

## **Slide One – First Consultation with BBPSA and University of Leeds**

Hello everyone, I'm Gemma Clarke, the Sector Specialist for volunteering at Elsecar Heritage Centre, working for Barnsley Council and the Museums Service.

I am a 30-year-old white woman with my hair tied back in a ponytail and I wear glasses.

During 2024 and through a lottery funded project called Elsecar Building Bridges, I worked with the Barnsley Blind and Partially Sighted Association to create a sensory touch tour.

The project's vision was to develop the current and popular guided tour programme that ranged from site tours to engine demonstrations and walking hikes and develop an interactive and accessible tour for a visually impaired audience.

In preparation for the first consultation session, I modified the existing tour to make it more interactive using physical objects located around the site. The images on the top right-hand corner show a large pit wheel located on the site and a locomotive wheelbase. In addition to physical objects, we used changes in terrain to share stories such as cobbles and rail lines. As well as the stonework where stone masons scored horizontal lines to signify buildings owned by the Earl Fitzwilliam.

In addition to physical objects, the University of Leeds joined us to share their research on a local Gasworks and test tactile resources with the group. Feedback was collected at each stage of the tour to help us understand how we could improve for the future.

## **Second Slide – Use of Sensory Objects**

On this slide you can see a few of the objects we used within the tour to help the group understand different aspects of the story. For example, in the top left-hand corner, there are two images of items made from Iron. The first one is an iron hinge from a gate, and the second would have been used to stand on the top of a fence. These items were useful to explain how heavy iron was and the variety of items that an Ironworks could produce. The object on the right-hand side is an example to help explain our engine with a movable part to signify the beam moving up and down when pumping water from underground. On the bottom left-hand corner is a collection of aroma cubes, these were used to help the group to visualise the smells of old steam trains and Ironworks.

Finally, one piece of feedback around the engine included the use of sounds. Ahead of our second consultation session, I purchased a sensory radio to enable someone to open the top and press the button and listen to sounds of the engine.

### **Slide Three – University of Leeds: Tactile Resources**

The University of Leeds had previously delivered a project in Elsecar, researching the area and running geophysics events. They found remains of a Gasworks in the village and a new project developed to create a tactile resource for a visually impaired audience. They produced raised line drawings and acrylic panels with different depths to understand which resource would be the most accessible. Teaming up with the University, I included their work within our consultations, I also asked if they could develop a tactile map resource. One of the pieces of feedback for the map was to have different raised sections to signify the spot on the tour that we were

all standing on, we tested this on the second consultation, and it helped the group enormously.

As you can see from the central image, the project won an award for the best Emerging Cultural project at the Research Impact and Engagement Awards.

### **Slide Four – Second Consultation with BBPSA and University of Leeds**

These images are from our second consultation session with BBPSA where we tested our engine sounds and again used physical objects to explain in more detail how the engine feels and worked.

### **Slide Five – Further Projects**

We are pleased that the connections with the Barnsley Blind Association have continued with further projects including the new Visitor Centre at Elsecar. The top three images show how we worked with the group to develop a sensory basket. Many objects are now on display in our new Visitor Centre behind glass cases, so we felt that it would be fantastic to create accessible tactile resources. The group attended a session where they were able to handle some of the objects that were to be displayed at Elsecar giving them the opportunity to share feedback.

At Worsbrough Mill, the team are celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mill and one of the project outcomes is to develop a tour programme, we asked the BBPSA if they would like to visit and help us to understand how we could make the tour accessible. We used replica millstones to help the group understand traditional milling methods and used our learning from Elsecar with the use of handling

objects and touching aspects of the mill building to understand the size and building materials used at the time.

We are continuing to develop our connection with the BBPSA, and we are also planning to roll out our new sensory tour in 2026.