

**Media Release**

5 February 2020

## **Historic England Chief to join the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust Board of Trustees**

The Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust is pleased to announce the appointment of Duncan Wilson OBE, Chief Executive, Historic England, to its Board of Trustees. Mr Wilson will officially take up the post at the Trust's next Board meeting on 27 February 2020.

Duncan has held significant senior positions in the heritage sector. He was Chief Executive of the Alexandra Park and Palace Trust, developing a major regeneration and conservation scheme to restore the Victorian theatre and television studios and Chief Executive at the Greenwich Foundation for the Old Royal Naval College, responsible for one of Europe's finest groups of baroque buildings. He also became the first Director of the Somerset House Trust, transforming the site from government offices and car park into an iconic heritage destination

Duncan joined Historic England, the public body which improves people's lives by protecting and championing the historic environment, as the organisation's first Chief Executive in 2015.

Mr Wilson said: "The Historic Dockyard Chatham is a fascinating place. The world's most complete dockyard from the Age of Sail, here you can live and breathe some of the most important moments from our Naval history. I've always been interested in the challenge of charting a future for our past and like Chatham, Somerset House and Greenwich are key parts of our national naval history which were opened up for the public to enjoy. I greatly admire the way the team at Chatham has also tackled this challenge and I'm looking forward to bringing my experience and passion to this special place as it builds on its great achievements."

Sir Trevor Soar KCB OBE DL, Chair, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, said: “I am thrilled to welcome Duncan as a Trustee of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust. Duncan has an extraordinary track record in leading significant heritage projects and an overt passion for protecting England’s heritage. He will bring a tremendous wealth of experience to the role. His appointment comes at an exciting time as we are on the cusp of launching our new Corporate Plan, detailing the aspirations for the Trust for the next 5 years. I look forward to working with Duncan to shape the Trust’s future.”

Duncan will replace Laura Nesfield, a Kent based property expert currently working for BTF Partnership. Laura contributed much to the oversight of the Trust’s tenanted property portfolio and major project governance during her tenure.

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust champions a strategy of “preservation through re-use.” Through a careful balance of commercial tenancy, tourism and residential, the 80-acre site is home to a thriving community of 115 houses; over 110 businesses and organisations, including the University of Kent (and its 800 students); 190,000 visitors annually and it supports over 500 jobs; these combined activities generate in excess of £29m to the Medway economy annually.

The completion of the Fitted Rigging House project in October 2018 unlocked the long-term financial sustainability of the wider Historic Dockyard site and enabled the Trust’s current Corporate Plan (2016 – 2021) to be achieved ahead of schedule.

A new 5-year Corporate Plan will be launched by Sir Trevor on 28 February 2020. With a focus on evolution, not revolution – balancing the core charitable objectives of preservation and education, the new plan will chart the work of the Trust through to 2025.

## **ENDS**

Please contact Lynnette Crisp, Head of Marketing and Communications, for further information on 01634 823800 or email [lcrisp@chdt.org.uk](mailto:lcrisp@chdt.org.uk)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Historic Dockyard Chatham is the only place in the world that lets you explore a complete dockyard from the age of sail. It’s a unique destination that celebrates Great Britain’s magnificent maritime past and unmatched contribution to the Royal Navy’s shipbuilding excellence that led to worldwide command of the oceans.

Chatham offers unrivalled access to the ships that shaped the world, from a Victorian anti-slavery sailing ship, to a Second World War Destroyer or a Cold War submarine and the stories of the people who made them. From Chatham's historic buildings, including The Commissioner's House and officers' quarters to the remarkable Victorian ropery, where the rigging for HMS Victory was made, to its collection of maritime archaeology, the Dockyard forms an indispensable part of Britain's naval history and its national heritage.

As a fully accredited museum, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust collects, preserves, researches and exhibits objects and materials connected with the history of the dockyard and its people. It studies the development of Royal Navy warship design, construction and the use of the River Medway by the Royal Navy. Visitors to and users of The Historic Dockyard Chatham are fundamental to its purpose and the economic reuse of the site and its buildings. Its staff and volunteers play a vital role in providing a high level of service and customer care.

The Trust is also involved in the on-going regeneration of Medway and The Thames Gateway

### **About Historic England**

[Historic England](#) is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. It protects, champions and saves the places that define who we are and where we've come from as a nation. It cares passionately about the stories it tells, the ideas it represents and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists it shares its passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.