

## **The New Foundations Project - Saving Hampshire's past by building a new future, brick by brick.**

### **Summary:**

Bursledon Brickworks located in Swanwick, is the only surviving industrial scale Victorian brick works left in the country. Opened in 1897 using machinery powered by steam and employing a new method of drying bricks, patented by its original Quaker owners the Ashby family, Bursledon Brickworks revolutionised English brick making. Bricks made at Bursledon helped build flourishing cities and have become a lasting component of our national built heritage.

The works which are Grade II\* listed, finally closed in 1974, still using the same steam powered machinery and manufacturing methods. Saved from demolition and with the original steam driven machinery still intact, the site is now an independent working museum. With its very large collection of brick and brickmaking artefacts, it has become a guardian and practitioner of the endangered craft of hand brick making.

Bursledon's brick drying sheds were innovative at the time they were built and were integral to the brick drying method patented by the Ashbys, but two of these ground breaking sheds are currently derelict and at risk. Without intervention it is clear that the sheds will deteriorate further, eventually collapse and a significant part of both Hampshire's and the nation's industrial heritage will then be lost for ever.

The New Foundations Project is an **entrepreneurial new £1.7m capital project** that aims to ensure that these sheds are saved, restored, and given new uses that will help start-up businesses create jobs and generate income, ensuring their long term survival and financial sustainability.



### **Bursledon Brickworks Museum Trust (Registered Charity 1170043)**

Bursledon Brickworks Museum is operated by Bursledon Brickworks Museum Trust (BBMT), an independent registered charity formed by The Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust in 2016. The Trust's vision is for the museum to become **The National Museum of Brick and Brick Making**.

BBMT is governed by a board of 12 trustees and the museum is run by a team of c70 volunteers - who cover a wide range of tasks from front of house to operating the machinery and taking care of the steam engines, to helping with activities and school and education visits. The volunteers are

supported by a small self-employed team of 4, who undertake the roles of Museum Director/Project Manager, Collections and Volunteer Manager, Education Officer and Café Manager. The museum, which was awarded accredited museum status by the Arts Council in 2018, is open to the public three days a week from April to October and for volunteering three days a week all year round.

### **The New Foundations Project**

The New Foundations Project aims to ensure that the drying sheds are saved, restored, and given new uses which provide for their future, so that they are no longer at risk. The sheds' original surviving walls will be preserved and their unique historic character conserved within a glass roofed atrium style space for exhibitions and **14 new small business units and co-working spaces for rental**. These rental spaces, will not only help new start-up businesses create new jobs they will also provide new and regular income for the museum; helping to enable the site to become self-sustaining and ultimately helping to preserve all the museum's historic buildings and its collections long term.

The project has been developed with the help of a Project Viability Grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) which informed and enabled the submission of a successful Round 1 application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Heritage Enterprise development funding of £108,000. A further grant of £20,500 has also been awarded by the AHF for project development. This funding has enabled the Trust to engage a multi- disciplined team including an architect, chartered surveyor and other property professionals, who have identified a significant local need for new business start-up units and co-working spaces. Comparable facilities locally include '49' in the New Forest (with whom the Trust has been in contact to understand best practice) and Cams Hall.

(Below: Architects impression of the restored drying sheds showing the atrium and new business and co-worker spaces)



In considering options for use, the Trust has also been mindful of local plans, including Hampshire County Council's Serving Hampshire – Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2021, which the project supports in three outcome areas:

***Outcome 1: Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity***

- Attracting increased inward investment
- Supporting businesses to start and grow, helping to create more jobs
- Delivering appropriate development and infrastructure

***Outcome 3: People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment***

- Enhancing and protecting Hampshire's heritage and culture
- Protecting and improving Hampshire's environment and quality of life
- Maintaining the unique character of the County

***Outcome 4: People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong inclusive communities***

- Supporting a thriving and diverse voluntary and community sector and body of volunteers.

**Timing:**

Such is the current state of dilapidation of the sheds that in order to avoid the risk of further serious deterioration, building conservation and other essential enabling capital works, should begin on site at the earliest possible opportunity. Subject to raising the additional funding needed, it is anticipated that these works could begin on site in late 2020.

If the project does not go ahead as planned, then the sheds will continue to deteriorate to the point of collapse and the opportunities identified to help support new start-up businesses create new jobs and deliver economic benefit for the local area will all be lost.

**Project Funding:**

In order for the project to proceed as planned and to secure a further inward investment of £780,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, BBMT needs to raise an additional £400,000 in match funding or funding pledges, by June 2020. The charity has therefore embarked upon a fundraising campaign, focused on securing funding from grant making bodies and trusts and foundations with an interest in economic development, heritage, culture and community. Initial informal conversations with two national grant making foundations have been encouraging, but the project urgently needs to secure a significant lead gift to encourage these private funders to come on board.

The Trustees are appealing for support to achieve this initial campaign milestone therefore, directly to Hampshire County Council to pledge funding of £100,000 to the project. A pledge of this nature from the County Council at this crucial juncture would represent a substantial and high profile endorsement of the quality and ambition of the New Foundations Project and the benefits it will help BBMT to deliver for Hampshire residents.

**Thank you**

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