



# Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership

*Interpretive Planning Strategy*

*December 2013*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Dearne Valley Green Heart Landscape Partnership (now called the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership) has secured £1.9m of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a five year programme of projects focusing on the heritage, environment and biodiversity of the Dearne Valley area of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

Work is now underway on the development of the detailed action plan (the Landscape Conservation Action Plan) that is to be submitted to the HLF by January 2014. Once the HLF have approved the action plan then projects are due to begin from April 2014.

### ***What is the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership?***

The Dearne Valley Green Heart Landscape Partnership is a new project, mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) looking at the heritage, environment and biodiversity of the Dearne Valley area. It aims to “Reveal the Hidden Dearne Valley”. Over five years it will fund a range of projects involving a combination of physical improvements to the area as well as working with local people on a range of events and activities. It aims to:

- Conserve, protect and enhance the built, natural and cultural heritage of the Dearne Valley.
- Increase people’s understanding, use and enjoyment of the heritage of the Dearne Valley
- Improve the economy of the Dearne Valley by making it a place where people want to live, work and visit.
- Support the local community by providing a range of training, skills and volunteering opportunities.

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- Establish a long term partnership that continues to have a positive impact on the area after the initial five years of the programme.

### *What makes the Dearne Valley Special?*

Below is a Wordle Cloud picture filled with words we feel best describes the Dearne Valley - we picked up these words and phrases from the local people and visitors we spoke to during our site visits.



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## 2. SCOPE

The scope of the project is to develop an 'outcome-based' Interpretation Plan for the Dearne Valley accompanied by a three year implementation and funding strategy.

The scope of the plan:

- Research existing interpretation strategies and approaches, for organisations operating within the Dearne Valley
- Identify best practice and how this can be used within the Dearne Valley
- Consult with partner organisations
- Identify key sites
- Identify key messages and how they can best be communicated
- Set out the principles of interpretation for the landscape partnership
- Establish a clear strategy
- Produce a costed action plan for the five year implementation period

This strategy will cover (as a minimum):

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- Why an interpretation strategy is needed – The benefits of a strategy in relation to guiding and informing the Landscape Partnership programme considering both the strategic and practical benefits.
- What there is to be interpreted – What is special about the area and the programme? What do we want people to know, feel or do as a result of the interpretation? What are the key messages?
- Why an interpretation strategy is wanted – To increase visitors’ understanding of the area, make people feel more positive about the area, encourage participation, increase the number of visits, provide a fun and informative day out and increase the length of time people spend in the area.
- Who is the interpretation for – To focus on local people and visitors from outside the area, both new and existing. To improve provision for visitors and ensure the landscape partnership has a greater understanding of who is visiting and who is not, along with what they like or dislike.
- How interpretation will be implemented – recommendations on approaches to take with interpretation (both for specific sites and general principles), how the key messages will be passed on to people and a clear action plan including suggested costs.

## 3. WHAT IS HERITAGE INTERPRETATION?

### 3.1. *The Definition of Interpretation*

Many people we meet in the course of our work don't really understand the true meaning of interpretation and what it is to be interpretive.

Every year the HDC team visit many hundreds of museums, nature reserves, national parks, AONB's, UNESCO World Heritage Sites and so on all around the world and see much time, money and resources spent on exhibits, panels and other media that are erroneously called 'interpretation'. However most of what we see is in fact information, historical data, narrative, description or specification which isn't the same thing at all.

There are a number of popular definitions describing heritage interpretation and the interpretive communication process, however we feel that the best definition is the one developed by Interpretation Canada in the 1970s. This definition has been picked-up over the past 30 years by many organisations, and is still the one most often taught in colleges and university around the world.

***This definition is:***

*'Heritage interpretation is a communication process, designed to reveal meanings and relationships of our cultural and natural heritage, through involvement with objects, artifacts, landscapes and sites.'*

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Heritage interpretation is not simply a way of presenting information; It is a specific communication process that is used to translate raw information, from the technical language of the expert, to the everyday language of the audience, in a personal, inspiring and engaging way that leaves a lasting and profound impression.

Heritage interpretation is an all encompassing, and all embracing psychological process that reaches deep inside people at a very personal and meaningful way.

### 3.2. *The Principles of Heritage Interpretation*

Heritage interpretation communication, both as a technique and as a profession began back in the 1950s in the US National Park Service. The guiding principles of heritage interpretation communication were originally conceived by Freeman Tilden in his ground-breaking book 'Interpreting our Heritage' in 1957. The principles remain relevant today.

#### *Tilden's Principles*

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

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3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is to some degree teachable.
4. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

Tilden's inspiring principles became the basis of the visitor engagement strategy used by educators, interpreters, and communication professional working in a wide range of visitor contact areas such as museums, zoos, botanical gardens, historic sites, reserves, industrial heritage sites, scenic byways – any place we want to impart the story or essence of a place to visitors.

### 3.3. *The Interpretation Acid Test*

To define whether something is truly interpretive or not we apply the following 'HDC Interpretation Acid Test' which tests interpretation against Tilden's Interpretive Principles.

The test evaluates whether the interpretation:

- **Provokes:** Does the interpretation provoke the audience to participate and interact?

