme Completion Date, or when all third party contracts end, whichever is later, with the following exception:

If your scheme includes buying a heritage item, land or building, the terms of the grant will last in perpetuity. If you wish to dispose of what you have bought in future, you must ask for our permission. We may claim back our grant.

Since WCBC is selling the Ebenezer they must own it in which case they must have bought it. Your own guidance indicates the earliest disposal date should be 2026 since the THI Scheme officially ended in 2016.

This is a significant Heritage Building right at the centre of our community.

Application guidance

Section four:
Project outcomes

Outcomes are changes, impacts, benefits, or any effects that happen as a result of your scheme. In the notes on the next pages, we have provided descriptions of outcomes for heritage, people and communities to help you understand the difference we want to make with our funding. We describe the outcomes we value the most as 'weighted' outcomes.

Your scheme should contribute towards all nine of the Townscape Heritage outcomes.

We want to see that your project will make a **lasting** difference to heritage, people and communities. It's likely that you will have achieved a number of outcomes before the end of your scheme, but some may be achieved in the future as well.

We would like to know how selling off the Ebenezer at auction and all chance we have for Economic Recovery of our community from post industrial depression to that of a Vibrant and Viable Community at the centre of the Pontcysyllte WHS has got to do with NLHF guidance?



4a. What difference will your project make for heritage?

As a result of HLF investment: W Weighted

The townscape and its heritage will be better managed

There will be clear improvements in the way that heritage is managed. This could include the adoption of appropriate statutory powers, such as Article 4 directions, or more active enforcement of planning guidelines. In addition, you may be able to demonstrate that those who live and work in the area are aware of the Conservation Area Management Plan, or any other guidance that helps property owners understand their responsibilities. You may have provided extra support to encourage owners and occupiers to maintain their properties better, such as through gutter clearance schemes. As a result of these improvements, you will be able to show that the heritage in your area is in a stronger position for the long term including, if appropriate, a stronger financial position. These improvements to managing the heritage are likely to mean that you can meet national or sector quality standards.

We fail to see how selling off the Ebenezzer, the lead THI work to any bidder at auction for any given purpose has any thing to do with this objective of better managed heritage?

An Article 4 Direction has been established and the Cefn Mawr Conservation area is well known. Unfortunately, it is well known locally for the very restrictive and often bias planning application process that we have seen since inauguration.

We will be quoting instances of this that have positively worked against our business community and residents next when we right to the Welsh Government.

Our property owners are aware of their responsibilities. It is WCBC that do not seem to be aware of their responsibility.

No support or schemes that have meant anything have been instigated. The CRP, Cefn Regeneration Partnership failed within 2 years of being set up, and the DVCP was extremely unpopular for competing with local business while using public funds.

The heritage in our community can now be seen peeling off the walls as

paint coats fail. This is due to a lack of maintenance because our economy has been further faltered over the last ten years since UNESCO inscription of the WHS because of the loss of our only main employers, Monsanto and Air Products. Therefore, the heritage in our area is not in a strong position and our financial position has been weakened.

However, we have asked WCBC to work with us and we are willing to take out the large commercial loans required, £5M for the first round of investment to turn our community around. Unfortunately, WCBC has not been willing to do so and is now insisting on selling a key asset for such, at auction to any bidder for any given purpose.

So, our community fails to meet any of the NLHF goals for better managed heritage because of local authority insistence. If the NLHF would like to see their goals realised even at this late stage, please review your response to WCBC and ask them to work with us.

The townscape will be in better condition w

There will be improvements to the physical state of heritage. The improvements will be the result of repair, renovation or work to prevent further deterioration, such as mending the roof of a historic building. The improvements will be recognised through standards used by professional and heritage specialists, and/or by people more generally, for example in surveys of visitors or local residents.

Unless we turn our local economy around to that of Sustainable Tourism Development and the Ebenezer is a key asset in being able to do so, all the good work of the THI will be lost.

Furthermore, given the extremely high visitor counts to our area, 400,000 (330K at the aqueduct and 70K at Ty Mawr) there is no good reason why we can not do this.

Therefore, we the PKC Group backed by BPS are willing to take out the large commercial loans required. We are not asking for charity; we are asking for the opportunity to make the THI investment what it should be for our children and grandchildren, instead of letting it go to waste.

Your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit w

Local residents will have a better quality of life and overall the area will be more attractive. As a result of improving the appearance of the townscape and through the opportunities you have provided for local people to visit, get involved with, and enjoy heritage, residents will report that they feel greater pride in the local area and/or have a stronger sense of belonging. Visitors will also tell you that the area has improved as a direct result of your scheme and what they value about it.

The Cefn Mawr Conservation Area which mainly consists of Crane Street and Well Street, our traditional shopping high streets lost all public transport in 2014 and despite requests for reinstatement, no public transport service has been provided.

Unfortunately following 7 years of closure of the Ebenezer since 2013, The Holly Bush Inn on the opposite side of the street to the Ebenezer, is now seen as the lead THI work.

Our track record with the Holly Bush Inn proves what can be done with the correct approach

and our people support us, and our pub is the Hub Pub for Cefn Mawr. We are confident we can have the same success with the Ebenezer for our community if only WCBC would work with us.

Your local economy will be boosted

There will be additional income for existing local businesses and/or there will be new businesses in your local area. You will be able to show that local businesses have benefited from your scheme. This will be because you spent your grant locally, and because you provided new premises for businesses that moved into the area or expanded their operations within it. You will be able to show that these changes have come about as a direct result of your scheme using information about the local economy before and after your Townscape Heritage scheme.

This has obviously not occurred in our community although if we turn it around and connect our community in accordance with the FGA 2015 and all Welsh Planning Policy WPP, it can be.

We as a small community group fully support the Welsh Government in their plans for a Circular Economy and the Economic Action Plan and ask for assistance in implementing such in our community.

The assistance we require is for WCBC to work with us.

We need to turn the Ebenezer around as intended by the NLHF through the THI Scheme back in 2007/8. The selling out of this objective for our Business & Residential Community and to any purchaser, for any given reason, at auction would seem to us, to go against all the guidance material of the THI.

Furthermore, for a company that relies on popular public appeal and support, we question this as well, as this will create a black mark on the NLHF reputation.

We are interested in your response, which our Community will be informed of, and if we do not receive a response, that will be noted to. We note WCBC seem to be incredibly quiet at present and seem to want to avoid the issue. However, our community is reacting on Facebook and disapprove of the auction.

Please note that we seek to work with all, the NLHF, WCBC CRT and Eastman's etc, but we are not willing to stand by and watch our community sold out.

Please also note this document will be posted on our website and distributed amongst our community along with your response which we hope will be positive. Simply enforcing your own guidance material would be of extreme help to our community who have been a major contributor to the THI scheme.

Dated 3rd March 2021.

Regards,

David Metcalfe,

BPS Director,
Holly Bush Inn Proprietor,
PKC Group Project Manager,
Cefn Community Councillor & AONB Champion,



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[Holly Bush Inn on Facebook](#)