

PAGE 1 - About your vision [150 words]

Tavistock Abbey plays a part in the everyday life of the town which is generally not recognised by the community. Throughout its 500 years plus life, the abbey was granted a market which still runs today and various fairs, of which Goose Fair remains a major event in the town. The granting of the abbey to the Russell family at the Dissolution has, over subsequent centuries, impacted on the town planning and its architecture, providing major public buildings which everyone uses and enjoys today. Seeing the ruins repaired and its history interpreted will educate the community and visitors about the significance and the scale of the abbey, its regional importance and influence which impacted on Devon and Cornwall prior to feudalism and industrialisation. This will foster appreciation of the town's depth of heritage and history.

137 words

PAGE 1 - About your heritage focus [500 words]

Tavistock's rich history is deeply rooted in its former Benedictine Abbey (973 CE foundation) though today, many visitors and residents have little awareness of its continuing legacy.

The abbey's royal connections and gifts of land enabled it to control manors and parishes throughout Devon and Cornwall. In 1105, it was granted a market and later hosted fairs, including Goose Fair, and these continue to be regularly held. Tavistock proudly boasts itself as a Stannary Town – a role awarded the abbey in 1305. Education always played an important part of monastic life, and the abbey had a tradition of preserving manuscripts; Tavistock College can trace its lineage to the abbey. Its link to Gloucester Hall, Oxford, possibly led to the establishment at Tavistock of only the seventh printing press in England.

Months after its dissolution in 1539, the abbey and its possessions were acquired by John Russell whose descendants governed the town until 1911, substantially altering its layout over the centuries. A consequence of this single-family ownership is a cohesive collection of documents, now archived in Exeter.

The town centre overlies the core of the abbey. Its ruins are an integral part of the streetscape adjoining the main route through the town and along a pedestrian/cycle link beside the River Tavy. These ruins comprise Betsy Grimal's Tower (BGT), Grade I, and Stillhouse (SH), Grade II (both part of SAM 1020401) and intermittent stretches of wall which, taken together, form the southwest boundary of the abbey precinct. A section of cloister is visible in the churchyard.

BGT is mainly 15th century with later 19th century alterations. The building consists of an entrance archway with projecting demi-octagonal turrets; the south turret has an anticlockwise stair to first floor, built contemporaneously with the 15th gatehouse, while the north turret has ground and first floors, plus garderobes at both levels.

The SH, possibly originally the abbey apothecary, is 6m high and 4.8m square. Surveys indicate it was built in two phases with an original ground floor, and a later 15th century first floor. The windows are mainly late-15th century additions with some added in the 19th century from abbey remains.

Archaeological investigations by Dr Radford within St Eustachuis's churchyard, carried out a century ago, revealed late-13th century decorated floor tiles and located the monastic church's north aisle.

Investigations in the 1990s by Dr Stuart Blaylock recorded further remains, and he noted the high quality of the buildings and their detailing, much of which was repurposed. He also drew attention to the unconventional layout of the abbey with the Great Court located on the east side of the cloister,

and recommended further investigations should be considered. In the 1990s recordings in service trenches in Bedford Square located the Lady Chapel and high-status burials associated with late-13th century silver coins. The finds are currently archived in Plymouth but are not on public display.

12th century Walter of Winchester described the abbey as 'holding first place in dignity, learning and magnificence in its buildings.'

495 words

PAGE 2 - Is this heritage at risk? [500 words]

BGT is on the 'at risk' register category C (slow decay; no solution agreed) and the condition of both buildings has deteriorated over recent years with some structural damage being caused to the fabric of the tower. The abbey sits in the Tavistock Conservation Area which covers a large portion of the town centre.

The material decay has been ongoing over a period of time with the Town Council who own and maintain the buildings, commissioning condition reports in 2017. The pandemic meant that only very minimal maintenance occurred due to the reduction in the Council's funding, and not to the level the TTC wanted to achieve. In the late 20th century, the ruins were accessible to the public, but the loss of this facility due to changes in policy by the then Council, meant that the interest in the buildings by the public and local community, fell away. An increase in vandalism and damage to artifacts led to gates being installed in the BGT. The SH had to be closed off, again, because of antisocial behaviour. Currently, the public and the community engage with the buildings through walks/talks arranged by the Tavistock Heritage Trust, and led by volunteers. However, as there is no access for people to experience the ruins, the scope for the talks is limited.

Apart from the natural decay of materials such as the lime mortar, the stonework has been adversely affected by plant growth, particularly ivy and other woody species, which are slowly breaking up the walls to BGT and the SH. This is less advanced than was initially feared in BGT, but is still an ongoing and increasing risk to the structure. Piecemeal expedient repairs do not take on the complex and poorly understood phasing of the structure, and to continue with unsupported repairs in this way will seriously hamper future attempts to understand the heritage.

Funding is necessary to enable the conditions surveys to be up-dated, and for tenders sought for the full repair of the ruins, such that the level of maintenance is continued to ensure that they play a prominent role in heritage of the town.

Currently, there is no interpretation available to the public, yet, the buildings are iconic with post cards of their images dating from the 19th century.

