



## Our Priorities

English Heritage's overriding priority is to safeguard for the future the most significant physical remains of our national story. We are therefore concerned with both the National Heritage Collection of properties, sites and archives in English Heritage's direct care and the nearly 400,000 buildings, monuments, landscapes and shipwrecks that make up the much wider national collection of designated sites. Our priorities are:

### Better Heritage Protection

We want England's heritage to contribute to our culture and our economy. That means protecting what is special and supporting owners to make changes to ensure our heritage can help stimulate growth and investment. This is why we are working with Government to improve planning policy, while making sure that changes do not inadvertently weaken protection for the historic environment.

Photograph: J W Evans, a family silverware and plate manufactory in Birmingham, has been saved for the nation thanks to a £2 million English Heritage project.

It is more important than ever that we make the best use of limited resources. We will focus our efforts on activities which others cannot do. Our grant giving will focus on expert advice and emergency repairs for heritage at risk, support for national heritage organisations and research and technical advice on the most pressing concerns for heritage conservation. Local authorities have the greatest responsibility for protecting historic places so we are extremely concerned about the loss of both general and expert staff in local authorities across England. We will monitor the situation carefully, and will continue to try to build the capacity of others.

### Digital Delivery

More and more of our work – our advice and guidance, practical and scholarly information about our properties and the all-important National Heritage List for England (the new online national database for all nationally designated assets) – is available online and we will build on these resources so that many more people can enjoy them. One example is the digitisation of National Monuments Record archives. We have begun work on making available online 95,000 of the oldest and most valuable photographs from the Aerofilms Collection, the unique air photographs archive of international importance which English Heritage acquired in 2007.

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English Heritage communicates electronically wherever possible. As part of our statutory role in the planning system we communicate directly with prospective applicants and others at pre-application stage, and we are committed to working with all involved to see E-planning extended further.

### National Heritage Protection Plan

Published in May 2011, the National Heritage Protection Plan identifies, for the first time, gaps in our knowledge about England's heritage and the threats to it so that the nationally significant parts can be first understood and then protected for the future. The Plan will direct English Heritage's conservation and protection work over the next four years and beyond.

### Financial Resilience

We must be ever more efficient as we work within the £51 million cut to our budget arising from the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. This gap is being closed by a combination of efficiency savings (notably in IT, procurement and utilities), growth in commercial contribution, rationalisation and some service reduction.

Over the last five years English Heritage's commercial turnover has grown by an average of over 7% a year. This has been largely due to investment in visitor facilities at our properties funded by modest but vitally important capital contributions from DCMS. While we will still receive some capital from government, we will have to raise the remainder from other sources. As long as we can be successful in this we believe investments in sites such as Stonehenge, Kenwood House, Osborne House and Kenilworth Castle will generate significant additional income.

### Innovation and Excellence

We want to improve the services we offer to the public and find the most effective ways of providing them. The interpretation work we have completed at properties in our care this year is pioneering. The new visitor experience at Dover Castle uses state-of-the-art effects and real film footage to evoke the drama of the Dunkirk evacuation. Historical vignettes filled with props and artefacts allow visitors to Wrest Park in Bedfordshire a glimpse into the lives of the characters who lived there and how they influenced the estate's evolution. The prioritisation work of the National Heritage Protection Plan will enable us to focus our efforts and we hope, increasingly, those of others where they can have the greatest impact.

## Making the Most of the National Heritage Collection

Improving the experience and understanding of visitors and providing educational services is part of our core purpose. We will invest £35 million over the next four years in properties such as Kirby Hall in Northamptonshire and Apsley House in London. The National Monuments Record will be further integrated into our public programmes and we will continue with our programme to provide new interpretation at all free sites and refurbish outdated displays at charged sites. We will continue to be in the forefront of innovation in the interpretation of historic sites and their collections.

## Conservation of the National Heritage Collection

We maintain an Asset Management Plan for the National Heritage Collection which assesses the condition of all the sites in English Heritage's care against consistent conservation criteria. We know that a long period of under-investment in conservation has increased the backlog of urgent works to £56 million. It is a primary duty of English Heritage to minimise further deterioration in the condition of the National Heritage Collection.

## The Owner of Last Resort

While English Heritage has had to reprioritise in order to manage within the reduced grant we were awarded in 2010, we can still, and always will, respond in a true heritage emergency. Such an emergency would be a case where a site of national significance is identified as being in danger and where no other body is in a position to intervene. The Grade I medieval barn at Harmondsworth, one of the most complete and unaltered medieval buildings in Britain, is an example. English Heritage acquired the barn in October 2011. Stepping in in this way will halt the further deterioration of this exceptionally significant historic building and enable it to be enjoyed and understood by the public.