

The
Heritage
Alliance

The Heritage Manifesto 2019



The voice of England's independent heritage movement

The Heritage Manifesto 2019

A Great National Asset

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 religious buildings, museums and preserved ships. It creates vibrant places and defines our towns, cities, countryside, and coasts, encouraging inbound tourism, uniting communities and enhancing our nation's soft power internationally. It tells our stories as a nation, supporting social cohesion, rootedness and identity. Heritage drives beneficial change, contributing to our well-being, enhancing biodiversity and supporting long-term environmental sustainability. Our historic buildings, landscapes, traditions, historic transport, and museums are part of our unique offer on the national and international stage and should play a central role in the promotion of the UK.

Productive

England's heritage industry directly contributes £13.1bn in gross value added (GVA). This is larger than the security industry, defence industry and the aerospace industry in the UK. Indirectly, England's heritage industry contributes £29bn, equivalent to 2% of national GVA. The heritage sector employs directly 196,000 people.¹

Popular

Heritage is popular. Nearly 15 times more people visited heritage attractions in 2016-17 than attended Premier League football matches.² It is the backdrop to the success of many of our creative industries. There's no Downton without Highclere. No Poldark without the mines. No Peaky Blinders without the Black Country Living Museum.³

Public good

Heritage is a public good, playing a key role in economic and social regeneration and enhancing well-being and mental health. 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 sites and buildings at risk show. Heritage is the background to people's lives.

Heritage needs all political parties to:

- **Champion our unique heritage sector on the world stage - maximising opportunities in the event of Brexit, and minimising its challenges for heritage;**
- **Maintain and improve the protection for heritage;**
- **Promote heritage assets as part of creating vibrant places to live in, and build sector skills and capacity;**
- **Reform the tax regime to promote the repair and maintenance of our nation's irreplaceable heritage assets, whilst tackling climate change;**
- **Continue to back Lottery funding for heritage.**

Nearly 15 times more people visited heritage attractions in 2016-17 than attended Premier League football matches

People who participated in heritage-related activities show better health and life satisfaction⁴

We call on all political parties to:

1. Champion our unique heritage sector on the world stage - maximising opportunities in the event of Brexit, and minimising its challenges for heritage

England's heritage is a major driver of the visitor economy and it is rightly at the centre of our unique national offer, contributing £16.9bn per annum in economic benefit from tourism alone.⁵ Our sector's expertise is unique – our heritage skills strengthen our international relations and global reputation, and there are opportunities to further strengthen the linkages between the tourism and heritage sectors and enhance economic benefit. Our international report's 8 recommendations are a starting point.⁶

Heritage-related projects and scientific research received at least £450m in funding via the EU over the last decade,⁷ bolstering tourism, creating jobs and saving important elements of our heritage and identity. We want to see a guarantee that funding for heritage is matched and sustained after Brexit. To safeguard future collaboration and research the UK should buy into Horizon Europe and other schemes such as Creative Europe and Erasmus+. The UK Shared Prosperity fund should ensure that all projects benefit heritage wherever possible.

Any replacement scheme for the current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should help promote the protection and good management of rural heritage assets. The rural historic environment is at least as degraded as the natural environment, and our much-loved countryside would look very different without our stone-walls, vernacular buildings and wonderful ruins and monuments. We welcome the much greater commitment to heritage in the 25 Year Environment Plan, but it is vital that this now happens on the ground – it must be carried forward into an Environment Bill and future agri-environment funding. Measures to replace the Common Fisheries Policy and manage our marine waters should make provision for the marine historic environment.

The heritage sector would also be adversely affected by any new restrictions on skilled workers entering the UK,⁸ and if access to specialist materials for restoration work was more difficult or costly. 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. Relevant heritage occupations should be placed on the UK skills shortage list and the heritage equivalent of Tier 1 and Tier 5 visas developed. 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 and cooperation agreements 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, funding and skills to run the system effectively and ensure sustainable development. The inadequacy of heritage and planning resourcing in local authorities leads to uncertainty, delays, and extra costs to developers, as well as damage to heritage. Public bodies are under pressure to dispose of historic public 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, interim protection for assets under consideration for national designation, and removal of permitted development demolition loopholes would be effective practical improvements, and would help to protect our heritage from the unforeseen consequences of the changes to the planning system and to permitted development. We should ensure that our valuable mobile heritage assets are not inadvertently caught by emissions targets and restrictions on their limited but essential fuel use. Consistent implementation of policy on underwater cultural heritage across government is an achievable step towards protecting our important maritime heritage.

3. Promote heritage assets as part of creating vibrant places to live in, and build sector skills and capacity

England's unique heritage sector is of global value. 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, strengthen research infrastructure, 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. It is necessary to particularly support smaller-scale apprenticeship programmes, for example through a cross-subsidy mechanism or by enabling shared apprenticeships.

Funding and schemes to support the sector's digital skills and environmental sustainability would be a positive development. 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. Programmes to help heritage address important

public priorities (including housing delivery), and facilitate positive relationships between the heritage sector and developers would be welcome, in order to ensure adequate maintenance and creative use of heritage assets in development projects.

4. Reform the tax regime to promote the repair and maintenance of our nation's irreplaceable heritage assets, whilst tackling climate change

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 demolition or new build. This creates a perverse incentive to demolish old buildings rather than repairing, maintaining or altering them. Incentivising repair and measures for improving energy efficiency of historic buildings in a sympathetic way is much better for the environment. VAT should be permanently reduced to 5%, and ultimately 0%, on the repair, maintenance and improvement of dwellings, and the income tax on heritage maintenance funds should be reduced from 45% to 20%. This would release investment, boost jobs and reduce the carbon effects of demolition and re-build. This approach will also help the Government meet the target of net zero emissions by 2050. Repair and maintenance work of historic buildings generated £6.6bn in construction sector output in England in 2016.⁹ At present the tax incentives for owners are inefficient – a smarter fiscal system would promote better outcomes, for heritage and for society.

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 National Lottery Heritage Fund 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 The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Historic England and the Arts Council join the Heritage Fund 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 more than 140 independent heritage organisations ranging from English Heritage, the National Trust, the Canal & River Trust and Historic Houses to specialist bodies representing visitors, owners, volunteers, professional practitioners, museums, 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 decision-makers to secure the best future for England, built on its invaluable past.

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¹ Heritage Counts 2018 Heritage and the Economy, pp. 2 and 28.

² Heritage Counts 2018 Heritage and the Economy, p. 32.

³ Inspiring Creativity, Heritage & The Creative Industries. A Heritage Alliance Report.

⁴ Heritage Counts 2018 Heritage and Society, p. 6.

⁵ Heritage Counts 2018 Heritage and the Economy, p. 2.

⁶ The Heritage Alliance International Report 2018.

⁷ Assessing the European Union's Contribution to England's Historic Environment.

⁸ Heritage & Immigration 2019 Briefing.

⁹ Heritage Counts 2018 Heritage and the Economy, pp. 28-31.

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English Heritage / Minecraft at Kenilworth.