380 words

PAGE 3 – What is the title of your project? (255 characters)

'Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey'

The sustainable project to open up the abbey remains to the public through conservation and repair, archaeological investigation, historical research and comprehensive interpretation with community involvement throughout.

252 characters

PAGE 3 - When will your project happen?

Start date March 2025

Completion date December 2026

The proposed dates are:

- Archaeological work carried out spring-autumn 2025.
- Basic research work of the lands under its domain, its jurisdiction and power, its relationship with various monarchs completed in the summer of 2026 to enable the interpretation to be launched but working towards a full published interpretation to celebrate 1500 years since its dissolution in 2035.
- Building repairs and consolidation work – TTC out to tender for consultants followed by preparation of schedules and tenders from contractors through 2025 with site works completed by autumn 2026.
- Interpretation/ computer graphics, etc to be ready at the same time as repair works completed to 'launch' at the end 2026.

PAGE 3 - Where is your project taking place?

Grid reference:

SX481744

PAGE 4 - Have you received any advice from anyone else about this project? 500 words

Prior to speaking to Heritage Lottery, we consulted with Historic England and received advice from John Ette (HE and Partnerships' team leader for the South-West) who advised that the project, partly due to some of the remains being on the 'At Risk' register, was suitable for a Community Grant. Subsequently, meetings with Andy Crabb from HE saw an application made for a Repair Grant for Heritage at Risk; this was successful and has enabled Tavistock Town Council to appoint a conservation consultant and tender for a stone mason to carry out removal of woody growth from BGT stonework, plus stabilisation of the tops of the walls, whilst further funding is sought.

In 2023, a site walkover was held with Bill Horner, Historic Environment Manager and County Archaeologist at Devon County Council, who was very supportive of the project and indicated the possibility of some funding of up to £1,000 to help develop proposals. An application was made for funding to obtain an up-date on the costings for repairs to BGT and SH previously prepared for the Town Council, which was successful. He recognised that the project offered a 'once in a century' opportunity to investigate the layout and sequence of monastic buildings within the precinct and, through research, to better understand the role of the abbey at a local and regional level. He was very keen for community involvement at all stages of the project.

In October 2024 a meeting was held with the West Devon Borough Council Conservation Officer, who is up-dating the Tavistock Conservation Area Plan, to discuss the importance of the abbey which forms the heart of the Conservation Area, and is a key issue within the Neighbourhood Development Plan and is currently its independent review stage.

Following publication in the local press covering the project, meetings were held with the community who had expressed an interest in being involved with aspects of the project. This has led to retired archaeology professionals joining the Group and assisting us with advice. Consultation with the Tavistock Heritage Trust's 'Discovery Group' who lead children's heritage events in the Guildhall led to considering the fun heritage events for younger people.

359 words

PAGE 4 - Have you received any advice from us about this project? [500 words]

When the concept of repairing the abbey with further archaeology work within the abbey precinct was in its initial stage in the summer 2022 the idea was presented to Arlene Montheith. At that time the total project included repairs to BGT, the SH and the abbey precinct wall, plus further archaeological work, research on the abbey and its power, an audio/visual/3D computer presentation of the outcomes, plus the publication of a book.

Following that consultation the project was reduced to exclude the abbey precinct wall as it is in private ownership and we were advised to proceed in stages. The concept of a publication as part of the grant application was also dropped.

Subsequently the project has been discussed with Kelly Spry-Phare who recommended that an initial enquiry should be submitted for a grant of up to £250,000.

Since making the initial enquiry Macaulay Bristow has visited, inspected the ruins and provided feedback on the initial enquiry information.

158 words

PAGE 5 - Tell us what you will be doing during your project. 500 words

Activities:

- All proposed investigations would be preceded and followed by community workshops outlining HSE requirements, explain research objectives, methodologies, types of equipment available, its use and potential/limitations. Provide feedback on the results and their significance.
- Undertake a range of geophysical surveys in areas within and to the west of the abbey precinct to locate areas of potential archaeological interest.
- Undertake archaeological, research-led excavations in identified areas of interest. Also, carry out archaeological investigations within BGT and adjacent to the cloister remains in the churchyard. Record the standing cloister remains.
- Hold 'Heritage Days' for heritage building owners to inform them of the abbey, and its implications for them as owners.
- Deliver courses led by conservators and stonemasons for local building contractors to learn about mortar mixes, and their application.
- Work with the community to discover masonry items from the abbey which were removed; to record and log them and to set up a database for reference.
- Volunteer-led primary documentary research to bring together a full understanding of and the history of the abbey and its impact on the local and wider regional area.
- Provide a digital baseline for the abbey remains and to enable future 3D modelling.
- Present the archaeological results in appropriate formats and channels.
- Activities at the Guildhall Interpretation Centre relating to the abbey to improve/update the existing interpretation.

Events:

- Working with the Tavistock Heritage Trust Discovery Group invite school children to attend events relating to the abbey i.e. assisting with the geophysical surveys, and the survey of the cloister ruin.
- Set up a series of talks on the outcomes of the repairs and the archaeological work whilst the works progress.

