

## PROTECT OUR HERITAGE AND MAKE THE REGION PROUD

**West Midlanders are rightly very proud of their history, and our buildings symbolise that history.** Sadly, not everyone shares our pride. The Crooked House Pub burnt down and was demolished in 2023, illustrating the disregard that some have for our history – and I was adamant that this could not be allowed to pass. I will continue to press for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and the pub to be rebuilt brick by brick.

The Crooked House is the most visible example of a much wider point: **our heritage is vitally important.** It makes the West Midlands great and it must be celebrated and protected. As Mayor, I will do everything I can to **respect our heritage and pass it on to future generations.**

### Progress made:

- **Committed funding to regenerate historic buildings** such as Globe House in Walsall, the Walsall Guildhall, Erdington Baths and the Town Hall in the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield.
- **Led the campaign for the rebuilding of the Crooked House Pub** in Himley and **supported efforts to retain local venues such as winning the campaign to list the Crown** in Birmingham, and nominated five other pubs in the region for listed status: The Mitre, The Duke William and The Queens Head in Stourbridge, Pretty Bricks, in Walsall, and Ye Old Leathern Bottel, in Wednesbury.
- **Championed local pubs and community buildings**, including leading the campaign for the rebuilding of the Crooked House Pub.
- **Provided funding for the expansion of the Black Country Living Museum**, including the Forging Ahead project showing the West Midlands in the 1940s, 50 and 60s.
- **Funded the development of new plans to save a number of important West Midlands buildings:** 16th-century pub The Golden Lion in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, Matthew Boulton's and James Watts' Soho Foundry in Smethwick, Walsall Imperial theatre and cinema, The Old Print Works in Balsall Heath, Birmingham.
- **Set up the WMCA Heritage Board and partnered with the Architectural Heritage Fund** to ensure our historic buildings are protected, and dedicated £8 million to culture and heritage from the Commonwealth Games underspend and capital funding secured as part of the Deeper Devolution Deal.
- **Secured the Commonwealth Games in the West Midlands, which celebrated our West Midlands heritage in its opening ceremony**, and secured the future of Ozzy the Bull at Birmingham New Street Station.



### **Plan for 2024-2028:**

- **Continue to lead the campaign for the Crooked House Pub to be rebuilt brick by brick,** and to press for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and **support our historic pubs through our 'List Your Local' campaign** with the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).
- **Broker a new plan for the Crown, Electric Cinema and Station Street in Birmingham,** to retain our heritage and the cultural uses of the buildings.
- **Continue our work with partners such as the National Trust, Historic England and the Architectural Heritage Trust** to protect the region's buildings.
- **Continue to support and fund where possible improvements to regional heritage sites,** such as the Chance Brothers Glassworks in Smethwick and the heritage greenhouses at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.
- **Commission an expert review ("Land Commission 2") into the housing & regeneration progress and powers** of the WMCA and the West Midlands Mayor, including examining whether the Combined Authority should have independent Compulsory Purchase powers, to **allow priority projects such as the Harborne Royalty to take place even where the local council does not have the resources to do so.**
- **Ensure that any plans for major new public infrastructure in the region respect the heritage buildings in the area,** for example at Moor Street station as part of the Midlands Rail Hub and at Curzon Street station as part of HS2, and use existing infrastructure creatively, for example by **beginning the construction of the Digbeth Viaduct Highline park and walkway.**
- **Use new transport links to improve access and open up heritage assets to more visitors,** for example around the Black Country Living Museum, and Dudley Castle and Zoo.
- **Explore whether the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and its collections could be supported sustainably with national funding,** potentially by becoming a National Museum.
- **Work with the Canal and River Trust to improve the West Midlands canal network and open it up to more people,** including restoring the Bradley Arm canal to link Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham, further work on the Lapal Canal in Selly Oak, exploring improvements to the Smethwick to Birmingham corridor including Icknield Port Loop, the Cape Arm around the new Midland Met Hospital, and Fens Pool in Dudley.
- **Celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Royal Charter for Sutton Coldfield in 2028,** and the founding of Bishop Vesey's Grammar School in 2027.
- **Offer support and expertise to local groups who are seeking to restore or protect historic buildings,** either through Local Heritage Trusts or community ownership, following the successful example of the Historic Coventry Trust.