



Historic England

**CHAMPIONING HERITAGE**  
**IMPROVING LIVES**

Historic England Future Strategy 2021



A dance student practices in the restored undercroft at Bradenstoke Priory, Wiltshire

# CONTENTS

Introducing our Strategy Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman	3
Our role as champion Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive	4
What we believe Our Purpose, Vision and Values	5
Making it happen Implementing the Strategy	6
Our next steps Working together	10

# INTRODUCING OUR STRATEGY

Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman

Our Vision at Historic England is for a heritage that is valued, celebrated and shared by everyone. Our Future Strategy, which starts in 2021, is about how we will make that Vision a reality.

Heritage has the power to improve lives. Our nation's extraordinary historic environment can unite communities, stimulate action and shape thriving places for people today and tomorrow.

At the heart of our Strategy is a desire to champion the outstanding quality of our historic surroundings – explaining the many diverse influences in their development, inspiring their celebration as a source of local and national pride and promoting their potential as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth.

Our historic buildings, places, landscapes and archaeology provide the most tangible physical links between our past, present and future.

That is why we will continue to identify and protect these important features of our historic environment – from beautiful buildings to buried traces of early settlements.

We will be engaging with heritage owners, communities and stakeholders to adapt places in ways which combine conservation with enhancement. We want to encourage participation by energising and equipping more people to become involved in supporting the places they care about.

This Strategy will be our guide for the future as we work together to make our heritage a vibrant source of wellbeing for everyone.



Willy Howe round barrow, Yorkshire. Grant aid and advice from Historic England has suppressed damaging vegetation and improved public access

## OUR ROLE AS CHAMPION

Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive

Heritage is all around us. It defines the character of our cities, towns, villages, seaside and countryside. To be in a position to drive England's heritage agenda forward is a privilege, and a challenge against which we at Historic England are well qualified to deliver.

### Sharing our expertise

From archaeology to archiving, we should share our unrivalled breadth of knowledge widely. We must play a central role in revitalising the nation's heritage sector after Covid-19. To achieve this, we must lead collaboration at a strategic level.

We need to work together to build partnerships across national and local government, with the arts, culture, heritage and environment sectors – and with communities throughout the country.

### Engaging with more voices

It is exciting to see heritage emerging as a mainstream concern. It is starting to gain the recognition it deserves as one of our greatest national assets.

“

To continue championing the profile of heritage, we need to invite and welcome more diverse perspectives alongside our traditional supporters.

By reaching and hearing from a wider audience, we can more effectively tackle the challenges we all face, from climate change to social and economic deprivation.

### A better future for our past

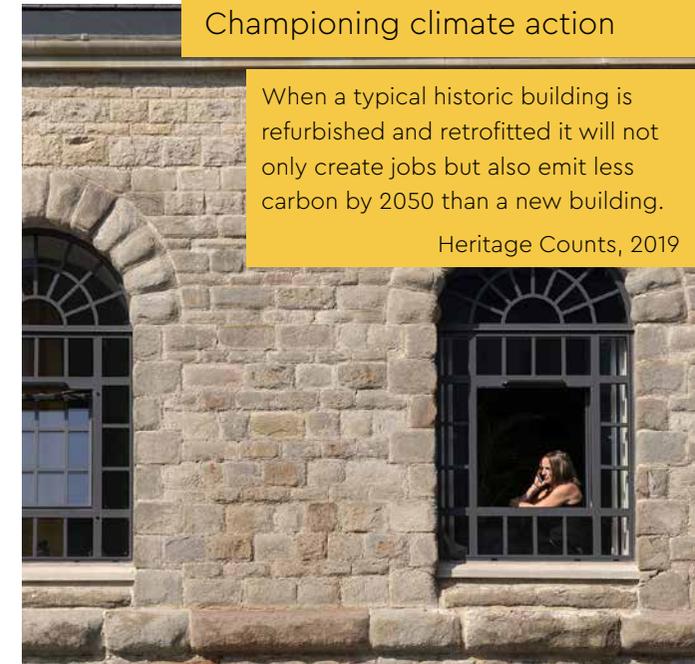
We need to support the heritage sector towards a financially-sustainable future. Most importantly, we need to save and care for the historic buildings, archaeological remains and places that inspire people today and tomorrow.

