



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

Alex Sobel MP

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26 February 2021

Dear Mr Sobel,

**Roundtable on heritage and recovery**

I am writing to thank you for outlining your commitment to the heritage sector at the roundtable arranged by The Heritage Alliance on Wednesday 24 February.

As I outlined during the session, I represent the Institute of Conservation (Icon). We are a charity and membership organisation, which brings together those with a passion for conserving cultural heritage. We represent around 2,500 individuals and organisations comprising professional conservators, heritage scientists and many others with a commitment to ensuring the long-term survival of objects and collections, historic buildings and archaeology.

Many of our members work in institutions such as national and regional museums, but many work in private practice as freelancers microbusinesses. The ecosystem of the commercial part of our sector is very fragile as the pipeline of work for microbusinesses is often highly dependent on the action of the larger institutions that commission conservation work.

These conservators have missed out on financial support for business due to ineligibility for key schemes. Whilst in theory they were eligible for the Cultural Recovery Fund, in practice they were not in a position to apply. Future grant schemes need to understand and address the barriers inadvertently built into post-Covid funding to offer better support to microbusinesses. We are also concerned that the current Government does not fully understand the challenges faced by cultural and creative freelancers. This is why Icon is backing calls on the Chancellor made by IPSE and the Creative Industries Federation to establish a freelance commission. I have attached a copy of my briefing outlining Icon's concerns and recommendations for recovery in more detail.

I warmly welcome your work to prepare a manifesto for heritage ahead of the next general election. Icon is keen to support you in this area of work and welcomes the invitation to feed in suggestions. I hope you will let me know if there is anything else that we can do to help you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sara Crofts'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Crofts BArch (Hons) MSc IHBC FRSA

Chief Executive