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- **Relates:** Does the interpretation relate on a psychological level to the audience? Does it relate the everyday life, memory, feeling or experience of your audience?
- **Reveals:** Does the interpretation reveal meaning rather than facts? Is the main concept, message or theme explained through some creative or unusual viewpoint.
- **Presents the whole:** Does the interpretation contain and address a clearly defined interpretive theme?
- **Has Message Unity:** Does the interpretation use supporting elements to illustrate your theme or main concept?
- **Is Relevant and Appropriate:** Is the interpretation relevant and appropriate to the subject, location and the audience?
- **Is Audience Focussed:** Is the interpretation specifically planned, written and designed for the given audience?
- **Accomplishes Planned Interpretive Objectives:** Was the interpretation planned with stated Learn, Feel, Do Objectives and when evaluated were those objectives accomplished?

### 3.4. Audience Psychology

In planning and designing interpretive exhibits it is important to remember some basics about how visitors learn and remember information. Interpretation is a deeply psychological process so effective interpretation is dependent on a thorough understanding how our brains work and what triggers us to think, feel and do in a certain way.

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In very simple terms people engage when they:

- *are not distracted or confused by complicated messaging*
- *use as many senses as appropriate*
- *learn that which is of most value to them now*
- *connect with their own beliefs, understanding or experience*
- *discover answers for themselves*
- *are actively involved in the process*
- *feel enriched by, or have benefited by the experience*

Human memory works in different way depending on the sensory input. The process flows like this:

- ➔ **External Sensory Input:** E.g. notice an exhibit in the landscape.
- ➔ **Sensory Memory:** Brief temporary storage of information like RAM on a computer. Different storage areas of the brain for different senses (hearing, touch, smell, taste, etc.) with different attributes and capacities.
- ➔ **Attention:** The point where we decide to engage with or ignore external input.

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- ➔ **Short term memory:** Around 20 seconds in a young adult, 5 to 8 seconds in an old person. At the short term memory stage people retain about:
  - 10% of what they hear
  - 30% of what they read
  - 50% of what they see
  - 90% of what they do
  - 95% of what they reenact or teach
- ➔ **Rehearsal:** This is where brain assess the value of the external input (see also Maslow Hierarchy of Needs).
- ➔ **Encoding:** This is where the brain formats the information ready for storage.
- ➔ **Storage:** This is where we store the information for later use.
- ➔ **Retrieval:** This is the process of retrieval at a later date. This links back to 'Rehearsal' and strengthens the 'Encoding' path.

## 4. INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

### 4.1. Strategic Overview

Strategically the aim of interpretation in the Dearne Valley is to encourage local people and visitors (i.e. tourists 'people who travel or visit a place for pleasure') into the landscape and to maximize their dwell time by delivering an entertaining, inspiring and engaging interpretive experience that is centered on a series of key messages that help them better understand Dearne Valley landscape.

The Dearne Valley is blessed with a huge quantity of fascinating stories to share with the local people and visitors, however there is little point investing in interpretation to tell those stories if the audience;

- ➔ are unaware of the interpretive experience because the marketing and promotion is poor, or
- ➔ can't find the key sites because the provision of orientation is inadequate, or
- ➔ can't find the interpretation because it is hidden in the landscape or loose interest because there is insufficient interpretation to hold their interest (known as 'pacing').

To achieve the strategic aim the audience must;

1. be made aware of the Dearne Valley offer and be compelled to participate in exploring it (marketing).
2. be guided efficiently and safely to, and around the key Dearne Valley sites (orientation).

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3. experience an entertaining, inspiring and engaging visitor interpretive experience that connects to other entertaining, inspiring and engaging visitor experience at key sites throughout Dearne Valley (interpretation).

For interpretation to be successful (i.e. to accomplish its objectives and achieve a financial or social return on its investment) it has to be planned. At a destination level we use a process called Interpretive Systems Planning.

### **4.2. Interpretive Systems Planning Dearne Valley**

Interpretive Systems Planning is a strategic, holistic development tool that adds significant economic, environmental and social benefit in and around a heritage destination that considers the whole visitor experience from the marketing, orientation to interpretation. It is a scaled up version of the Outcome Based Interpretive Planning process used for stand-alone heritage sites.

### **4.3. It's the Destination that Counts!**

Many destination-wide interpretation plans we see today tend to be site specific with little attention paid to the wider context or integration with visitor offers at other related sites.

This, *'the world stops at my front gate'* and *'my biggest competition is my neighbour'* approach to destination interpretive planning and development are the single biggest factors that prevents heritage destinations fulfilling their potential.

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Except in exceptional circumstances, visitors tend to come to a destination because of the sum of its parts rather than any one single part. As a rule of thumb, visitors want 3 good reasons to invest their time, money, effort and emotion to come to a destination, so planning, developing and/or selling a single site as an isolated experience makes no sense.

Businesses and agencies with visitor planning responsibilities within a destination generally focus on those facets directly pertaining to, and within the scope of their own concern. Often little attention is paid to the interface between one entities mandate and another which results in a disjointed approach to interpretation, marketing, orientation, themes, experiences, services, and facilities.

The result is that a large percentage of expended efforts is spent haphazardly and narrowly, with work often duplicated, gaps unfilled, and inefficient use of available resources resulting in a disconnected visitor offer.

The interpretive systems planning process is key to the success of the Dearne Valley offer as it considers the destination as a whole, integrated, visitor focussed experience whilst accomplishing specific interpretive objectives and making meaningful connections with audiences to understand Dearne Valley's story and key messages. However it can only be truly successful if all the key players involved sign up to the plan, and deliver their roles according to the plan.