The best way to do this is to champion our heritage effectively, demonstrating its essential role with objective, innovative research and working together with a diverse range of people and potential supporters. We are determined to rise to that challenge.

#### Championing climate action

When a typical historic building is refurbished and retrofitted it will not only create jobs but also emit less carbon by 2050 than a new building.

Heritage Counts, 2019



Brandon Yard, Bristol. A good example of sensitive repurposing of buildings

WHAT WE BELIEVE

# OUR PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES

Our Strategy outlines the route and steps we can all take to better serve and safeguard our heritage. Our Values will guide the decisions we make along the way.



A Dartmoor shepherd in Devon – a beneficiary of the National Parks Pilot Scheme for Field Barns

Championing the economy

The heritage sector had a Gross Value Added of £36.6bn and provided over 563,509 jobs in 2019.

CEBR, 2020

## OUR PURPOSE

To improve people’s lives by championing and protecting the historic environment.

## OUR VISION

A heritage that is valued, celebrated and shared by everyone. A historic environment that people connect with and learn from and that we are proud to pass on to future generations.

## OUR VALUES

How we do things is as important as what we do and that’s where our Values come in. They inform and influence how we go about every part of our work.

### PASSION

We share our love of the historic environment to inspire and energise people

### LEARNING

We listen and learn, and pass on this knowledge to others

### COLLABORATION

We work with partners and we work together to achieve great things

### OPENNESS

We communicate in a way that’s understandable, available and useful to everyone

### RESPONSIBILITY

We are accountable to the public and we always act with integrity

# MAKING IT HAPPEN IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY

Our Strategy sets out how we will achieve our Vision. It plots a course that we can use to navigate the future and it will direct all our work, both within Historic England and with our partners.

Our Strategy embraces all that we do, including the work of our teams within the organisation and that of our partners.

It's also flexible, allowing us to adapt to factors beyond our control such as funding fluctuations, societal changes, local issues, and building back from Covid-19.

For our partners, it offers a transparent view of the journey we're undertaking, and what we're working together to achieve.

Our Strategy is built for the long term. We'll review our key areas of focus regularly to ensure that we're staying on the right path and, if something's not working, we'll change it quickly.

## One Strategy Three Areas of Focus

### Thriving Places

We will collaborate with people and partners to secure vibrant and sustainable futures for historic places.

### Connected Communities

We will bring communities together by discovering and celebrating local heritage, and by protecting the character of historic places.

### Active Participation

We will inspire and equip people to take action in support of the places they care about.

Stevenage Town Centre Gardens. The town centre Conservation Area is currently on the Heritage at Risk Register



### Championing wellbeing

People who cease visiting heritage sites report significant declines in physical health, mental health and life satisfaction.

Lakey et al, 2017

# THRIVING PLACES

We will collaborate with people and partners to secure vibrant and sustainable futures for historic places.



Shop worker, The Burges High Street Heritage Action Zone, Coventry

## What we want to achieve

Historic places and spaces are central to our heritage. We will advise, support and share our expertise to help discover, save, protect and adapt them so that current and future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from them.

When places thrive, they bring people together and deliver unique economic and social value to communities. By saving and caring for them and through research, listing, grant-aiding, planning and technical advice, we can help our heritage have a positive impact on the world around us.

## How we're going to do it

We will help national and local decision-makers to appreciate and invest in our historic environment. We'll stimulate local economies by supporting, funding and providing expert advice and guidance for the sustainable regeneration and future economic contribution of heritage sites and places. This support is more essential than ever in order to assist with Covid-19 recovery.

We will ensure that the craft and trade skills needed to repair and maintain historic buildings are preserved and passed on to future generations.

We will position heritage as a key part of national and local responses to climate change, through policy advocacy and promoting the re-use and adaptation of existing buildings and infrastructure.