Items or resourcing which will be created:

- A resource will be used by the Tavistock Heritage Trust for walks/talks for the local community and visitors, and to increase the interpretation of the abbey in the Interpretation Centre.
- A resource will be available to local schools and educators both locally and nationally.
- Obtaining knowledge and understanding of the abbey layout/buildings by excavating within BGT; geophysical surveying open spaces and suitable structures within and adjoining the precinct; small-scale excavations and recording of targeted features and structures carried out with involvement from members of the public.
- Following the completion of the archaeological survey work and research work, the creation of a 3D computerised graphic interpretation of the abbey, its everyday life, its power and the people who were part of its history by working with local volunteer, specialist individuals and organisations. This resource will be located in the Guildhall Interpretation Centre and the Tavistock Museum offering a better visitor experience.

Heritage repairs:

- Repairing/stabilisation of BGT and the SH to enable public access by working with conservation professionals, employing conservation contractors.
- Ensuring a long-term conservation plan is agreed and in place to enable ease of long-term maintenance of the ruins by meeting with relevant parties and specialists outlining economic and community benefits of working together for long-term conservation.

499 words

PAGE 5 - Will capital work be part of your project? 500 words

Repairs to historic buildings and the digitalisation of the work and findings:

The BGT and the SH are in the freehold ownership of Tavistock Town Council; the ruins of the cloister are in part of St Eustachius closed churchyard and owned by the church and the Diocese of Exeter.

The digitalisation of the work will be owned by Tavistock Heritage Trust and Tavistock Town Council and kept in Subscription Library. Any finds will be kept in the Museum or at The Box, Plymouth depending on quality of care required. The web site will be maintained by the Tavistock Heritage Trust.

PAGE 7 - Do you need any permission to carry out the capital work? 500 words

1. Listed Building consent will be required for the repairs to the ruins within the ownership of Tavistock Town Council.
2. Schedule B approval will be required from the DAC for the archaeological digs adjacent to the cloister ruins.
3. Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent will be required to the archaeological digs within the abbey precinct.
4. It is necessary to obtain a section 42 licence from Historic England (HE) before any geophysical surveying can take place on a scheduled ancient monument. Almost all of the supposed Abbey remains are included in their listing no. 1,020,401 dating back to 1924. The project team have personnel already experienced in obtaining such licences and have had meetings with the local HE manager Andy Crabb. Typically, it will take up to 2 months to obtain permission so it is not time critical for the project.

PAGE 7 - Has a condition survey taken place in the last 5 years? 500 words

YES for BGT

YES for SH.

Betsy Grimal's Tower - a condition survey was carried out in September 2024 following the removal of the plant growth.

Stillhouse – a condition survey was carried out in December 2024.

PAGE 8 – Are there any legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage which may affect your project? 500 words

Tick box - YES

There is a legal obligation for the Bedford Hotel, whose carpark and entrance abuts the east side of Betsy Grimbals Tower and whose garden abuts the Stillhouse to provide access for maintenance purposes.

33 words

Page 9 – Is this heritage on the at Risk Register?

Yes

Risk register number 1020401

PAGE 9 - Will you be creating any digital works as part of your project? 500 words

Tick box - YES

A digital interpretation of the archaeological findings and the research will be created. A section of the Guildhall Interpretation Centre will be updated to house the additional information about the abbey, plus audio/visual equipment to offer various levels of information on the abbey buildings, its life and power. The interpretation will include photographs, electronic documents and databases, and a 3D computerised modelling of the abbey.

Information will also be placed on the Tavistock Heritage Trust web site and managed by the consultant responsible for the Guildhall Interpretation web site.

PAGE 10 - Will you be acquiring any buildings, land or heritage items as part of your project? 500 words

Tick box - YES

The project does not include for the purchase of any artifacts, however, there is a possibility that artefacts will be located during the digs within the abbey. Any such material will be housed locally at the Museum or the Guildhall Interpretation Centre, unless special conditions are required for their preservation; in such a case they would be deposited at The Box, Plymouth.

PAGE 10 – Do we consider that the funding applied for to be a Subsidy within the Act and if we have taken any advice? 500 words

As the TTC financial contribution does not confer an economic advantage then the Act does not apply. The THT has taken advice and sought clarification from the TTC.

PAGE 10 - How will you maintain the benefits of your project and meet any related costs? 500 words

The BGT, the SH and the abbey ruins will be maintained by the maintenance staff of the Town Council following the specification and methodologies as set out in the maintenance plan. The Town Council staff carried out heritage training through the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative on conservation management skills. They have also attended lime course through the Cornish Lime Company and through on-site training. The Town Council continue to invest in their workforce skills with continued conservation management training.

Where such work requires skills beyond the staff the Council will tender the work to an acknowledged conservation experienced stone mason. The maintenance plan will be costed and budgeted for by the Town Council.

Other elements of the project will be archived and will be donated to, be maintained by and made available to the public through the Tavistock Heritage Trust, Tavistock Museum, the Tavistock Subscription Library and the Guildhall Interpretation Centre, all of whom work together to promote the heritage under the banner of the Tavistock Heritage Quarter.