### **4.4. *The Value of Interpretive Systems Planning to Dearne Valley***

- It creates linkage and reduces duplication across different organizations which is more efficient, more focussed and saves money and resources.
- It promotes and fosters joined-up thinking and partnership working.

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- It integrates tactical branding, marketing, visitor research, planning, grants, financing, etc.
- It makes evaluation of interpretive plans, media, programs orientation and marketing easier and more meaningful, by pointing out excessive duplication and/or omissions within the interpretive system.
- It helps to create a sense of place and fosters community pride through better understanding of the landscape and its stories.
- It increases the intrinsic value of Dearne Valley as a special place which is key to its future protection.
- It encourages a more expedient and rational approach to planning interpretive services along the valley corridor.
- It integrates related sites, facilities, services and stories within Dearne Valley to create a seamless, holistic presentation that is easy for the visitor to understand and relate to.
- It reduces sign and panel clutter by focussing on those stories and messages that are truly important to convey.
- It creates a more enjoyable and satisfying visitor experience that the visitor is willing to invest time, emotion and effort to experience.
- It creates linkage and cross-pollination between different sites which encourages visitors to explore further, discover and learn more and stay longer.
- It facilitates the utilization of natural, physiographic, historical and cultural resources and stories, which might otherwise be ignored or overlooked.
- It facilitates a variety of levels of experience or 'pacing' for visitors as a common thread of experience at a destination level.

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- It extends the season and attracts and holds more visitors; they have a more enjoyable experience and they stay longer which means they spend more money which is good for the whole economy.

## 5. INTERPRETIVE SYSTEMS PLAN FOR DEARNE VALLEY

In developing the interpretive systems plan for Dearne Valley we have considered:

**Where you are now?** Critical Evaluation Exercise that assesses what exists today and whether it is fit for purpose.

**Where do you want to be?** An assessment of what the future interpretive visitor experience will look like in Dearne Valley.

**How to get there?** A series of site interpretation plans together with other specific recommendations.

**Did it work?** Evaluation and monitoring strategies.

## 6. WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

### 6.1. *A Critical Evaluation Exercise*

A key activity in the Interpreting Dearne Valley project was to understand what provision exists now and assess its effectiveness in terms of visitor focussed interpretation.

In this evaluation exercise we visited the 11 key sites and critically assessed 122 interpretation panels and exhibits. Some details of our findings are noted on the individual project plans, however the general synopsis is that very little in the area could be considered technically interpretive. Unfortunately much that is optimistically called interpretation is in reality information which is quite different.

For something to be considered interpretive it must pass the HDC Interpretation Acid Test (see 3.3 above) and the IEHI Writing and Graphic Best Practice Standards for Interpretive Media

### 6.3. *Critical Evaluation Tests in Dearne Valley - Key Findings*

During our visits to Dearne Valley we evaluated 122 exhibits at 11 key sites.

These sites included: Worsborough Mill, Elsecar Heritage Village, Elsecar Heritage Railway, Elsecar Lake, Monk Bretton Priory, Phoenix Park, Wentworth Castle, Connisborough Castle, Maurice Dobson Museum and the Bamsley Museum and Archive.

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The key findings are:

- Out of 122 panels and exhibits evaluated only 9 panels were considered to be interpretive in any way.
- A further 16 panels had elements that were interpretative but failed to meet the HDC Interpretation Acid Test or the Writing and Graphic Best Practice Standards for Interpretive Media criteria to be considered truly interpretive.
- The majority of panels were not written or designed to provoke, relate, reveal, address the whole, have message unity, be relevant, be appropriate, be audience focussed or have clear measurable objectives.
- The majority of panels were not written or designed to meet the IIEHI Writing and Graphic Best Practice Standards for Interpretive Media.
- Time was limited and we only had a short time available to conduct Test 3 - The DDT Test and Test 4 - Body Language Test on 12 separate panels at 6 sites.
  - ➔ We watched the behavior of 47 visitors interacting with the panels of which 4 were children, 14 were young to mature adults, and 29 were aging grays.
  - ➔ 16 were new visitors to the sites and 31 were repeat visitors.
  - ➔ A further 172 people ignored / disregarded the panels during the tests of which 53 people noticed and acknowledged the panels existence but chose not to engage.
  - ➔ 8 people displayed 'looking for an answer' body language but on questioning the answer wasn't found.

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- ➔ Only 17 people completed reading any of the panels within the DDT.
- ➔ On questioning the 47 we found that 43 of the audience were unable to answer simple LFD Outcome questions about the panels.
- ➔ Their comments about the panels included: *Where is the cafe? Where is the toilets? Can you see any of the house today? How long will it take to walk around the lake? I couldn't see my granddad in the photos! I don't care about this really, They're ok, Sort of interesting, I was looking for something else, Not what I was expecting.*
- The majority of outdoor panels were made from GRP / Fiberglass materials. Around 65% were embedded GRP laminate, around 20% were gelcoat GRP with silk screen printing and the rest were a mixture of acrylic, polycarbonate and vinyl laminations. In nearly all instances the panels materials were in some state of failure and failed the IIEHI Writing and Graphic Best Practice Standards for Interpretive Media .
- Around 65% of the outdoor frames we inspected were in a poor state of repair and needed repair or replacing. The majority of frames failed to meet and failed the IIEHI Writing and Graphic Best Practice Standards for Interpretive Media.
- None of the panels we inspected we believe were planned, written or designed around LFD Objectives.
- None of the panels we inspected we believe were pre-tested / pre-evaluated in situ with the target audience before fabrication.
- We suggest the key reason for the poor outcome of this evaluation is that existing panels in Dearne Valley have been planned, written and designed by individuals or organisations with no formal training in interpretation and therefore lack the necessary skills.

