

Backing the Bedrock

Five Heritage Fiscal & Funding Priorities 2019



The voice of England's independent heritage movement

Our heritage is our future. It has never been more important to our nation's identity. It is our great national asset and an integral part of 'Brand Britain'. It breathes life into our towns, cities and countryside, creating places that people want to live and invest in, and underpins the success of other sectors from construction to the creative industries. It tells our nation's stories, supporting social cohesion, pride in place, learning and identity. Its positive effects on health save the NHS money and improve quality of life.

England's heritage industry is valuable, it directly generates at least £13.1 billion in gross value added (GVA) and indirectly generates 2% of national GVA (£29 billion) - more than the agriculture and aerospace sectors combined¹. Heritage jobs account for 1% of total national employment. Heritage tourists spend £16.9bn each year at our sites.

Heritage is popular. 99% of people in England live within a mile of a listed place and 80% of people think local heritage makes living in their area better. More people volunteer in our sector each year than live in Sheffield. There were 616,000 heritage volunteers in England in 2015/2016, which was 5.7% of all volunteers in [the country](#)².

Heritage is also a public good. The majority is cared for by private owners - from buildings to vintage vehicles. The private, independent, public and charity sectors must work together for it to survive and thrive. We are great custodians who don't constantly ask for ever increasing subsidies, but as recognised in the Government's 2017 Heritage Statement - 'a variety of measures are needed to support the sector and ensure its continuing success'. 73% of UK adults agree that the UK government has a moral obligation to protect [our heritage](#)³. An investment in the future of our historic environment is an investment in our country's future prosperity and in the public, who use and value it.

We have worked to obtain additional funding to support capacity in the heritage sector, for instance through our British Council Travel Grant Scheme and National Lottery funded 'Giving to Heritage' Programme. Our current Resilient Heritage Project will ensure that we can continue to advocate for and support the more than 7 million members, staff and volunteers in heritage into the future. This is our Manifesto, which aims to identify our members' overarching messages on fiscal and funding priorities.

Five funding and fiscal measures will give our world-leading heritage sector a positive future:

Don't lose it:

- 1. Champion our world-leading heritage sector on the world stage - maximising Brexit's opportunities, and minimising its challenges for heritage.**
 - The UK Shared Prosperity fund should ensure that all projects benefit heritage wherever possible;
 - Buy into Horizon 2020 Creative Europe, Erasmus and other schemes;
 - Avoid imposing tariffs on restoration materials after Brexit; and
 - Ensure the new Environmental Land Management System provides sufficient long-term funding to deliver public goods with the historic and natural environments on an equal footing.
- 2. Ensure continued National Lottery funding for the heritage sector and adequate funding for Historic England.**
 - Protect the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 20% share of National Lottery funding and continue to maximise the return to The Good Causes;
 - Ensure Historic England is adequately funded to deliver effectively to its core functions, including financially supporting the independent heritage sector; and
 - DCMS to support, fund and encourage other heritage organisations, including other relevant arms-length bodies, in order to develop and strengthen the capacity of the heritage sector as a whole.

Use it:

- 3. Promote heritage assets as part of creating vibrant places and more homes.**
 - Building on the welcome announcement of £62 million to support regeneration on high streets, work with the sector to develop more programmes that help heritage address important public priorities (including housing delivery), and facilitate positive relationships between the heritage sector and developers, in order to ensure adequate maintenance and creative use of heritage assets in development projects;
 - Encourage Local Planning Authorities to invest in their planning, conservation and archaeological staff who look after our heritage, by ring-fencing funding for proportionate staffing levels;
 - Create an action plan for Local Authority Collections with no funding to continue and consider fiscal incentives to support Trusts and other groups who take these collections on; and
 - Work with the sector to develop a Cultural Capital approach akin to the natural capital approach, and champion this with HM Treasury and others as essential to decision making.

Sustain it:

- 4. Reform the tax regime to promote the repair and maintenance of our nation's irreplaceable heritage assets.**
 - Reduce the income tax on heritage maintenance funds from 45% to 20%;
 - Continue the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme so that VAT incurred can be recovered;
 - Reduce the burden of business rates on the heritage sector through clearer treatment of historic sites and assets; and
 - Pilot a grant scheme to refund VAT on repair and maintenance of listed buildings in areas of greatest need and gather evidence of its impact on productivity and repair, aiming to set a 0% VAT rate for repair and maintenance of listed buildings after Brexit, which would create a level playing field with new build housing.

Grow it:

- 5. Help the heritage sector to attract more investment and engagement and build sector skills and capacity.**
 - The Cultural Development Fund should continue to support heritage projects to create a sense of place and enable heritage to continue to support other sectors; and
 - Ensure a cross-subsidy mechanism to support skills training in smaller companies and more flexibility to enable shared apprenticeships.

