The Heritage Alliance

Strategy 2021 - 2026

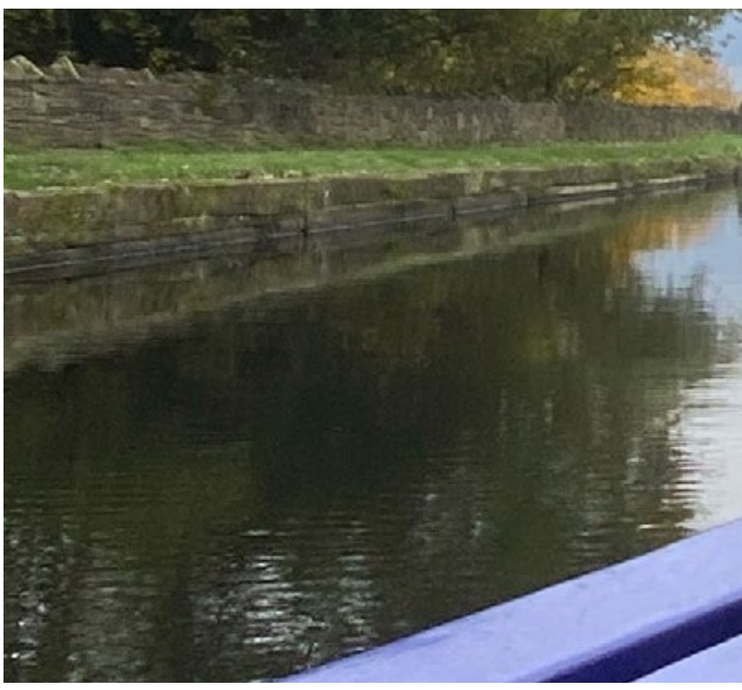
About the Heritage Alliance

Established in 2002, the Heritage Alliance is the membership body representing the independent heritage movement in England.

We have a unique and powerful role as the voice **promoting and championing the independent sector** in all its diversity. We embrace some very large organisations and many smaller ones; the unifying factor between them is a love of our diverse built, natural and created heritage. Between them, the many million volunteers, trustees, members and staff of these organisations demonstrate the strength and commitment of the independent heritage movement. We are uniquely well placed to share ideas and information between our members and with Government and other funding organisations and policy-makers.

We are passionate about promoting the importance of heritage to **prosperity, wellbeing, our environment, creativity and social resilience**. We promote new thinking and conversations. We have active programmes aimed at building capacity and capability amongst our members and the wider sector. We promote partnerships, host events and debates and offer practical support and information. We are committed to being recognised for achieving the highest standards of **inclusion, diversity and equality** of opportunity in our work and activities.

We support the **sustainability and resilience** of the sector through initiatives to strengthen independent heritage organisations and facilitate collaborative working and information sharing to deepen understanding and commitment.



Our Vision

Our vision is for a society in which England's historic environment and wider cultural heritage is valued, supported and able to enrich everyone's lives.

We believe this can be achieved through the sympathetic, sustainable and imaginative stewardship of the past around us by a vibrant, independent heritage sector that is fit for the future.

Our Mission

We harness the skills, strengths and talents of our broad and diverse membership, partners and the wider sector to:

- **champion the independent heritage sector** to policy makers and opinion formers, convening a wide range of stakeholders to build a shared, deep and nuanced understanding of the importance and value of all kinds of heritage; and
- **inspire and catalyse action**, supporting independent heritage organisations to achieve their full potential through enhanced sustainability, resilience and capabilities, and enabling networking and shared learning amongst practitioners across the sector.

