

Annual Report: 2021

1. Administrative Details

1.1 - Name of National Committee: United Kingdom National Committee of the Blue Shield

1.2 - Date Report Completed: 01/03/2022

1.3 - Reporting period covered: January 2021-December 2021

1.4 - Names, positions and emails

Chair:

Fionnuala Rogers

Other (Interim) Trustees:

Professor Peter Stone

James Ratcliffe

Ian Barnes

Suzanna Joy

Secretary:

Emma Cunliffe

1.5 - Address of the main office:

School of Arts and Cultures, Armstrong Building, Newcastle University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

1.6 - Website and social media (if applicable):

Website: <http://ukblueshield.org.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ukblueshield>

Twitter: @UKBlueShield

2. Income:

What is the total income of your committee? What are the primary sources? (Donations, grants, etc?)

£0

Website paid for by the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace, Newcastle University.

3. Report of Activities: Achievements & Performance

Explain the activities & projects carried out over the year under the Areas of Activity

Overview:

Due to exceptional circumstances, UKBS was not able to complete as many activities as anticipated due to Covid Pandemic (affecting conferences, training and capacity building) and events in Afghanistan which took (and continues to take) significant time commitments from Chair and other members of UKBS.

3.1 - Law, policy development and implementation:

This was the highest priority for the committee in 2021.

1.1] Encourage & support UK implementation of the 1954 HC

- Both the Chair and Secretary have attended the Cross-Government CPP Working Group to maintain links with the Civil Service and politicians.
- UKBS commented on the Cultural Property Protection Section of the first two drafts of the Ministry of Defence Human Security Directive.
- UKBS submitted a paper to a UK Government Call for Evidence regarding National Security Machinery on behalf of UK National Committee with a colleague from the V&A Museum. The Evidence highlighted the risk to cultural venues and asked for a nominated person with responsibility for cultural properties and to act as a point of contact.
- Chair supported Metropolitan Police Service in assessing illicit trafficking offences relating to objects potentially exported from conflict zones

1.2] Act as a source of advice and support in the UK re. illicit trafficking

- The BSI illicit trafficking working group was granted approval to continue beyond its 1-year mandate. UKBS is represented by FR and Neil Brodie (NB) both of whom are very active.
- UKBS assisted the Metropolitan Police in investigations (which remain confidential)
- Chair assisted DCMS in lobbying HM Treasury for Amendments to AML Regulations to include antiquities (announcement of amendment expected 2022).

- UKBS responded to a UK Government consultation on UK AML regulations as to why cultural property and antiquities need to be included as works of art within regulations. These previously applied to the art market however a loophole was created for antiquities as they were not included within definitions as “works of art”. During discussion of the repeal of the EU regulation, AML legislation was cited as a reason why UK legislation was so strong. UKBS remain hopeful that this loophole is closed.
- Chair attended first meeting of the UK Government’s Illicit Trade Working Group and shall continue to attend future meetings and act as a source of advice
- Chair and JR joined EU Task Force on enforcement of art and heritage crimes, and will participated in 4 conferences in next 18 months

1.3] Assist UK Government on implementation of the EU Cultural Property Import Regulations, in particular full application in N Ireland and implementation of Article 3(1) in GB

- In summer 2021, the UK Government repealed the Regulation in Great Britain but not in Northern Ireland, where it will apply in full. UKBS raised concerns on Northern Ireland becoming a gateway for illicit antiquities into Europe, and urged UK Government to set out measures to mitigate the risk. Activities included:
 - i. Preparation of a briefing paper which was circulated to UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which the Chair discussed with them, and a [public press release](#).
 - ii. Circulating a briefing note to the House of Lords Grand Committee debate highlighting the risks in Northern Ireland and UK’s reputation in CPP more widely. UKBS was pleased to have our work [cited heavily during the debate](#), and followed up with speakers regarding some of their queries;
 - iii. Chair Authored and Released a Policy Brief for the Antiquities Coalition (available here: [Policy Brief](#)) and is engaged in multiple media reports/ radio and webinar on the topic to raise awareness.
 - iv. Raising the issue at the DCMS Illicit Trade Working Group and with the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group (APPAG) for Cultural Property. This work is ongoing (for example, with a public discussion panel in partnership with the Antiquities Coalition in early 2022).

2.6 - Co-ordination (of Blue Shield and with other relevant organisations):

2.1] Establish UKBS as a Charity. Continue to review and implement corporate / charitable legal compliance

- UKBS was unable to submit its charitable status paperwork in 2021, but continues to progress it. Pro-bono administrative support was provided by one of the members. The application has been finalised and the interim trustees have agreed the financial structure.

2.2] Develop fundraising strategy

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- A fundraising strategy is in development to accompany the charitable registration.

2.3] Attend 2021 Blue Shield General Assembly, and other Blue Shield events as the opportunity arises.

- UKBS attended the virtual General Assembly; and spoke at the 2021 anniversary national committee presentations.

2.4] Maintain quarterly meetings of UKBS and partner organisation guest speaker programme

- Quarterly meetings have resumed virtually throughout 2022, with a successful guest speaker programme that is providing excellent networking opportunities.

2.5] Aim to have at least 1 representative attend each BSI informal meeting (virtual monthly meetings)

- At least one member of UKBS attends every meeting.

