

# Regional Forums

March 2010



## Challenges & Issues

At each forum delegates individually brainstormed the challenges and issues they face in organising HODs events. The main areas of concern were revealed as:

- Funding – for leaflets, publicity, event enhancers eg transport, re-enactment groups
- Volunteer recruitment and management
- Marketing and publicity
- Keeping an event fresh and attracting new sites
- Local networking – having a support network to share ideas and resources
- Admin – avoiding double registration procedures, keeping communications simple, rising worries about health & safety requirements

## Future Opportunities

Following on from the issues and challenges, discussions were held in groups to explore the ways English Heritage can best support organisers in future, and the opportunities available that could help keep the programme fresh. Ideas were brainstormed using a set of prompter cards<sup>1</sup>, from which each group chose c.7 as their priorities to explore further.

Looking over the resulting grids the main themes that came out were:

- Increased opportunities for networking, both geographically and thematically, helping to share best practice and build a support network for organisers. Eg:
  - connecting local sites in projects
  - online network
  - national trails
- Build up a library of downloadable resources so organisers have a bigger pool of ideas to work from and enable best practise to be shared. Eg:
  - guides for volunteers
  - children's activities
  - funding sources and application guidance
  - legal requirements for health & safety / access
- Training sessions also came up but people were less clear on what they wanted from them; downloadable resources were preferred.
- Many organisers expressed interest in working more with young people, attracting them both as visitors and volunteers. Eg:
  - Downloadable guides on how to create family friendly activities; a selection of children's activities to copy; how to attract and work with young volunteers; advice on things like CRB checks.
  - Training might also be useful.
  - Connections made with national organisations like the scouts, could help filter the message down to local groups and projects, boosting participation.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix

The Top 10 Choices:

Card	Suggestions...	Support/ Opportunity	No of times chosen*
Projects that join together local schemes in different ways – Any suggestions?	Stained glass, textile, faith	Opportunity	10
Partnerships with national bodies to reach particular audiences and support local programmes - such as .....	Youth organisations, green issues, museums, chamber of commerce	Opportunity	7
Share good practice and successes from different regions		Support	7
Online database of funding/sponsorship opportunities		Support	5
Downloadable resources with children's activities		Support	4.5
Downloadable resources on (for inspiration also check Training cards) .....	Volunteers, logos, health & safety	Support	4
National trails that highlight specific types of heritage – Any suggestions?	Faith, architecture, industry, famous people	Opportunity	4
Link with green living and/or health agendas		Opportunity	3
Online organiser network		Support	3
Shadowing opportunities / Peer mentoring for organisers		Support	3

\* NB. There were 12 groups in total.

Decimal numbers are where groups pooled card options eg. training cards.

More information from the top 10:

No	Support/Opportunity selected	Need - why?	Delivery - how?	Impact - what difference will it make?	Time scale
10	Projects to join local schemes in different ways. Such as...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some projects too small on their own, adds value, drawing more interest, linking regions with themes.</li> <li>- Encouraging tourism and boosting the local economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Locally to improve local liaison, but also thematically regionally and nationally.</li> <li>- Search on HODs website.</li> <li>- Local coordination: meetings, literature, schools, local interest groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mutual support for organisers.</li> <li>- Maximising marketing and visitor numbers.</li> <li>- Improve visitor experience.</li> </ul>	Within 2 years
7	Partnerships with national bodies to reach particular audiences and support local programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reach wider audience, especially obscure organisations.</li> <li>- Might also help secure more funding.</li> <li>- Use of partnerships to help advertise events, eg. RNIB, NADFAS, Aspire, Aspergers Syndrome Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EH to attend as appropriate, eg Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>- HODs local groups - via liaison with local reps and national organisations.</li> <li>- Email, post, websites, links; articles within members' magazines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross promotion for groups.</li> <li>- Spreads the word, helping attract funding, visitors and volunteers.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
7	Share good practice and successes from different regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feel part of network &amp; improve delivery.</li> <li>- Can cut down on workload.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular meetings / online forum.</li> <li>- Via HODs newsletter and end of event report - expand on the winter newsletter anecdotes.</li> <li>- EH produce leaflets, online, dvd arranged by subjects.</li> </ul>	Build on success, avoid errors, increasing creativity, improving standards and the resulting visitor experience.	From now
5	Online database of funding/sponsorship opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better access to funding.</li> <li>- Help with navigating the minefield.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Centrally managed: fact sheet, email.</li> <li>- Regional grants - applications form for local groups.</li> <li>- Possibility for match funding.</li> </ul>	Better able to deliver programmes.	Ranging from immediately - 3 years
4.5	Downloadable resources with children's activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reach out to families.</li> <li>- More ideas to choose from and saves organiser time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online.</li> <li>- On-site creating added interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More children at HODs - education, enrichment of experience of heritage.</li> <li>- Saves time and improves quality of activities.</li> </ul>	Ongoing, 6 months ahead of HODs