168 words

PAGE 11 - Why does your project need to happen? 500 words

Tavistock Abbey, founded in 974CE, was a powerful abbey and for five centuries it controlled the town, vast areas of land, and exercised power throughout Devon and Cornwall.

Little has survived, but those buildings which were not destroyed remain in use, and form the heart of the town. Others are remains since the 19th century at least and although maintained, time has taken its toll such that BGT and the SH, both set within the abbey's precinct wall, require substantial works to ensure that they remain an integral part of the town centre landscape.

In 2022, the Guildhall World Heritage Site Interpretation Centre led to an increase in public and community interest in our heritage and our abbey. Today the THT conducts walk/talks about the abbey and its importance. However, the archaeological evidence for what stood in mediaeval times is difficult to justify as little archaeological work has been carried out, and certainly none in this century. What little we know is piece-meal from works carried out in the early 20th century by Dr Radford and the late 20th century by Dr Stuart Blaylock, plus excavations carried out during the renewal of drain and a gas supply at that time. We have little to show local people and visitors who are eager to understand the abbey and its importance.

Through articles in the local press volunteers have come forward and expressed a keen interest in being involved in any archeologically work within the abbey precinct, as well as researching into its buildings and land, its power, its wealth and its impact on the town and area which is reflected in our current landscape.

Repairing the remains will ensure the abbey's future as well as offer the opportunity for people employed by TTC, other local contractors and volunteers, to work with lime mortars and obtain an in-depth understanding of good conservation practice. Using volunteers in archaeological digs, under the supervision of an archaeologist, would give them an opportunity to understand our past and provide information on the abbey buildings. Archaeological geophysical work will locate the abbey church and other lost monastic buildings. With the help provided by the volunteers we will be able to create an interactive 3D interpretation located for visitors, and up-date the abbey information in the Interpretation Centre for the local community and for educational purposes. All of this will make the

abbey accessible to the public and continue to tell the story of a monastic system which began in Tavistock 1050 years ago.

When the Tavistock Heritage Townscape Initiative was given its Stage 2 approval by the HLF in December 2014 the target area included the abbey site, and the project proposed an Abbey Conference among its complementary initiatives. The Initiative was successful and saw the conservation and repair of all its key projects with a positive impact on the town. However, the continuing deterioration of the abbey remains has become a prominent feature of the town which urgently needs to be addressed.

496 words

PAGE 11 - Is there any specific community your project is dedicated to serving? Select any that apply.

Tick box:

1. Ethnic or racial inequity, discrimination or inequality, faith communities, people who have migrated and experienced the immigration system
2. People with disabilities YES
3. The over 65 years of age YES
4. Young people under 25 YES
5. Women and girls YES
6. LGBTQ+ YES
7. Those who are educationally or economically disadvantaged YES
8. Specific groups not mentioned above
9. None of the above

PAGE 12 – Who else have you approached about funding your project? 500 words

Currently we are in the process of making an application to Historic England (HE) for a Community Grant of £200,000. In 2024 the THT applied to EH with TTC for a stabilisation grant for BGT and this was granted. These initial works were completed in September 2024.

Tavistock Town Council have pledged £50,000 towards the repair and stabilisation works. The Tavistock Heritage Trust has set aside £20,000 for the Audio-visual interpretation, plus fund raising continues through volunteer help.

PAGE 13 – Explain how your project will save heritage. 500 words

Two of the main extant features of Tavistock abbey, the SH and BGT. In the years since 1725, when the majority of the then surviving abbey buildings were removed, they have had an extremely chequered history of maintenance.

In the 19th century extensive plant growth was encouraged as it was deemed to give a romantic aspect to the ruins (see photos from the Devon Archive dated 1891 in supporting doc). The 20th century saw some repair works carried out but not as part of an established maintenance plan.

In early 2024, an EH maintenance grant for buildings on the At Risk Register, enabled stabilisation work to be carried out involving the removal of woody plant growth from BGT, and for a consultant architect to inspect the masonry and prepare a report on the overall condition of the masonry. Funding was not made available to include similar interventions on the SH.

Our aim is to see the masonry of both towers repaired, using acknowledged conservation methods, such that they will be safely accessible to the public - as they were for a brief period in the early 20th century. This will require appointing a conservation architect and an approved conservation contractor to carry out the work.

Included in the architect's brief will be the preparation of a long-term maintenance plan, to be approved and adopted by TTC which has statutory responsibility for the care of these structures. This will provide their Works Department with clear written guidance such as:

- standards of maintenance required covering regular inspections and documentation;
- preventative maintenance;
- use of traditional materials and techniques;
- minimal intervention;
- adherence to conservation guidelines;
- consideration for climate and environmental issues;
- long term planning and monitoring and re-evaluation.

Within BGT numerous individual elements of abbey masonry have been retained, (see photograph in the supporting information). In addition, a timber roof truss from the Abbey Chapel, originally located in the grounds of the chapel but moved some years ago to the BGT for protection. However, the worsening condition of the tower's stonework has allowed water to drip onto these elements causing further deterioration.

