

## MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

### HMS VICTORY (1744): FUTURE WRECK SITE MANAGEMENT

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Michael Fallon):** HMS VICTORY, the flagship of Admiral Sir John Balchin, sank in the English Channel in 1744; the wreck site was found in 2008. In 2010 the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport conducted a joint public consultation on options for the management of the wreck site. A summary of the responses and the Government's proposed way forward were published on 19 July 2011:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hms-victory-1744-options-for-the-management-of-the-wreck-site>

Following the consultation, the wreck was gifted to the Maritime Heritage Foundation (MHF) in January 2012. Since then the site, which is at risk of damage from fishing vessel activity, natural erosion, and illegal salvage, has been regularly monitored. In parallel, the Government has worked with MHF to develop a phased approach to the management of the site through a Project Design that conforms with the archaeological principles of the Annex to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage ("the Annex"), the agreed Key Management Principles, and with the Government's heritage policies. These are set out in the "Protection and Management of Historic Military Wrecks outside UK Territorial Waters" guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-and-management-of-historic-military-wrecks-outside-uk-territorial-waters>

We have been assisted in this work by an Advisory Group, consisting of representatives of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, English Heritage, the Receiver of Wreck, and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO); and the Advisory Group has been supported by an Expert Panel of independent specialists from various fields of the marine historic environment and maritime heritage management. The Government is grateful to all those involved.

Following consideration of the detailed information and assurance provided by the MHF I have given consent for MHF to proceed with the next phase of the agreed Project Design. This decision is supported by the Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, my hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (Ed Vaizey). Specifically, MHF has been granted permission to recover at-risk surface items from the wreck site in accordance with the Project Design once the necessary licence has been issued by the MMO.

Consideration of any further phases of work would be made in light of progress reported by MHF.

All artefacts recovered are to be declared to the Receiver of Wreck in accordance with existing legislation to determine ownership. Artefacts transferred under the Deed of Gift that are recovered and accessioned from the wreck and the associated archive, including site plans, drawings and photographs, will form the “Victory 1744 Collection”, which will be managed and curated in line with the Museums Association’s Code of Ethics for Museums.

The Government has previously committed to publishing more information about this project, including the set of Key Management Principles that MHF has agreed to. This information and reports documenting the pre-disturbance work completed as part of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Project Design are now available at [www.victory1744.org](http://www.victory1744.org). Additional information will be made available as the project progresses.

The Government is satisfied that the Project will be managed in accordance with best practice and will ensure that important artefacts from this unique part of our maritime history remain together for the future appreciation and education of all.

Friday 24 October 2014

