



Starter Guide for New Heritage Champions

As a Heritage Champion, you will play an important and influential role in supporting and celebrating your local historic environment.

Being a Heritage Champion can lead to highly visible and positive outcomes for the community, which can boost the council's profile within the local area.

What is the role of a Heritage Champion?

By taking on the role of Heritage Champion you will act as a figurehead, becoming an important voice for the historic environment at the local level. Each Heritage Champion works differently, according to what is best for them and their local authority. Here are the general components that can form your role:

- Champion and make the case for the protection of your local historic environment
- Support the historic environment services within your authority area
- Help ensure that the historic environment is properly represented in all your local authority's plans, strategies and individual planning decisions
- Advocate for, promote and raise awareness of the social and economic benefits that the historic environment brings to the local area
- Act as a contact point for support and information on local heritage-related issues
- Encourage collaboration between the community, local authority and heritage professionals





© Historic England

There should be no additional financial implications associated with your role as a Champion other than those which might be involved with developing your skills, such as attending training events. Your championing role should permeate throughout all your other tasks as a local authority member and be incidental to them. However, it will inevitably be necessary for some specific time to be allocated to Champion duties (e.g. meetings, training, etc.), which may be a day a month on average.

Getting started

After being appointed a Heritage Champion, the following might be useful in helping you get started:

1. **Make contact with your Historic England [local office](#).** Local Engagement Advisers (LEAs) are the main point of contact for Heritage Champions in Historic England. By ensuring that Historic England has your details, including how you prefer to be contacted, you can be kept up to date on new publications, heritage events and training opportunities.
2. **Consult the [Heritage Champions Handbook on the Historic England website](#).** This document provides detailed information on what you can achieve in your role and sources of support.
3. **Identify key members within relevant departments of your local authority**, such as planning, environment, highways and culture and start

building working relationships. Conservation and Archaeological Officers will be best placed to let you know what the key issues are locally and are essential partners in making the best of your role. You might also want to make contact with the relevant portfolio holders, if you are not one yourself.

4. **Make yourself visible as a Heritage Champion.** Ensure your local authority and local heritage organisations know who you are and what your role is. You could publicise your role on your local authority website.
5. **Make contact with relevant local groups**, such as civic societies and historic environment lobby organisations, explaining who you are, your contact details and how you can help.
6. **Make contact with other Heritage Champions in other authorities.** This will allow you to share views, access advice and discuss cross boundary issues. You may even wish to develop a local Heritage Champions network. Your local Historic England office will be able to assist you with this.
7. **Familiarise yourself with material available** on heritage-related websites and research training and development opportunities such as [HELM Training](#).

Useful publications and links

- [The Heritage Champions webpage](#) contains details and links to assist Heritage Champions.
- [Historic England](#) has published a number of [advice documents](#) and [Research Reports](#).
- The [Heritage Counts website](#) contains various resources and tools on the social and economic value of heritage. The material is updated annually. Of particular interest to you would be the [Local Authority Profiles](#) (which can be used to help understand the scope of heritage in any given local authority).
- The [Local Management webpage](#) provides information on local authority and community management of the historic environment.
- The [Planning system webpage](#) sets out how the planning system works to protect historic places.

For further information please contact your Local Engagement Advisor at your [local Historic England office](#) directly, or, for any general enquiries, email Champions@HistoricEngland.org.uk