## 6.4. Recommendations

- Existing panels that failed the tests should be replaced with panels that meet satisfy the HDC Interpretation Acid Test and writing and Interpretive Graphic standards.
- Employ a member of staff, or hire in a company or individual with recognized heritage interpretation qualification for any future planning, evaluation, writing or design projects. Qualifications should be a degree or higher specifically in the field of heritage interpretation (rather than modules of another course), and/or certification and accreditation from the NAI, NPS or IIEHI, together with a minimum of 5-years experience planning, evaluation, writing and designing interpretation.
- All new interpretation is pre-tested prior to fabrication.
- All new panel installations should be made of environmentally friendly materials with a minimum 10-year warranty.

## 7. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE?

The aim of future interpretation in the Dearne Valley is to encourage people to explore and better understand the landscape which is key to better support for its long-term protection.

The aim of the interpretation systems plan is to develop interpretation that;

- is fit for purpose
- is professionally planned, written and designed
- is, where possible environmentally friendly and long lasting (10-years plus)
- is focussed on a series of easily accessible interconnected key sites that have strong relevant stories to tell.
- is based on a strong main interpretive theme that is supported by program themes which in turn are supported by sub-themes.
- is focused on a broad audience base, from special interest to the family holiday market and has the potential to attract new markets.
- is accessible to as many people as possible.
- adds value to the local economy.
- uses interpretive media that is cost effective, low maintenance and works best for the target audience.

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- where possible exploits the potential of modern communications.
- where possible uses live interpretation.
- is supported and promoted by effective pre-visit, on-visit and post-visit marketing
- is supported by a network of tourist information points that market the interpretation and orientate the visitor to key sites.
- that is backed by robust pre- and post-evaluation process that measures effectiveness, return on investment and outcomes.

## 8. HOW TO GET THERE?

For this element we have broken the activity into 3 areas; Marketing, Orientation and Interpretation.

The key task of this project was to look at interpretation solely, however in our experience it is essential to take a holistic, integrated approach by considering the marketing and orientation aspects when developing designation-wide interpretation plans.

## 9. MARKETING

### 9.1. *Marketing Overview*

For interpretation to be successful the audience must be made aware of the Dearne Valley offer and be compelled to participate in exploring it. This can be achieved through marketing before, during and after the experience has been undertaken.

- **Pre-visit** - brochures, websites, advertising, PR, etc.
- **On visit 'point of use' marketing** - trail head panels, paper trail leaflets and guides, tourist information points, tourist information centres.
- **Post visit marketing** - membership programs, mailers, events, PR, 'friends-websites', etc.

The way visitors discover information about Dearne Valley will depend on the type of visitor they are:

- **Local residents:** Many local residents will be well aware of the Dearne Valley landscape and some will visit on a regular basis, however many will have gaps in their understanding of the landscape and the work of the Landscape Partnership. This is an important market group for Dearne Valley because they can be politically and socially influential. They are also the main benefactors of tourism development in the area.

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- **Day visitors resident in the region:** A large percentage of day visitors from the region will be well aware of the Dearne Valley landscape and will rediscover Dearne Valley in the same way as Local Residents do. However some day visitors from the region will discover the valley for the first time, especially those living in the regions large urban areas. This is a key potential new market.
- **Day visitors staying in the region:** This group will be staying at accommodation in the region. They are keen to explore the area and are willing to travel significant distances for entertainment. This group are adaptable and easily persuaded to take action if the offer is good. Many in this group are staying with friends and relations (VFR). A small percentage of day visitors staying the region will be well aware of the Dearne Valley landscape and will rediscover Dearne Valley in the same way as Local Residents do. However some day visitors staying in the region will discover the valley for the first time.
- **Staying visitors staying locally:** This group will be staying at accommodation in the area. Many are return visits and are perhaps the most passionate about the area. They are keen to explore the valley especially if there is something new to see. This group are adaptable and easily persuaded to take action if the offer is good. Many in this group are staying with friends and relations (VFR). A very large percentage of staying visitors staying locally will be well aware of the Dearne Valley landscape.

### 9.2. Branding

Destination branding is much more than a logo, slogan or a corporate design. A destination brand is the 'promise of an experience' and conveys to a target audience a certain assurance as to the nature of the experience they will receive, and the standards the destination seeks to maintain. A destination brand is about; *what you do, why you do what you do, how you do what you do and the benefits your audience will receive from what you do*. Brands are reputational assets based on powerfully held beliefs or missions; they drive the understanding of the value of a destination by creating intellectual links with the audience which, in turn drives customer loyalty. Brands are

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hard won in a busy marketplace, expensive and developed over many years.

The Dearne Valley has a very weak brand identity so this will need developing into an outward facing and consumer aware brand with a focus on the benefits the Dearne Valley brings to the audience.

### **9.3. Public Relations**

PR (Public Relations) together with a web presence are the two most cost effective marketing tools available to a destination. We recommend that a separate PR strategy is developed that aims to promote the Dearne Valley at a local and regional level. The target should be to achieve 2 or 3 'mentions' in the press and media per week as a minimum.

