

Museum's Future Secured: Friends statement

The Friends welcomed today's news of the transfer of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust to the care of the National Trust as a means of securing its future over the long term.

Naturally the Friends are saddened that the days of the Museum's status as an independent charity will draw to a close with the opening of this new chapter in its existence. Assurances have been received about the importance of the Friends in this new arrangement and we look forward to working with the National Trust to establish the guidelines for our future relationship.

At a Briefing today, Mark Pemberton, Chair of the Museum's Board, spoke to many assembled volunteers detailing the reasons that led to the transfer to the National Trust which did not come as a surprise due to the unceasing battle with rising costs and stalling visitor numbers, issues which affect many Museums. The agreement to seek the support of such a prominent heritage body as the National Trust was sad but inevitable as the only way to secure the future of Ironbridge and its unique historical significance.

Many questions remain to be answered about the details of the transfer which will officially take place on 2nd March 2026 but in the meantime the Friends, having reached an understanding with the National Trust about its work as a separate charity, will continue to support the Museum in its new guise as well as continuing to offer members access to its Talks Programme and volunteering opportunities.

Future meetings between the Friends Committee and the National Trust will provide more information about the new working arrangements and as they become clearer members will be kept informed about them.

The Museum has always valued the contribution that the Friends have provided over the half century plus of its existence; it will need that support now more than ever as it transitions into its new life and beyond, I hope you all will be with us on that journey.

Jim Clarke

Chair of the Friends of Ironbridge Museum

Thursday 16 October 2025