The project will appoint a specialist conservator to conserve and evaluate the long-term sustainability of the masonry fragments with a view to retaining them in BGT once it has been conserved. This would allow the stones to be displayed within the archway enabling visitors to appreciate their context and significance. The timber truss will be fixed to the rear wall rather than resting on the cobbled floor.

Our project pledges to conserve and cherish Tavistock abbey's two historic towers safeguarding them from future deterioration. Our aim is to ensure that these iconic structures will not only be conserved, but also revitalised to better engage and educate the community and visitors to the town about their significance as part of the abbey.

476 words

PAGE 13 – Explain how your project will protect the environment. 500 words

The project recognises the importance of environmental sustainability in heritage projects. Under the guidance of an ecologist consultant, we aim to enhance wildlife habitats, contributing to nature recovery targets and mitigating climate impacts.

The lifecycle of the project will aim to appoint professional people and contractors who are based within the southwest to ensure that travel distances are minimal. Further, materials for the repairs work will be sourced locally where possible and considered to ensure that their longevity is such that the repair works have a long life.

Artificial lighting to highlight the abbey elements within BGT is part of the project, with the lights controlled by movement sensors. Currently there is no electrical supply to the tower and a pad size PV panel is proposed located within the structure, thereby removing the need for short term groundworks and providing a sustainable electricity supply.

The standing remains of the abbey, which are central to this project, along with locating stones and bits from the abbey in the surrounding area, highlight the inventiveness of past societies, who

prioritised resource conservation by reusing building materials. This historic example of recycling will serve as a powerful reminder to project participants and future visitors of the importance of safeguarding our environment and treating its resources as precious and finite.

215 words

PAGE 13 – Explain how your project will increase inclusion, access and participation 500 words

To meet the National Lottery Heritage Fund's goals of increasing inclusion, access, and participation, the THT in conjunction with TTC, will look to use the 'Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project [RTAP] to incorporate strategies that actively engage underrepresented groups and make the heritage more accessible and more inviting to a wider audience. These are some ways that these goals can be met:

1. **Accessible Infrastructure:** The plans will include wheelchair-friendly access at ground level and visual or tactile aids allowing more people, including those with mobility challenges, to visit and enjoy the site.
2. **Community Outreach and Partnerships:** We will engage local communities, especially those who may feel excluded from heritage spaces, by partnering with local schools, cultural organisations, and community groups. These partnerships will help identify and address specific barriers to participation and foster a sense of shared ownership. We have already begun to empower the local community in understanding the abbey with volunteer-led initiatives through regular reports in the local weekly *Tavistock Times* newspaper and the bi-monthly *Tavy Links* and *Moor Links*.
3. **Inclusive Interpretation and Storytelling:** The narrative of the site will be expanded where possible to represent diverse cultural, social, and historical perspectives. This might mean highlighting stories of marginalised communities, social movements, or lesser-known historical figures tied to the environment. A group has been formed to research abbey-related records and pull together the very fragmented information that currently exists. This volunteer-led group will enable contributors to develop skills and ensure that heritage becomes a shared endeavour, thereby enriching lives and promoting equitable participation.
4. **Educational Programmes and Events:** We will organise activities that appeal to various age groups, abilities, and backgrounds, such as school programmes, volunteer days, family events, and guided tours. Tailoring programmes to attract families, young people, or specific communities will foster deeper engagement and make heritage feel relevant and accessible to a wider range of people. We have met with Tavistock College's History Department about their students' participation in the project.
5. **Digital Access:** We will develop digital resources that enable virtual tours, apps, and online content to make the site accessible to those who can't visit in person. This would be especially beneficial for people with mobility issues, those in remote areas, or people with busy schedules.
6. **Training and Employment Opportunities:** We will be offering volunteering, training, and employment opportunities which will help build skills and provide new perspectives. Recruiting people from diverse backgrounds or groups underrepresented in the heritage sector for these roles would also make the site's interpretation and management more inclusive.
7. **Affordable or Free Access:** If practicable, we will offer discounted or free access for certain groups such as local residents, low-income individuals, or school groups where we provide

fee-charging events. Reducing financial barriers might increase participation by those who might otherwise find it difficult to attend.

469 words

PAGE 13 – Explain how your project will improve your organisational sustainability. 500 words

Tavistock Heritage Trust [THT], in conjunction with Tavistock Town Council will look to use the 'Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project [RTAP] to improve its organisational sustainability in the following ways:

Enhanced Skillsets and Staff Development:

To train staff and volunteers in specific skills like heritage conservation, project management, and community engagement. These skills not only enhance the quality of the project but also strengthen the team, making the organisation more adaptable for future projects. Stakeholders will be equipped with the tools and expertise needed to sustainably manage and promote Tavistock Abbey's heritage for generations to come, which in turn will promote the town and sustain its economy.

Increased Community Engagement and Partnerships:

By engaging with local communities and forming partnerships with local organisations, schools, and universities, the RTAP can create a network of supporters who have a long-term interest in THT's mission. Community involvement also makes the THT's work more relevant and well-supported, enhancing its resilience.

Partnerships with other organisations can lead to resource sharing, cross-promotions, and collaborative events that benefit the THT and its mission over time.