2.6] Continue to build relationships with the National Trust, and other partners as opportunities arise

- This has been put on hold due to internal reorganisation within the National Trust following COVID.

2.7] Review UKBS membership to cover all aspects of heritage

- Following COVID ,several people who previously represented various forms of heritage have stepped down from the committee. The Committee is currently considering new members.

2.8] Widen UKBS representation from Scotland, N Ireland, and Wales

- This is on hold until charitable status is achieved, but UKBS members have proposed several suitable candidates. We have increased participation from Scotland with new representative from National Library Scotland

2.9] Connected with 3.3 below, support better coordination regarding CPP in UK dependencies

- This is on hold until charitable status is achieved, but UKBS members have proposed several suitable candidates.

Other

- UKBS submitted its reaccreditation paperwork to BSI.
- The Chair of UKBS has been working with BSI to try and provide support to Afghan cultural heritage workers and their heritage.
- The Chair has also been providing support for those affected by the conflict in Ngorno-Kharabakh, specifically through working to provide information on preventing illicit trafficking and on the applicable legal framework. She has
 - i. supported heritage professionals in the region and the Armenian church to discuss best practice for monitoring and documenting heritage;

- ii. supported a Memo for the MFA of Armenia to the Armed Conflict Committee of the 1999 Second Protocol Committee;
 - iii. worked with BSI colleagues on guidance for best practice for CPP (movable and in situ protection) to heritage workers and academics in the region;
 - iv. advised on measures they could take to support this work in partnership with the Art Loss Register.
- Two members of UKBS are on the BSI Illicit Trafficking Working Group (see [1.3]).

3.2 - Education, training, and capacity building:

3.1] Support the MoD in the development of the UK's CPP capability & co-host one event with identified key partner – British Army Cultural Property Protection Unit (CPPU).

- UKBS has continued to develop strong links with the British Army Cultural Property Protection Unit, who attend UKBS meetings. UKBS members also attended British Army CPP meetings in the first half of 2022.
- As part the Blue Shield 25th anniversary celebrations, UKBS and the British Army Cultural Property Protection Unit (CPPU) hosted a virtual panel to discuss **What is Cultural Property Protection?**

The panel was well attended and is available online here:

<http://ukblueshield.org.uk/panel-registration-what-is-cultural-property-protection/>

3.2] Develop training opportunities with the National Trust, and other partners as opportunities arise

- [As per 2.6 above], work with the National Trust has been put on hold due to internal reorganisation within the National Trust following COVID.
- UKBS are exploring training opportunities with ICOM-UK.

3.3] Investigate potential of contributing to publications (online or hard copy, academic or non-academic publications i.e. blog articles)

- No progress made; ongoing.

3.4] Deliver at least 6 public/student lectures

- Due to the Covid Pandemic, many lectures were cancelled however chair delivered the following public presentations, "The work of the Blue Shield", Cranfield University, Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict: Nagorno Karabakh (public webinar)
- Members of the Committee lectured on student courses (Sotheby's Summer School, Christie's Education, Institute of Art and Law and MA courses at Durham and Newcastle Universities).

3.5] Develop a training and capacity building strategy to be rolled out in N. Ireland, particularly in respect of illicit trafficking and EU CP Regulations.

- Due to work of Chair in Afghanistan support, this activity could not be progressed in 2021

Other

- In November 2022, BSI invited UKBS to support [a two-day training workshop](#) for UNIFIL, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities in Beirut. The course was organised at the request of UNESCO Lebanon.

3.3 - Proactive protection and risk preparedness:

4.1] Support BSI's work developing and delivering training and educational materials for the heritage sector and armed forces.

- Ongoing; no progress

4.2] Explore possibility of involvement with COP26/ G8

- UKBS was unable to support COP26 or the G8 due to organisational restructuring affecting members, and the provision of support in Afghanistan and Ngorno-Kharabakh.

4.3] Connected to 3.5 above, preparedness to be included in strategy in N. Ireland which may be a target for illicit trafficking at the border

- See 3.5

3.4 - Emergency response in disaster, domestic emergencies, and armed conflict:

This is considered a low priority activity for UKBS.

Strategic Plan 6.1] Consider building a relationship with Team Re:ACT (was Rubicon) [a disaster response organisation]

- Team Re:ACT gave a talk to UKBS as part of our guest speaker programme. UKBS are considering how to follow up on this.

3.5 - Stabilisation, post-disaster recovery, and long-term/ongoing support

This is considered a low priority activity for UKBS, with no activities in the Strategic Plan to report against.

4. Main issues faced:

The committee struggles with a lack of funding and lacks capacity to fully engage on all issues.

5. Future goals

The key goals for the committee are

- to achieve charitable status; paperwork is expected to be submitted in 2022.

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- To develop and implement a fundraising strategy.
 - To coordinate and formalise membership and widen participation from Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland
 - To host at least one event, and others if the opportunity arises.
 - To continue to provide advice and support regarding implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and prevention of illicit trafficking.

6. Other

Through its connection to Newcastle University, BSI is sometimes able to access funding that can be shared with research institutions to further the work of Blue Shield. Does your national committee have any connections with research institutions interested in its work (e.g. in risk management, heritage protection, etc.). If yes, please supply the names and contact details here.

Professor Peter Stone and Dr Emma Cunliffe, Newcastle University; Professor Nigel Pollard, Swansea University.