1. Champion our world-leading heritage sector on the world stage - maximising Brexit's opportunities, and minimising its challenges for heritage.

Our sector's expertise is world-leading. Government recognises that 'heritage is the glue that binds together our [Brand Britain](#)⁴. It is rightly at the centre of our unique national offer, contributing £16.9bn per annum in economic benefit from tourism alone. Our international report's [8 recommendations](#)⁵ are a starting point for Government to provide the support promised in The Heritage Statement. These recommendations include funding to facilitate international exchange in a heritage context. The British Council and The Heritage Alliance have already launched a pilot travel grant scheme in response.

The Government should clarify how funding the sector received via the EU will continue after Brexit. To maximise the impact of the UK Shared Prosperity fund it should recognise heritage as a driver for regeneration and reflect this in its design - allocating funds to ensure all projects benefit heritage wherever possible.

Heritage projects and scientific research received at least £450m in funding via the EU over the last decade, bolstering tourism and saving important parts of our [identity](#)⁶. UK heritage organisations have been very successful in bidding for such funding, but this is already in jeopardy for future programmes. Archaeology ranks top of all sectors in % income from [EU sources \(38%\)](#)⁷. To safeguard future collaboration and research the UK should buy into Horizon 2020 and other schemes such as Creative Europe and Erasmus. Heritage should be included in the development of any cultural and scientific cooperative accords.

The heritage sector will be greatly affected by restrictions on [skilled EU workers](#)⁸ entering the UK. The Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations on a minimum salary of £30k for a visa would be deeply damaging to our highly skilled but low paid sector. Our research shows that in half of organisations responding, over 50% of roles would be ineligible, exacerbating an already growing skills gap and jeopardising future major infrastructure and conservation schemes. Relevant heritage occupations should be placed on the UK skills shortage list and the heritage equivalent of a Tier 1 visa developed. Access to restoration materials may be more difficult or costly after Brexit – the Government should work to ensure tariffs are not imposed.

The 25 Year Environment Plan and the draft Agriculture Bill have put the natural and historic environments on an equal footing for the first time. It is positive that the draft Agriculture Bill provides for cultural heritage to be funded on the same basis as all other environmental public goods. European UK agri-environment funding under the CAP alone has already protected over 24,000 heritage assets. We need to ensure the new Environmental Land Management System delivers the Government's ambition, and "incentivise[s] land managers to restore and improve our natural capital and rural heritage" and provides sufficient long-term funding to deliver public goods valued by the public, with the historic and natural environments on an equal footing piloted from 2019. The ten goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan should be adequately funded to achieve tangible improvements, including for cultural heritage.

Our full Brexit Briefings are [here](#)⁹.

2. Ensure continued National Lottery funding for the heritage sector and adequate funding for Historic England.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded £8 billion to over 44,000 projects since 1994. It has saved numerous heritage assets from damage or loss, generated jobs and growth, and inspired communities. The 20% share of National Lottery funding for the Heritage Fund should be protected, the return to The Good Causes maximised, and opportunities to enhance that to meet emerging needs explored. The National Lottery Heritage Fund should consider raising the ceiling on applications from private owners, from £100,000 to £200,000 or higher.

Historic England, the Arts Council, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and local authorities need to form the bedrock of the sector. The National Lottery Heritage Fund should not be the only body expected to resource heritage projects, it is a joint responsibility between central and local Government. Historic England and other heritage organisations funded by the Government have faced disproportionate cuts in recent years - their future, stability and adequate funding are crucial, particularly given the challenges with reductions in funding and capacity at Local Authority level. The Arts Council's National Portfolio Organisations system funds sector support in museums and the arts. An equivalent scheme for the independent heritage sector would greatly enhance its long-term sustainability.

3. Use heritage to create vibrant places and homes.

New homes don't have to be new-build. Heritage drives positive social and economic change and is vital to creating distinctive places where people want to live. Government has clearly recognised that some public money is needed in order to conserve heritage, protect the character and stimulate the potential of places. This is reflected in the £62m carved out in the Budget for heritage high streets. The Government should consider how it can better support under-utilised heritage buildings being brought back into use as housing e.g. mills and factories. Applying standard office floor space densities to just the vacant floor space in Greater Manchester and Lancashire's [textile mills](#)¹⁰ shows the potential to create 25,000 new homes. Re-using historic buildings to meet office and housing needs reduces carbon footprint significantly.

The sector is already working to develop a cultural capital approach akin to the natural capital approach. The Government should champion this approach with HM Treasury and others as essential to future decision making.