Development of Digital and Interpretive Assets:

RTAP will include the development of digital resources that could include a website, virtual tours, and a digital archive. These tools not only broaden the reach of THT's work but also position it as an accessible, contemporary organization in touch with current technologies.

Building a Stronger Brand and Public Profile:

By executing a high-visibility project, THT can increase public awareness and attract future supporters, volunteers, and funders. This project could help establish the charity as a credible, trusted organisation in the heritage sector.

Improved Governance and Operational Systems:

As part of the RTAP, THT could invest in strengthening its governance structures, policies, and operational systems, such as financial planning, risk management, and fundraising strategies. These improvements make the organisation more robust and capable of managing future growth.

Sustainable Practices:

Integrating environmentally sustainable practices into the restoration and interpretation work can also demonstrate commitment to long-term responsibility. This could involve using local materials, reducing waste, or applying for green certifications, making the charity's work more appealing to funders with environmental goals.

398 words

PAGE 13 – How is your organisation best placed to deliver this project? 500 words

There is a proven track record of the THT and the TTC working together through the Guildhall Interpretation Centre project and working alongside General Manager, Wayne Southall MBA(Open) BEng(Hons) DipNEBOSH who will be the capital project lead for the TTC.

THT, a registered charity, was formed to work alongside the TTC's successful Lottery Fund application to restore the Tavistock Guildhall and create the UNESCO Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site West Gateway and Interpretation Centre. Subsequently the Trust has been working with the Town Council and other heritage organisations to create a heritage hub whose aim is to bring together the wealth of knowledge and skill in the heritage and history sector in the town. The project has been a success with local schools and other educators using the centre, as well as visitors to the town. The Trust works with the TTC to promote the Guildhall Centre and manages a series of events related to heritage in the town throughout the year, most of which are run by local volunteers.

The 'Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey' project Group operates under the jurisdiction of the Tavistock Heritage Trust (www.heritageintavistock.org) chaired by Dr Parlby an accredited lecturer, tutor and writer. The Board consists of nine trustees whose skills range across management, architecture, conservation, archaeology, business management, lecturing and social enterprise.

The roles of the Group's members are as follows:

Sue Spackman – lead of the Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Group offers skills as a retired chartered conservation architect.

Simon Crosbie – (THT trustee) input on methodology for conservation and due process with regard to a Schedule Ancient Monument and Listed buildings.

Simon Thompson – advises on various aspects of archaeology and the history of Tavistock.

Malcom Wright – offers his extensive knowledge of archaeology.

Tim Robey – offers his extensive knowledge of archaeology.

Christopher Pancheri – offers his extensive knowledge of Tavistock abbey and the town.

David Simkins – leads on the location of possible former abbey masonry.

Ian Wright – (THT trustee) input on working with the local community and communications in general.

David Conn – (THT Trustee) offers his extensive knowledge on exhibition/conference management, and sales and marketing; he leads the abbey research group.

The majority of the Group are active but retired. They, with the THT trustees will oversee the project with the TC's Buildings Manager who will be the lead for the building conservation work. The archaeologists in the Group, with the trustees, will oversee the archaeological elements. The Group as a whole will work alongside the trustees, who have extensive experience through the Tavistock Interpretation Centre project, which was funded mainly by the HLF, of creating and managing the interpretation element of the project.

The THT trustees and the TTC are aware of the HLF requirements through the Guildhall Tavistock Interpretation Centre project, and the lead of the Group has chaired a Trust which obtained funding from the HLF for an oral history project 'Quarry Voices'.

484 words

PAGE 13 - How will you manage running your Project? 500 words

Abbreviations used: Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project – RTAP; Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project Group – RTAPG.

Day-to-day decisions will be based on the skill set of the TTC General Manager, the THT trustees and members of RTAPG, as follows:

Repairs and restoration work to the Betsy Grimbal's tower and the Stillhouse

The RTAPG with the TTC General Manager have created the brief for the repairs and conservation of BGT and the SH; seek tenders from approved conservation architects to prepare the necessary information for the works and to oversee the contract and maintenance programme.

With the project architects the TTC General Manager will seek tenders from approved contractors to undertake the work, setup the contract, and oversee works as they progress and have capital oversight of the work.

THT will set up training days for the TTC maintenance staff and the public interested in working with traditional conservation methods.

THT will inform the public of progress through its website and social media

Archaeological geophysical survey work

RTAPG and THT have created the brief for surveying the areas within the abbey precinct and St Eustachius.

Tenders will be obtained by THT in conjunction with TTC General Manager, and investigations will be overseen by RTAPG archaeologists. THT will seek volunteers to assist with the on-site investigation and any finds processing. RTAPG will ensure that all reports and information provided by the appointed archaeologist are archived locally for community and academic access.

Archaeological Investigations

The THT have created the brief for the appointment of an archaeologist; tenders will be obtained and works overseen by RTAPG archaeologists. THT will work with schools and the public to seek volunteers to assist with the on-site work. RTAPG will ensure that all reports on the investigations are archived locally for community and academic access. RTAPG will work with Tavistock Museum regarding any finds, and their interpretation.