### **9.4. Website**

Research shows that 93% (VisitBritain Insights 2012) of new visitors to the Dearne Valley area will use the world wide web to research their visit before they come.

Visitors may not book facilities and services online, as a visit to Dearne Valley is an emotional purchase and people tend to take more care purchasing a leisure visit than we would if it was a business trip (utility purchase). We therefore feel that it would be worth investing in a search engine optimized website dedicated to the Dearne Valley.

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This should be very audience focussed with a separate corporate areas accessed through a login. The website should be very visual and designed on the 'mass customization and markets of one' principle (see section 12.2 below). The site should have a strong events element which can be administered by the Landscape Partnership team. Cost of the development of such a website of should cost no more than £3,000, however to that cost should be added content development of £3,500 and an ongoing link strategy marketing program costing around £4,000.

### 9.5. ***Tourist Information Centres***

The local and regional Tourist Information Centre (TICs) have a role to play in promoting Dearne Valley to potential audiences. Regional TICs should carry a good supply of Dearne Valley destination guides and leaflets. These can be supplied either directly from the Landscape Partnership office, or by using a specialist distribution company such as Carrier Direct Ltd.

### 9.6. ***Hard Copy Leaflets & Brochures***

Traditional pre-visit hard copy (brochures, leaflets, guides, etc) as a destination marketing tool is on the wane. Hard copy is out of date the second it is printed, and design and production costs are high compared to web pages. Hard copy needs dry storage which costs money, it needs distributing which costs money, it needs evaluating which costs money, and research shows that visitors are more likely to plan their visit using the world wide web than they are by reading hard copy. However, there is a place for a destination guide which can be distributed to regional TICs, info points and accommodation providers.

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There is also a role for some targeted on-visit hard copy that visitors can find whilst they are in the area. We recommend a simple 3-fold DL-sized, full colour design in a waterproof paper for specific trails and sites in the Dearne Valley. The leaflet would contain a 3-d map (see below) and the amazing experiences this trail or site has to offer.

These should be made available at local and regional TICs, local TIPs, local accommodation providers, key local attractions and at key Dearne Valley sites. To keep the costs down we suggest that these leaflets are written and published once every 2 or 3 years, which means that information presented must be generic and not specific to a year.

### 9.7. **Tourist Brown Signs**

Tourist brown signs are primarily an orientation tool for road traffic management and under the control of the prevailing road traffic authority. Officially they are not seen as a marketing tool, however there is universal acceptance backed by clear evidence that tourist brown signs are a very effective marketing tool that are used in one of two ways:

- **Pre-visit** - people traveling from A to B for other purposes (i.e. not on a leisure visit to the destination) see brown signs and register the information. This information is later retrieved and used investigate and plan visits to the destination.
- **On-visit:** Visitors exploring the destination with no fixed plan, often see tourist brown signs, which raises their curiosity and compels them to investigate which often results in a site visit. See also Section 11 Orientation. Specific recommendations are noted in the attached site plans.

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### 9.8. **Tourist Information Points**

As part of this project we identified a number of key locations for Tourist Information Points (TIPs) in and around the Dearne Valley. TIP's primarily used as a marketing and orientation tool and as such should be highly visible to the traveling visitor, easy to find and easy to access. In general, TIPs are used less than tourist brown signs because visitors don't have to stop a car to use a tourist brown sign - they see it, and register the information and the task is completed. However their impact and effectiveness of TIPs in generating tie visitation is much greater because the visitor visiting a TIP has invested time and energy and they require a return on that investment in the form of information they can use.

We recommend that 2 different sizes of TIP are used in Dearne Valley:

**Medium sized TIPs:** these are small roofed wall structure built of stone, metal or wood. These would be built key sites on strategic routes.

**Small sized TIPs:** these are small A0 or A1 sized structures of varying designs depending on the location. These double up as trail head panels at the beginning of a trails and would be built at all key sites.

### 9.9. **Welcome Signage**

All key sites will require prominent and visible promotion 'welcome' signage at the entrances to all the key sites.

See also Section 11 Orientation. Specific recommendations are noted in the attached site plans.

## 10. ORIENTATION

### 10.1. *Orientation Overview*

The Dearne Valley is a complicated landscape with a number of key routes into, and around the valley. The key heritage sites are scattered throughout the area which, in many ways is a great advantage as it encourages visitors to explore a wider area, with the opportunity for greater economic benefit, for more communities.

The disadvantage is that navigating visitors around the landscape is a greater challenge. Finding specific sites will require changes to directional and welcome signage at specific points (see Dearne Valley Orientation Strategy) together with conspicuous, strategically placed tourist information points (TIPs) at key sites.

### 10.2. *Maps*

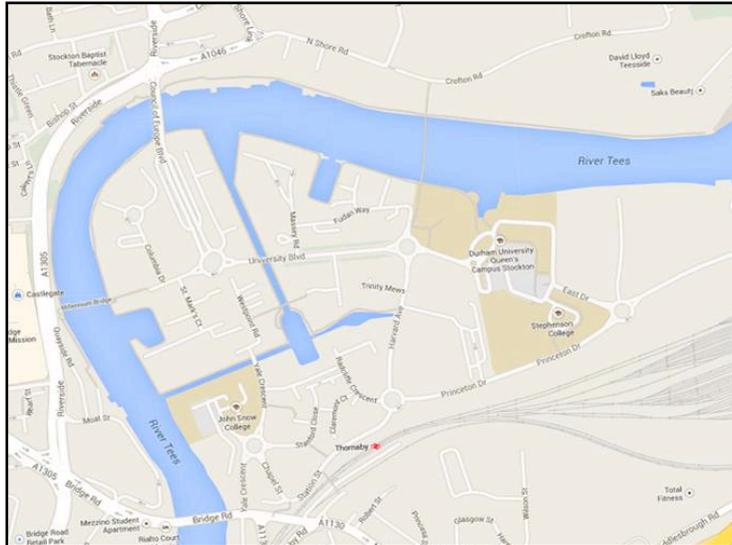
Maps will form a key feature of the orientation installations in the Dearne Valley.