Credit: Lizzie Glithero-West

Our Context

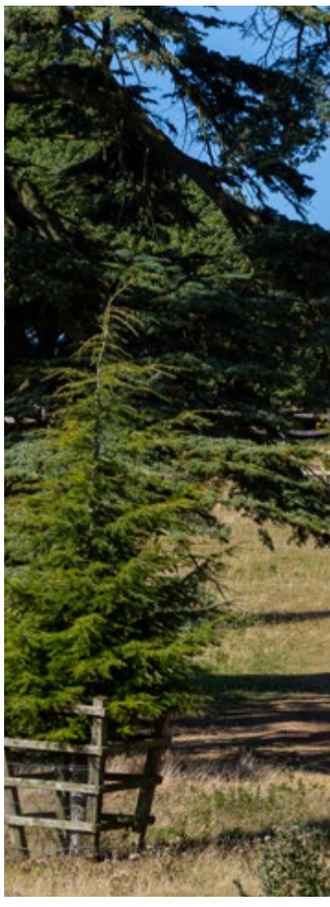
Our heritage provides a strength of continuity from the past, creates meaning for our present, and helps to shape the future. It tells our nation's stories and supports **social cohesion, pride in place, learning and identity**. Our historic buildings, archaeological sites, landscapes, traditions, transport and museums are part of our unique offer on the national and international stage and underpin the success of other sectors from construction to the creative industries.

Our heritage is a legacy worth cherishing and passing on to future generations in as good, if not better, condition. We know the power of heritage to change people's lives and improve wellbeing. It helps to **sustain communities**, creating jobs and incomes and providing a range of climate change solutions. The recent experience of the pandemic has shown how much people miss interacting with their heritage when they cannot access it.

Heritage is **much more than a physical asset**; it brings meaning and value to our lives, inspiring us to imagine what we can achieve and create tomorrow by celebrating and understanding what we created in the past.

- The UK's heritage needs to be protected - 79% of British adults agree and 74% believe the government has a moral obligation to protect our heritage.
- Heritage is personally important to a majority of Britons (59%) and 90% think the UK's heritage makes a contribution to the country.
- 61% of Britons recognise that the heritage sector makes an important contribution to the creative industries, almost three quarters say the UK's heritage is important for the economy (73%) and 81% agree it is important in attracting tourists (81%).
- Heritage does not obstruct future housing developments (82% of British adults concur).

(data from *Public Perceptions of Heritage*)[5]



Heritage is Valuable: England's heritage industry is already a major contributor to the national economy with a total GVA of £36.6bn and providing over 563,509 jobs in 2019, generating a GVA greater than the security industry, defence industry, aerospace industry and the arts and culture industry in the UK.[1] Heritage tourists spend £17bn each year at our sites. In 2018, heritage-related construction activities generated £7.1 billion in GVA in England, employing over 100,000 people.[2]

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.[3] According to the DCMS Taking Part survey, an estimated 5.5% of the adult population in England undertook heritage volunteering during 2018/2019.[4]

Heritage is a public good: 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. 73% of UK adults agree that the UK government has a moral obligation to protect our heritage. Heritage is at the heart of places with character from urban centres to the countryside.[5] We have a mixed economic model of caring for our heritage, no one can do it alone. Private, independent, public and charity owners are all passionate about heritage surviving and thriving.

Credit: Heritage Open Days

The opportunity for heritage as a positive driver for change has never been more important to recognise than now. Over the last two years, we have faced a grave threat from Covid-19 and the necessary measures to control it, along with a host of issues arising from globalisation, climate change and Britain's new place in the world. These threats have compounded and exacerbated challenges which already existed.

More than ever before, a powerful, compelling voice is needed to make the case for heritage, both financially and politically. Nor has the sector's need for direct support to help build its resilience and sustainability ever been greater, both through the immediate crisis and to ensure that it can thrive in the longer term.

Even in a crisis, however, the sector has shown remarkable resilience and ingenuity, demonstrating its ability to embrace change, in particular the power of digital channels to provide new and inclusive ways of understanding and promoting heritage.

Britannia Sailing Trust

The Heritage Alliance will work ever harder to:

- Put the sector's case to policy makers and opinion formers;
- Support the sector through its capacity and capability building programmes;
- Share and amplify insight, new thinking and good practice;
- Find more ways to express the value of heritage to attract investment into the sector.