Restoration of the abbey elements housed in Betsy Grimbal's Tower

RTAPG with the TTC General Manager will work with recognised stone conservator Torquil McNeilage to prepare a report and set out tasks required for the long-term preservation of the various stones. RTAPG will oversee any works carried out on site.

Research of the abbey

RTAPG will seek and work with volunteers to carry out in-depth research on aspects of the abbey from Saxon times to the 19th century. RTAPG will assist with investigations, interpretation and the creation of a digital archive.

Visual and digital interpretation

THT and RTAPG has written the brief to appoint by tender a person/company to create an interactive 3D rendered digital model and map of Tavistock abbey from its foundation to the remains that survive to this day.

Community projects

To find pieces of the abbey - the RTAPG will create a database of any new former abbey building material reported to the Group by the public and work with the appointed archaeologist to investigate these elements and to complete the data base, for access by the public.

Events – the THT/RTAPG will work with volunteers and community groups to set up and run community activities.

500 words

PAGE 14 – Will your project be delivered by a partnership? 500 words

Tick box - YES

The partnership will be between TTC and THT. The two organisations have worked together over a period of years to enable and facilitate the UNESCO Cornwall & West Mining World Heritage Centre in the Tavistock Guildhall. The Centre is managed by the TTC and the walks and talks relating to the heritage of the town, are arranged and managed by the THT.

The Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey Project Group consists of THT trustees, knowledgeable volunteers from the local community and the TTC Buildings Manager; the Group is under the management of the THT.

PAGE 14 - How will you evaluate your project? 500 words

The THT has designed a comprehensive evaluation plan for the *Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey* project to measure its impact and effectiveness in achieving its goals. This evaluation will provide clear evidence of the project's outcomes, focusing on conservation, community engagement, public accessibility, and educational impact.

1. **Establishing the Evaluation Plan:** At the project's outset, THT will create a detailed evaluation plan that outlines how data will be collected and analysed to track progress and assess achievements. This plan will specify key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with the project's main activities, including conservation of the Abbey remains, the archaeological investigations, public volunteer involvement, and the development of accessible displays at the Guildhall Interpretation Centre and the Museum.
2. **Data Collection Methods:** THT will employ a variety of data collection methods to gather both quantitative and qualitative information:
 - **Conservation Progress:** Detailed records and photographs of the abbey's conservation work will be maintained to document the preservation processes and the resulting improvements to the structures.
 - **Volunteer Involvement and Experience:** THT will collect feedback from public volunteers, both excavators and history researchers, to gauge their engagement and satisfaction with the project. Volunteer attendance, hours contributed, and demographics will also be tracked.
 - **Archaeological Discoveries and Interpretation:** For archaeological work, THT will document discoveries, analyse their historical significance, and record how these findings are integrated into the project's public interpretations. Observations on the accessibility and educational effectiveness of these displays at Tavistock Museum will be included.
 - **Visitor and Public Feedback:** To assess the impact of museum displays, THT will use visitor surveys and comment cards, along with visitor attendance data, to understand how effectively the interpretations and digital interaction engage and educate the public.
3. **Data Analysis:** The collected data will be analysed to measure the project's success in achieving its goals, such as the level of community engagement, the quality of conservation, and the educational impact on museum visitors. Feedback from volunteers and visitors will be categorized and reviewed to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

4. **Final Evaluation Report:** At the project's conclusion an experienced evaluator, Mel Humphries, will prepare a final evaluation report. This report will synthesize findings from the data collected, highlighting key outcomes, lessons learned, and areas for potential development in future projects. The report will also demonstrate the project's achievements against the KPIs set out in the initial evaluation plan, providing comprehensive evidence of *Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey's* impact.

Through this evaluation process, THT aims to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement, supporting not only the success of this project but also enhancing its approach to future heritage projects.

427 words

PAGE 15 - Tell us about the key challenges or potential risks to your project that you have identified. 500 words

The *Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey* project may face several significant risks. The THT will take specific steps to mitigate these risks and support project success.

1. Funding Shortfall

- **Challenge:** A shortage of overall funding could impact the project's scope and quality, jeopardizing conservation, excavation, and interpretive elements.
- **Mitigation:** THT will pursue supplementary funding sources, including funding from other national heritage funding bodies, private sponsorships, and community fundraising. THT will also prioritize essential conservation and excavation elements and implement cost-saving measures to maximize project outcomes within available funds.

2. Insufficient Budget Contingency for Repair Work

- **Challenge:** The conservation of historic structures often uncovers unforeseen issues, potentially leading to increased costs if extensive repairs are needed beyond initial estimates.
- **Mitigation:** There will be a contingency fund into the project budget, ideally at least 10-15% of the estimated repair costs, to handle unexpected expenses. Additionally, a phased approach to repairs will allow THT to address high-priority issues first and defer non-essential repairs if needed to stay within budget.

3. Ecology issues

- **Challenge:** Nesting birds in the SH plant growth
- **Mitigation:** Works to be carried out outside the nesting season.