## High Streets Heritage Action Zones

This £95-million government-funded programme is designed to unlock the potential of high streets across England. It will fuel economic, social and cultural recovery and breathe new life into places for future generations.

These schemes will transform underused and dilapidated buildings on the high street into new homes, shops, workplaces and community spaces, enhancing historic character. By working with local authorities, businesses and communities, we'll help renew high streets across the country, reinvigorating places with much needed grants and initiatives such as the High Streets Cultural Programme.



Craftsmen reinstating traditional shop fronts in Hales Street, Coventry, as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

We will bring communities together by discovering and celebrating local heritage, and by protecting the character of historic places.

Attendees at St Paul's Carnival, Bristol. One of the UK's largest street carnivals, working to promote and celebrate African Caribbean culture and traditions

## What we want to achieve

The discovery and celebration of our history and heritage can galvanise a community, offering a sense of shared identity and character. It can also raise challenging issues and spark debate.

We welcome conversations that connect people with place, and we will work with all communities to make the most of their historic environment.

We'll work to share knowledge, carry out research, and collaborate with communities and heritage professionals everywhere.

## How we're going to do it

We'll use digital technologies to enable innovation in how we engage with the sector, other organisations, and our audiences.

We will develop and deliver heritage programmes and projects in inclusive and participatory ways. We'll provide a platform for under-represented and unheard voices to encourage differing perspectives on heritage.

We'll ensure that our workforce is representative of the communities we work with, bringing regional knowledge to the forefront.

We will work with partners and stakeholders who help us engage with diverse audiences, and we'll work to remove the barriers to heritage careers and learning.

## Heritage Schools

Our Heritage Schools programme helps children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance, and it engages school children in the art of discovery. It gives them a sense of pride in where they live, it embeds local historic context in the school's curriculum and it helps communities become more deeply involved in the life of the school.

The results so far have been exceptional. 94% of teachers agreed that they have a greater understanding of how local heritage connects to regional, national or global history, and 99% of teachers agreed that learning about local heritage improved pupils' sense of place\*.

\*Heritage Schools Evaluation Research 2019–20



Pupils at Feversham Primary Academy in Bradford, which has been part of the Heritage Schools network since 2016

# ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

We will inspire and equip people to take action in support of the places they care about.



A National Park employee directs volunteers to remove bracken from Shieling settlements at Scale Beck, Cumbria

## What we want to achieve

A successful future for heritage depends on giving more people the chance to help out the historic places that surround them. We're already carrying out a number of participation schemes, but we intend to do more; from community engagement, to innovative campaigns, to developing Enriching the List.

## How we're going to do it

We will spark curiosity by sharing techniques, tools and knowledge in innovative ways.



We'll create opportunities for people to get involved by providing information, advice and inspiration on how and what people can do to help make a real difference for heritage.

We'll bring heritage to life for greater knowledge sharing, and to motivate people to appreciate, support and look after their historic environment.

We'll provide free access to heritage protection and adaptation tools to encourage engagement, help to improve skills and sustain action.

## Archive Services

The Historic England Archive is one of the largest accessible archives in the UK. Many of the photographs, drawings and reports included in the Archive are publicly available, encouraging participation with our heritage and stimulating curiosity.

We also carry out projects that inspire the public to add their own content to the Archive. This was recently highlighted by the Picturing Lockdown project in which we asked the public to submit photos to document their experiences of one week in lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Picturing Lockdown Collection: first sight of her first grandchild  
© Laura Dally

## OUR NEXT STEPS

# WORKING TOGETHER

---

Work with us to champion heritage and improve lives.

Together, we can create an even better future for our heritage so we can all keep enjoying the history on our doorstep.

Our Corporate Plan provides further information on our Objectives, Activities and how we'll spend our resources over the coming years.

Get involved at [historicengland.org.uk](https://historicengland.org.uk)



HistoricEngland



Historic England



historicengland

All images © Historic England 2021 unless otherwise stated

“

Historic England is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops.



Wind turbines at the Humber Gateway Wind Farm in the North Sea. Renewable power generation is critical in tackling climate change that threatens our historic environment



Historic England