Well-funded and responsible local authorities are needed to protect our valuable historic environment and use heritage to create vibrant homes and places. Severe cuts to local authorities have meant that local museums, archives and planning departments have suffered. Since 2006, the number of conservation specialists has fallen by 37% and the number of archaeological specialists has fallen by 35%. The sector is working on how heritage consent processes can be streamlined while maintaining the current level of protection for the historic environment to allow local planning authorities to deliver a more effective heritage and design-led service. In tandem, the Government should encourage Local Planning Authorities to invest in their planning, conservation and archaeological staff who look after our heritage, by ring-fencing funding for proportionate staffing levels.

4. Reform the tax regime to promote the repair and maintenance of our nation's irreplaceable heritage assets.

Most heritage, including that which the Government has designated as nationally important, is looked after by private owners at their own cost, and often by volunteers, creating places where people want to live and supporting tourism. The tax system should better recognise owners' burdens and support sustainable economic use and re-use of heritage buildings, which in turn is better for the environment.

A strong (and costed) business case has been developed, supported by the sector, showing that reducing income tax on Heritage Maintenance Funds from 45% to the basic rate of 20% would generate a net benefit of £85.5m by 2023. This benefit derives from the additional tourism visits that would be carried out (because more historic houses would be open to the public), the additional maintenance and repair work that would be carried out, and the general enhancement to wellbeing that arises from greater public access to well looked-after heritage assets.

The Government should commit to continue the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme so that these important buildings can recover VAT incurred on eligible costs.

20% VAT applies to work to historic buildings, yet no VAT at all is charged on building new homes. This is a perverse incentive not to repair or maintain historic buildings. Nevertheless, repair and maintenance work of historic buildings generated £6.6bn in construction sector output [in 2018](#)¹¹.

The Heritage Statement's openness to consider tax measures was extremely welcome and the sector is working to gather evidence. The Government should now pilot a grant scheme to repay VAT spent on the repair of listed buildings in areas of greatest need, like the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, and gather evidence of its impact on productivity and repair, with a view to a wider roll-out. Repair and maintenance of listed buildings should attract a 0% VAT rate after Brexit. This would spur investment, create jobs and reduce the wasteful carbon effects of demolition and re-build.

A commitment to reducing the burden of business rates on the heritage sector would help the heritage organisations and museums who have suffered from a sharp increase. Clearer treatment for historic buildings – both in terms of reducing the burden of rates on heritage organisations, and recognition of the significant repairs liability owners of businesses based in listing buildings suffer – is important in light of the Government's regeneration agenda.

5. Help the heritage sector to attract more investment and engagement and build sector skills and capacity.

The historic environment is fundamental to the success of many other thriving sectors from construction to the creative industries - it is the backdrop to our successful TV export creative industry. There's no Poldark without the Mines. Evidence is building to demonstrate the positive role heritage plays in mental and physical wellbeing. The Cultural Development Fund should continue to support heritage projects to create a sense of place and enable heritage to continue to support other sectors.

Apprenticeship funding needs to work for specialist sectors and organisations. Government should ensure that the voice of small contractors working on, for instance, repair and maintenance of traditional buildings or vintage vehicle restoration, are heard in discussions about skills and apprenticeships. A cross-subsidy mechanism to support skills training in smaller companies and more flexibility to enable shared apprenticeships would also be welcome alongside initial financial support for providers and placement hosts to ensure the successful introduction of the new T-Level in Cultural Heritage and Visitor Attractions. Funding or schemes to support the sector's digital skills and environmental sustainability would be a positive development.

Our wider 2017 Heritage Manifesto can be accessed [here](#)¹².

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 Canal & River Trust and Historic Houses, 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 decision makers to secure the best future for England, built on its invaluable past.

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¹ Heritage and The Economy 2018.

² Ibid.

³ http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Public-perceptions-of-heritage_2015.pdf

⁴ https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/tha-website/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/THAReport2018_Final_Pages.pdf

⁵ https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/tha-website/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/THAReport2018_Final_Pages.pdf

⁶ <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/research/assessing-eu-contribution-to-englands-historic-environment-pdf/>

⁷ <https://www.royalsociety.org/~media/policy/Publications/2017/2017-05-technopolis-role-of-EU-funding-report.PDF>

⁸ <https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/tha-website/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Heritage-and-Immigration-Brexit-Briefing.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/tha-website/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Brexit-and-Heritage-Briefing-FINAL-with-Royal-Society-Report.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/engines-of-prosperity-new-uses-old-mills/engines-of-prosperity-nw-exec-summary/>

¹¹ <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2018/heritage-and-the-economy-2018/>

¹² <https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/tha-website/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Manifesto2017.pdf>

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