4. Contractor Availability and Project Timeline Delays

- **Challenge:** Delays in finding qualified contractors, particularly those with experience in heritage conservation, could impact the project's timeline and lead to missed deadlines.
- **Mitigation:** TTC and their architect will initiate contractor selection early to ensure there is time in lieu contractor availability and possible unforeseen on-site issues. TTC/THT will also maintain a timeline buffer to absorb any minor delays and keep the project on track.

5. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

- **Challenge:** Since public involvement is central to the project, difficulty in recruiting or retaining volunteers could reduce its overall impact.
- **Mitigation:** THT will create an active outreach strategy to attract volunteers, focusing on local history groups, schools, and community organizations. Providing training and recognition and making the experience engaging will help maintain volunteer interest and commitment.

6. Evaluation and Documentation of Project Outcomes

- **Challenge:** As evaluation is a key project requirement, any gaps in planning or documenting project achievements could impact the project's ability to showcase its outcomes.
- **Mitigation:** Will be a detailed evaluation plan at the project's outset, identifying specific metrics for each activity. Ongoing documentation, including volunteer feedback, project milestones, and financial tracking, will provide the basis for a comprehensive final evaluation report.

By proactively addressing these risks, THT will maintain project momentum and increase the likelihood of completing *Rediscovering Tavistock Abbey* successfully, meeting both funding requirements and community engagement goals.

398 words

PAGES 16 - 19 - Tell us how much it will cost to deliver your project

New staff:

None.

Professional fees:

Conservation architect	£30,000+VAT
Ecologist	£5,000+VAT
Archaeologist	£63,351+VAT
Stone conservator	£4,000+VAT
Visual and digital interpretation	£9,600+VAT <i>Note - this is a portion of the £32,800 quote obtained – see below</i>

Recruitment:

None.

Purchase price of heritage items:

None.

Repair and conservation work:

Betsy Grimbals tower and the Stillhouse	£328,600+VAT
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Event costs:

Costs associated with the setting out of the abbey project and the model Viking ship race (carried out by the THT Discovery Group + volunteers and other organisations in the town.) £2,000.00

Digital outputs:

Cost of creating interpretation and digital works and meeting HLF digital requirements. £32,800.00 includes:

AV equipment interactive screen + computerisation + graphic designer + installation £19,400.00.

Equipment and materials, including learning materials:

£1,000

Training of volunteers:

£500

Travel for volunteers:

£750

Expenses for staff:

None

Expenses for volunteers:

£500

Other:

None.

Publicity and promotion:

£500

Evaluation:

Up to £7,500+VAT

Contingency:

10%

New build work:

None

Community Grants:

None

Full cost recovery:

£3,000 for time of the THT trustees – how do we evidence this?

Project support from TTC £10,000.

Inflation:

Based on materials used, labour costs, etc. – the budgets for the BGT and SH includes a contingency of 10%.

PAGE 19 - Are you getting any cash contributions to support your project?

Tick box - YES

Tick box - YES

Use of Robing Room for meetings and training sessions £4,680.00

THT £20,000

TTC £50,000

PAGE 20 - Are you getting any non- cash contributions to support your project?

Tick box - YES

Description of non-cash contribution

Estimated value £62,680

Officer time £10,000

Volunteer time £48,000

Room Hire £4,680

Supporting documents required:

1. Most recently audited accounts (last 12 months)
2. Project plan and risk register – [see attached draft](#)
3. Job descriptions for any new staff or apprentices – none.
4. Briefs for any commissioned work: –
 - Architect – [see attached draft](#)
 - Contractor for repairs – [see attached draft](#)
 - Archaeologist for geophysical surveys and digs – [see attached draft](#)
 - AV/computer graphics production – [see attached draft](#)
5. Full recovery costs – **what do we send as evidence?**
6. Images – 6 permitted:
 - As BGT and SH images in condition reports:**
 - a. Aerial photo with the abbey precinct shown – *Simon Thompson to provide*
 - b. Historic image of abbey from South side of river – Prideaux sketch 1716.
 - c. Photo of the abbey porch roof
 - d. Historic image of abbey from north – Bucks image 1734.
 - e. Cloister remains
 - f. Artifacts in BGT
7. Evidence of support –
 - Evidence of support from TTC**
 - Evidence of support from the THT Board of Trustees**
 - Letter from the Museum [obtained for initial enquiry](#)
 - Letter of support from Devon Historic Buildings Trust [obtained for initial enquiry](#)
 - Letter of support from the History Society [obtained for initial enquiry](#)
 - Letter of support from Bill Horner [obtained for initial enquiry](#)
 - Letter of support from BID [obtained for initial enquiry](#)
 - Letter of support from Tavistock NDP [obtained for initial enquiry](#)
 - Letters of support from community Groups – TASS – Simon Thompson**
 - Letters of support from schools i.e. Whitchurch School, Tavistock College – Simon Thompson, Mount Kelly – Andrew Main**

END

- A. Amended 7.11.24 following meeting with Wayne.
- B. Amended 19.11.24 following Group meeting of 12.11.24
- C. Updated 6.1.25 following costing received for AV installation and other information
- D. Updated and finalised for submission for TTC approval – 13.1.25