Our Strategy

Over the next 5 years, the Alliance will work to realise our shared vision and ensure the sector emerges from the Covid-19 crisis inspired and equipped to be better than ever before. We will do this by focusing our efforts on four interrelated strategic objectives: **advocacy**; **communicating and connecting**; building **sustainability and resilience**; and developing **insight**.

Advocacy

We will champion the needs and aspirations of the independent sector, persuading others, both private and public organisations, to support our specific policy objectives for the benefit of the sector and society at large.

Our key activities will be to:

- maintain and enhance our position as the trusted and representative voice of the independent heritage sector;
- deliver an advocacy programme focused on areas of greatest need and potential impact, which complements and reinforces the work of other advocates;
- capitalise on the findings of our insight work to anticipate and advocate for the sector's likely future needs to help ensure a sustainable future;
- harness the skills and capacity of our members through advocacy groups focused on areas of greatest interest to, and potential impact for, our diverse membership.

Communicating & Connecting

We will maintain and develop high quality information resources on policy, good practice and research. We will broker networking and collaboration within and beyond the sector to catalyse new ways of working, support shared learning and skills/career development; and promote the importance and value of the sector.

Our key activities will be to:

- maintain Heritage Update and other communications channels as valuable sources of information for the sector and beyond, sharing relevant news and amplifying the positive work of our membership;
- build on our insight work to convene opportunities for organisations in, and alongside, the independent heritage sector to explore creative solutions to the challenges and opportunities facing the sector;
- facilitate networking to enable shared learning across the sector, support skills and career development for practitioners and drive membership engagement;
- further improve communications within and beyond the sector, targeting messages more “smartly” and significantly improving the look, feel and functionality of our communications channels.

Sustainability & Resilience

Building on our insights into the sector’s distinctive needs we will work in partnership with others to inspire and grow the capabilities of our members, the wider sector and the Heritage Alliance itself to be more sustainable and resilient.

Our key activities will be to:

- support our members to be effective advocates by providing advice, resources, knowledge and insight;
- in partnership with other experts, we will deliver direct support to independent heritage organisations to increase sustainability and resilience, responding to their needs in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, fundraising, workforce development, business planning and digital skills. Our offer will include advice and guidance, training, peer-learning events, resources and publications;
- invest in future heritage leaders through engagement of interns, volunteers and secondments;
- invest in the sustainability and resilience of the Alliance, including diversifying and growing our income base, further growing membership and establishing the infrastructure, capacity and capability to deliver this strategy.

Insight

We will develop and use our high quality, evidence-based insights into the sector and its value, impact, needs and aspirations, to lead innovation, enhance our advocacy and communications, and to support the sustainability, resilience and vibrancy of the sector.

Our key activities will be to:

- continue to develop regular signature publications, underpinned by sound research and data. These will promote the value of the sector, stimulate changes in practice/policy and catalyse new actions/innovations;
- collect insights as part of the delivery of our support programmes and use these to support understanding of need and inform future delivery;
- continue to convene an annual Heritage Debate to stimulate new thinking and activity;
- use these insights to:
  1. embolden and add further credibility to our advocacy work;
  2. stimulate innovation within and beyond the sector;
  3. inform our communications;
  4. connect people working in and with the sector; and
  5. guide the development of our sustainability and resilience work.

Credit: UKAHT

References

1. *Heritage and the Economy 2020*, Historic England.
2. *Heritage and the Economy 2019*, Historic England.
3. *Heritage and the Economy 2019*, Historic England.
4. *Rebuilding Volunteering Capacity in the Heritage Sector*, Heritage Volunteering Group (2020).
5. *Public Perceptions of Heritage* - ComRes (2015).

Images (in order of appearance)

1. *Canal at Finsley Gate Wharf, Lancashire* - Credit: Lizzie Glithero-West
2. *Visitors at Stowe* - Credit: Heritage Open Days
3. *Britannia* - Credit: Britannia Sailing Trust
4. *Port Lockroy, Goudier Island (Penguin Post Office)* - Credit: UKAHT
5. *Kenilworth Castle* - Credit: English Heritage

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