Hikers, and people who regularly work with, or in landscapes are very used to Ordnance Survey cartography or other single dimensional flat maps, however there are not very user friendly for the average visitor.

Research HDC has undertaken over the last 10-years clearly shows that a 3D map is 10 times more effective as an orientation tool for the average visitor. The simple reason is that as human beings we see the world in 3D and we navigate our way in the world by looking for

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landmarks and shapes in the landscape. By using a map that graphically represents the landmarks and shapes we will see exactly what we are going to see.



*3D maps are more user friendly than traditional one dimensional maps.*

A one dimensional overhead graphic representation is a much harder concept to process as first the brain has to analyze the visual data and then translate it into what it might look like at eye level based on our previous experience. A set of 3D maps for Dearne Valley would cost in the region of £5,000.

## 11. INTERPRETATION

### 11.1. *Holding the visitor in the Dearne Valley*

The key to maximizing the duration of visitor stay in the valley is to maintain a high level of entertainment. We can achieve this by presenting inspiring and engaging interpretation to visitors at key sites and by cross pollinating related ideas to visitors from one interpretive site to another using the principles of mass customization and markets of one.

### 11.2. *Mass Customization and Markets of One*

Mass Customization and Markets of One (see *The Experience Economy* by Gilmore and Pine) involves looking at the wide range of interpretive programs, services and topics that visitors might want to experience, learn about and enjoy and making intellectual connections and links between them.

We know from our visitor profile that our market is older, traveling as a couple or with family and they have an interest in birdwatching, angling, hiking, photography, history, culture and nature. We also know that people who like birdwatching, angling, hiking, photography, history, culture and nature, also like pubs, village events, car boot sales, local food, bargains, the Daily Mail, sunday lunch and they have a strong folk memory.

This means that when we present interpretation to the audience we should maximise the opportunity to cross pollinate ideas to the audience about other sites in the system.

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- *By the way, if you are photographer the best view points in the valley are here, here and here.*
- *If you'd like to see what farming was really like in days gone by you must visit...*
- *You can see a great example of this plant (building, stone, structure, etc) at...*

In this way you cross pollinate ideas across the system, passing visitors from one site to another which holds them in the destination for longer. The visitor likes this because you are responding to their needs and allowing them to create their own unique experience - a market of one!

### 11.3. **Market Analysis**

#### **Dearne Valley Visitor Profile**

- **A** - Upper Middle Class: Higher Managerial, Administrative or Professional
- **B** - Middle Class: Intermediate Managerial, Administrative or Professional
- **C1** - Lower Middle Class: Supervisory or Clerical, Junior managerial, Administrative or Professional
- **C2** - Skilled Working Class: Skilled Manual Workers

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- **D** - Working Class: Semi and Unskilled Manual Workers
- **E** - Those at lowest level of subsistence: State Pensioners or Widows (no other earner), Casual or Lowest Grade Workers

## 11.4. Interpretive Topics

The starting point in the development of an interpretive systems master plan is to identify the key topics that are covered within the subject area. The master plan helps to identify the ‘unique’ interpretive story of each site, relative to other sites within the system and this is really appreciated when developing themes, however the identification topics is a simple yet critically important element of the master plan.

Dearne Valley covers a great many topics, has a great many stories to tell and related activities the visitor and partake in. This project covers a wide variety of topics and we have endeavoured to whittle these down into 11 subjects.

The following matrix highlights the variety of topic areas across the key attractions in this study.

Topics	Pre-Medieval History	Post Medieval History	Earls of Stafford	Industrial Heritage	Coal Mining	Railway Heritage	Farming Heritage	Church Heritage	Social History	Natural Heritage	Bird Watching	Fishing Lakes	Gardens
Monk Breton Abbey		X						X		X			
Barnsley Main		X		X	X				X				
Deane Valley Park		X		X		X			X			X	

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Worsbrough Mill	X		X			X		X	X	X	X	
Wigfield Farm						X			X			
Hoyland Low Stand	X							X	X			
Elsecar Heritage Centre			X	X	X			X				
Elsecar Heritage Railway			X	X	X			X				
Connisborough Castle	X	X						X	X			
Hemingfield Pump			X									
Elsecar Village	X		X	X	X			X	X			
Wentworth Castle	X	X	X	X		X		X	X			X
Wentworth Woodhouse	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X
Rockley Engine & Forge	X		X	X					X	X		
New Hall Farm	X					X			X			
Wombwell Woods	X		X						X	X		
Maurice Dobson Museum	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Railway Cut					X							
Phoenix Park			X	X				X	X	X		
Bolton Brick Ponds			X					X	X			
Wath Park								X				
Swinton Activity Centre								X	X	X	X	
Swinton Pottery	X		X					X				

## 11.5. Interpretive Themes

### *The Jigsaw Dilemma*

When a visitor comes to a destination like the Dearne Valley they perceive a scrambled, disjointed jigsaw of un-connected stories, places and experiences.

