

The
Heritage
Alliance

The Heritage Manifesto 2017



The voice of England's independent heritage movement

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Our heritage is one of our greatest national assets, from our rich architectural tradition to our ancient and distinctive landscapes, from exquisite objects, archaeological sites and historic vehicles to stunning churches and museums. It defines our towns, cities and countryside, encouraging inbound tourism and uniting communities. It tells our stories as a nation, supporting social cohesion, rootedness and identity.

England's heritage industry directly generates at least £10 billion in gross value added (GVA) and indirectly generates 2% of national GVA (£21.7 billion). This is more than the agriculture and aerospace sectors combined. Heritage jobs account for 1% of total national employment¹.

Heritage is popular. Nearly four times more people visited heritage attractions in 2016 than attended league and championship football matches². It is the backdrop to our successful TV export creative industry, worth £22billion. There's no Downton without Highclere. No Poldark without the mines.

Heritage is a public good. Its survival depends on the private, independent and public sectors working together. The battle to protect our heritage is far from won, as high-profile campaigns to 'save' historic landmarks and thousands of buildings at risk show.

To realise the power of heritage, we call on all political parties to:

- **Maximise the advantages, and minimise the disadvantages, of Brexit for heritage;**
- **Maintain and improve the protection for heritage;**
- **Attract more investment and engagement in heritage, and build sector skills and capacity;**
- **Effect positive fiscal change for heritage;**
- **Continue to back Lottery funding for heritage.**

Nearly four times more people visited heritage attractions in 2016 than attended league and championship football matches

95% of adults agree that it is important to them that heritage buildings and places are well looked after⁴

We call on all political parties to:

1. Maximise the advantages, and minimise the disadvantages, of Brexit for heritage

Heritage related projects and scientific research received at least £450m in EU funding over the last decade, bolstering tourism and saving important elements of our heritage and identity. Any replacement scheme for the current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should help promote the protection and good management of rural heritage assets. European UK agri-environment funding under the CAP alone has already protected over 24,000 heritage assets. Our much-loved countryside would look very different without our stone-walls, vernacular buildings and wonderful ruins and monuments. We want to see a guarantee that EU funding for heritage is matched and sustained after Brexit.

The heritage sector would also be affected by any new restrictions on skilled workers entering the UK, and if access to specialist materials for restoration work was more difficult or costly. A reciprocal exemption for accredited heritage and museum professionals, craftspeople, and academics should be included in any new visa regime. Continued levels of environmental protection, including Environmental Impact Assessments, are crucial, as will be a budget for collaborative research projects on conservation issues between the UK and other countries, ensuring we can maintain our excellence in this area.

2. Maintain and Improve the protection for heritage

Everyone benefits from a good local environment, so we need to see the National Planning Policy Framework maintained as the bedrock in an effective planning system. The system can be enhanced by making it easier for owners to make sensible changes without drowning in red tape. In turn, local authorities need improved capacity and skill to run the system effectively and ensure sustainable development. Public bodies are under pressure to dispose of historic buildings, but must seek to achieve the best outcomes for the buildings' future, not necessarily the highest price.

A statutory requirement for local authorities to provide historic environment services and Historic Environment Records, and interim protection for assets being under consideration for designation, would be effective practical improvements.

3. Attract investment and engagement with heritage, and build sector skills and capacity

England's heritage sector is a world-leading industry. We call upon all parties to champion us nationally and internationally, deliver changes that improve conditions for philanthropy and giving, and support and fund projects that build sector capacity, develop skills, and deliver diversity, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities.

The current Government's approach to apprenticeships through the Trailblazer programme tends to favour large scale industries over the niche skills the heritage community needs. We call upon all parties to particularly support smaller-scale apprenticeship programmes.

4. Deliver positive fiscal change for heritage

We need a more positive, and simpler, tax regime for repair, maintenance and conservation. Work to historic buildings is subject to 20% VAT, yet no VAT at all is charged on new buildings. This creates a perverse incentive to demolish old buildings rather than repairing, maintaining or altering them. VAT should be permanently reduced to 5% on the repairs, maintenance and improvement of dwellings. This would release investment, boost jobs and reduce the carbon effects of demolition and re-build. Repair and maintenance work of historic buildings generated £9.7bn in construction sector output in 2015³.

The new Government should commit to the future of the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme so that VAT incurred on eligible costs can continue to be recovered for these important buildings and look to extend this scheme to other historic assets. A commitment to simplifying and reducing the burden of business rates on the heritage sector would also help the many museums and other heritage organisations who have suffered from a sharp increase.

5. Continue to back Lottery funding for heritage

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has transformed the way we care for our heritage. We call on all political parties to protect the 20% share of National Lottery funding for HLF, and to explore opportunities to enhance that still further to meet emerging needs. Historic England and the Arts Council join HLF as the bedrock of the sector. Their future stability and adequate funding is crucial.

About The Heritage Alliance

The Heritage Alliance is England's largest coalition of heritage interests. It brings together independent heritage organisations from English Heritage, the National Trust, The Canals & Rivers Trust and Historic Houses Association, to specialist bodies representing visitors, owners, volunteers, professional practitioners, museums, mobile heritage, funders and academics. Between them, over 7 million volunteers, trustees, members and staff demonstrate the strength and commitment of the independent heritage movement.

The Heritage Alliance is ready to put our resources and expertise at the disposal of all political parties to secure the best future for England, built on its invaluable past.

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¹ Heritage Counts 2016 Heritage and the Economy

² <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-indicators-2016.pdf> & <http://www.efl.com/documents/efl-attendance-report-average-attendance-season-2015-16549-3547231.pdf>

³ Heritage Counts 2016 Heritage and the Economy

⁴ <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2016/heritage-and-society-2016.pdf>

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