4	Downloadable resources on...volunteer packs, training, logos, children's activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing knowledge and skills = less isolation.</li> <li>- Improves standards: publicity, activities.</li> <li>- Information required, NOT training sessions, to keep abreast of changing legislation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skills audit - sharing best practise.</li> <li>- Downloadable from HODs website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Higher standards.</li> <li>- Help free up time for volunteers and increase confidence in improved delivery.</li> </ul>	All year - ongoing.
4	National trails that highlight specific types of heritage, such as...	Linking regions, sharing publicity, encouraging tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EH - HODs search to begin with.</li> <li>- Cross-county working.</li> <li>- Geo-caching.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More visitors, understanding other areas.</li> <li>- Joined up thinking, aligning work.</li> <li>- Springboard for other activities.</li> <li>- Highlighting the heritage of routes and buildings.</li> </ul>	Within 2 years
3	Online organiser network	Sharing knowledge and skills - less isolation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intranet, group email, chatroom.</li> <li>- Skills audit - sharing best practise.</li> </ul>	Exchange of ideas - problems solved!	Start now and build
3	Shadowing opportunities/peer mentoring for organisers	Sharing knowledge and best practice, ideas and support to improve standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand on the excellent handbook.</li> <li>- HODs to facilitate via provision of travel costs, lunch and venue. There could possibly be a big day starting with a 'poster session', like a market place of opportunities, showcasing what different groups offer that organisers could then form clusters around.</li> <li>- Buddy system for exchanging relevant contacts.</li> <li>- Regional/local online advice backed up by event.</li> </ul>	Upskilling, improve performance, motivation.	Probably too late for 2010, Priority 2011
3	Link with green living and/or health agendas	Linking in to national interest - so topical, health of planet and individual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involving families in outdoor activities, walks.</li> <li>- Schools, Ground Work, countryside dept.</li> </ul>	Healthier people.	Ongoing

## Appendix: Future Opportunities Cards

### Support

- Shadowing opportunities / Peer mentoring for organisers
- Training sessions on making events / openings accessible to disabled audiences
- Training sessions on health & safety procedures
- Training sessions on marketing to diverse audiences
- Training sessions on young volunteering
- Training sessions on working with schools
- Training sessions on family learning
- Training sessions on recruiting and managing volunteers
- Training sessions on visitor welcome & dealing with the public
- Training sessions on guiding tours
- Training sessions on .....
- Downloadable resources with children's activities
- Downloadable resources on working with schools
- Downloadable resources on (for inspiration also check Training cards) .....
- Opportunities for organisers to meet more in person
- Online organiser network
- Share good practice and successes from different regions
- HODs standard / mark / award which recognises excellence
- Online volunteer application system allowing organisers to advertise vacancies
- Online visitor booking system allowing organisers to monitor & control numbers
- Online database of funding/sponsorship opportunities
- Central evidence base, e.g. data pocket book, for organisers to use
- Electronic design templates and centrally negotiated print rates
- New branded materials, such as.....
- More balloons

### Opportunity

- Partnerships with national bodies to reach particular audiences and support local programmes - such as .....
- Partnership with a national youth agency
- Themes for different years – such as.....
- Campaigns for different years – such as.....
- Joint youth project involving several local programmes
- Discovering Places/Cultural Olympiad: Young volunteers programme
- Discovering Places/Cultural Olympiad: Sporting heritage theme for 2011
- Link with green living and/or health agendas
- Projects that join together local schemes in different ways – Any suggestions?
- National trails that highlight specific types of heritage – Any suggestions?