This is true whether it is a returning visitor or a first-time visitor, however the effect tends to be exacerbated for returning visitors as their ideas about the destination are pre-conceived and embedded.

At one site a visitor may see a pretty lake covered by wading birds and ducks; At another site they will discover the remains of dismantled buildings, an awe-inspiring castle and perhaps the ruins of an abandoned brick-works; At another site they may find the remains of a kiln and at another, a restored steam railway. At other sites they will discover the stories of a grizzly mining disasters, highwaymen and haunted houses. And at yet another site they will discover a pretty pond in a shady wood near a medieval chapel.

All these sites are in Dearne Valley and yet collectively they don't add up to the sum which is the essence of Dearne Valley - there is no structure and no plot and so the visitor leaves with unconnected pieces of the Dearne Valley jigsaw that really make no sense.

The interpretive theme acts like the picture on the jigsaw puzzle box - it helps visitors make sense of the Dearne Valley story with each piece of the jigsaw fitting into the big picture of the overall story.



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An interpretive theme is the central concept, or key idea of any visitor experience or presentation. Themes provide organisational structure and clarity of purpose of the experience or program and has a dramatic effect on the whole business planning and marketing process; Themes help you to plan exhibits and manage visitors, it focusses marketing and promotion campaigns, it impacts the way in which staff are trained and what products you sell in the gift shop. It is all encompassing and the single most important element in interpretive planning process.

Once the interpretive theme has been decided, everything you do in effectively presenting that theme to the audience falls into place. If you ask a visitor to explain what your experience or presentation was about once they have completed it, the answer they give should match your theme – if it don't, there is a problem with your interpretive message.

Themes should:

- Contain one main idea if possible.
- Be stated as a short, simple, complete sentence.
- Reveal the overall purpose of the experience, program or activity.
- Be interestingly and motivationally worded when possible.

In simple terms visitors exiting your museum / heritage centre / historic site / and so on, should be able to summarise the interpretive theme of the visitor experience in one succinct sentence.

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### 11.6. *Interpretive Theme for Dearne Valley*

Based on discussions with the Landscape Team, interviews with key stakeholders and members of the public and a review of key interpretive objectives the we feel that the following interpretive themes reflected the essence of the Dearne Valley offer we recommend the following overarching theme:

*People have lived in the beautiful and secluded Dearne Valley for thousands of years, shaping and adapting the landscape, leaving fascinating traces of their lives as each generation faced new challenges!*

It is this interpretive theme or message line that will flow through all interpretive experiences, be the first exhibit visitors would see in the visitor center, and be stated, and illustrated by all interpretive programs and services.

Flowing into the overarching theme are main sub themes and under that sub themes. Each one of these when linked to objectives can form the basis of an exhibit.

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### 11.7. *Interpretive Objectives for Dearne Valley*

In our experience this is the area where other approaches to interpretive planning tend to fail. We believe that it is impossible to effectively plan and design any interpretive program or presentation if we don't know exactly what it is we want to accomplish from each site, service, facility, exhibit, panel, label, image and so on.

Objectives are outcome driven and measurable. For example if we had the interpretive theme: *'Fish Pond Wood has a chilling story to tell!'* then we need to develop interpretive learning objective that would help illustrate that theme, such as: *'On completion of this panel the audience will understand how the Fish Pond Wood ice house was used'*.

This objective statement can be pre-tested with visitors to see if they already know or can explain how the ice house was used and then post tested, having read the panel to see if they now explain how the ice house was used. If they can't – the panel didn't accomplish its learning objective.

You can't really evaluate the success of any interpretive program or service without first understanding what the outcomes or objectives of the program or service were.

In outcome based interpretive planning we use three distinct types of objectives: Learning, Emotional and Behavioural (or Learn, Feel Do or LFD objectives). These LFD objectives are psychologically connected; If you want your audience to 'behave' in a certain way, they must first of all 'feel' compelled to do so, and the only way they can 'feel' something about a subject is to 'learn' why it is significant for them personally.

For example for the lost village of Lodge you could have:

***Learning objective:***

## Dearne Valley Interpretive Plan

*Upon the completion of their visit the majority of visitors will understand why Lodge should be protected for future generations.*

**Emotional objective:**

*Upon completion of their visit 70% of visitors will feel that the preservation of Lodge is important for their heritage.*

**Behavioral objective:**

*Upon completion of the visit 10% of visitors will money towards the preservation of Lodge*

These LFD objectives are central to interpretive program planning and they are your guidepost to what is really important for the program to accomplish and how you want the program to affect your visitors. You can have as few or as many objectives as you want, however they must be achievable and realistic.

Details of individual LFD objectives are noted in each site plan

### 11.9. **Interpretive Media**

Details of recommended interpretive media are noted on each site plan, however the following is an overview of a range of different types of interpretive media that are relevant to the Dearne Valley interpretation project.

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Interpretive exhibits fall into 4 types (see graphic right).

Type 1 exhibits are totally interactive - you do something to it and it does something back. Type 2a exhibits are one way active - you do something to it but it doesn't respond. Type 2b exhibits are one way active - it does something to you but it don't interact back respond. Type 3 exhibits are passive.

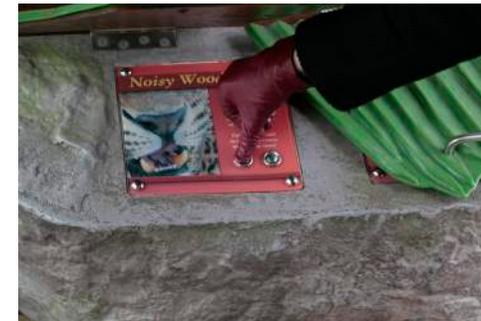
Exhibit Classification Matrix			
	exhibit is active	exhibit is inert	
visitor is active	type 1	type 2a	High Intrinsic Interest ↓ Low Intrinsic Interest
visitor is passive	type 2b	type 3	

## 11.9.1. Audio Exhibits

Audio exhibits are a type 2b exhibit

Because humans only remember 10% of what they hear, audio exhibit is considerably less effective than a visual one, and an interactive hands on, minds on exhibit is more effective than a visual exhibit.

However, we have developed a range of techniques that boost the effectiveness of audio exhibits turning them into a more inter active type 1 exhibit.



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to hear the end of the story!

Due for the need to limit the number of interpretive panels in the landscape audio exhibit will play an important role.

The audio units will need to be solar powered. You could opt for the hand or foot powered units, however in our experience these tend to fail mechanically pretty quickly.

The other issue with hand or foot powered units is that the minute a user stops rotating the handle or pumping the pedal the audio presentation reverts to the start - so the listener never get

### 11.9.2. Apps and QR Codes

Apps and QR codes are not necessarily a good option for interpretation. There is a lot of hype around these forms of media, however when you study usage in detail the return on investment is poor. QR codes get used a great deal, but only in situations where there is a point of sale offer to be had: Click the QR code and download a 2 for 1 voucher for a cheese burger.

When you look at QR codes used for interpretation in heritage setting you see that usage is low and, when it is used the visitor rarely drills down very deeply to find additional information.

The same holds true for Apps. The reason for this is that visitors come to a heritage site to have a good time. The average visitor does not want encyclopaedic knowledge of a subject, they just want to know the 'juicy bits'. They are generally unwilling to dig very deep which is what most Apps and QR codes want you to do.

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The simple fact is that if a visitor leaves a site remembering in the long term memory part of the brain, 3 interesting facts about a site then that would be counted a success - more than 3 facts is unusual.

## 11.9.3. *Interpretation Panels*

In Dearne Valley it is important to limit the numbers of interpretation panels as there is an overwhelming wish to maintain the visual amenity of the landscape. However a well planned and executed interpretive panel can be an extremely effective way to communicate specific learning, behavioural and emotional messages to an audience at a relatively low cost.

Panels have the added advantages that they are on duty 24 hrs a day, need very little maintenance and the return on investment can be very high compared to other types of media.

However for panels to work they must be planned, written and designed to minimum planning, writing and graphic standards for interpretation panels (see Appendix 2 - DID IT WORK? EVALUATION & MONITORING STRATEGY), they must be easy to find and they need to be paced along a trail at regular intervals.

Panels are like a good book that you cant put down; The trail head panels is the front cover that tells entices you to follow the trail. Each panels is a chapter in the book that provokes, relates and reveals a story through a gripping plot line with the final panel acting as the 'ta dah!' final reveal.

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## 11.9.4. Interactive Hands-on, Minds-on Exhibits

The opportunity for 'hands on, minds on' interpretive exhibits in the Dearne Valley is limited. Interactive exhibits can be highly effective, however they tend to be expensive and breakable - there are exceptions to this, although a general rule interactive exhibits are better located in controlled, usually indoor environments.

We wouldn't envisage using touch-screens in say Dearne Valley Park as it is highly likely that they would be inadvertently damaged, vandalised or stolen. However an interactive exhibit in the mill at Worsborough Mill could work well if it illustrates a specific concept that need illustrating.



We often see "hands on, minds on" interactive exhibits shoe-horned into existing exhibits which rarely works so it is important that interactive are planned in as part of an overall planning process.

Three forms of simple, robust interactive exhibit that can work well are 'signal signs', 'treasure boxes' and 'flip reveal signs' and we have noted these in the individual project plans.

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### 11.9.5. *Live Interpretation*

Of all the forms of interpretive exhibit the live interpreter is by far the most effective!

The art of live interpretation is quite different to that of a tour guide or a blue badge guide. In fact we regularly train tour guide and blue badge guide with the additional skills it takes to become a live heritage interpreter. In the US it takes 2 years to train a National Park Ranger in the necessary skills to face an audience and effectively deliver inspiring, engaging interpretation.

Live interpretation is a truly interactive experience: The interpreter can interpret to the audience, and the audience can react back, and the interpreter can react back again to the audience by tweaking and modifying the presentation to meet the audiences needs.

The number of different providers in the Dearne Valley offer and promote a wide range of ad hoc guided tours.

There are a variety of individuals, organisations and voluntary groups in and around the area that would benefit from some live interpretation skill training so we have included a training program as a separate line items in the site budgets.

## 12. DID IT WORK? EVALUATION & MONITORING STRATEGY

We have included as Appendix 1 a series of evaluation and monitoring summative and formative strategies that can be used to assess the effectiveness of new and existing interpretive media and exhibits.

## 13. INDIVIDUAL SITE PLANS

See Appendix 3 onwards.