



Historic England – Listing audience reach events

Isle of Wight engagement summary

Why did we select the Isle of Wight?

The purpose of this exercise was to gather opinions from three communities regarding the National Heritage List for England, targeting a wider and more diverse audience than might usually engage in this topic.

The Isle of Wight was selected as the rural location for this engagement as it contains a rural community with a distinct culture. As a popular tourist destination, the Isle of Wight has a strong agricultural, brewing, and maritime heritage. The island has a population that is gradually diversifying. There are also more elderly residents than the national average, due to the net inward migration of older adults to the island, with a net outward migration of the younger people away from the island to the mainland.

There was also a significant number of community groups to contact, many of whom were extremely active. The LGBTQ+ groups were particularly active, with the island hosting a Pride event every year, as well as many heritage groups on the island with the Isle of Wight Society being a prime example, that also works closely with the Council.

Engagement methods

Promotion – Social media advertising was used to promote the engagement in the local community. This allowed us to target residents based on location as well as priority groups, maximising the potential for these audiences to engage, and the adverts invited recipients to fill out the online survey or attend our workshops. Overall, 4,279 people engaged with the social media adverts, across all three locations, and on the Isle of Wight, there were 1,418 click-throughs reported on the social media adverts.

Stakeholder groups were also written to, inviting them to attend the workshops and take part in our online survey. This method was particularly successful on the Isle of Wight, where we met with the Isle of Wight Council Cabinet, who gave us useful feedback and agreed to disperse more information about our engagement through their network. The other stakeholder groups, including formal and informal community groups, provided an effective means of promotion. The Historic England website was also used to promote the engagement, which included a link to the online survey.

Workshops – Five online workshops were held across a week, which included one for the Isle of Wight, which was held on 2 November between 18:30-20:00. The workshop included information about Historic England and the Listing process, as well as discussions about heritage in the local area, and specific examples of heritage on the Isle of Wight that had



been highlighted by those who signed up to attend. There was also a discussion on how communities felt Historic England could best protect these places, and the importance of how places are used.

Online survey – An online survey was developed with the Historic England team, which covered the same topics as the presentation outlined above.

Feedback response rates

For the Isle of Wight, the response rates were:

- 46 people filled out the online survey
- 22 people attended the online workshops
- 43 people filled out the main online survey

Overall, the Isle of Wight saw the best levels of engagement out of the three locations that were chosen. There was a real enthusiasm for the project, with stakeholders and groups keen to develop the relationship with Historic England further and provide feedback on their perception of heritage. They were especially interested in the next stage of consultation about the new strategy.

Response themes

Understanding of Historic England – Respondents from the engagement on the Isle of Wight had a good understanding of who Historic England were, with many respondents confirming they are aware of their role.

Heritage as a shared experience – This was a key theme from respondents from the Isle of Wight, who viewed heritage assets as essential for shaping early experiences of communities, both as experiences in early life and as new members of a community.

Learning more about Historic England – People from the Isle of Wight felt that social media, the Historic England website and partnerships with local government and community groups would be the most effective way to find out more about Historic England. Interestingly, participants from the Isle of Wight made up more than half of the overall requests for more face-to-face engagement, illustrating that this method is more popular on the island.

Protection of spaces as a whole – Respondents from the Isle of Wight highlighted the ‘bitty’ nature of the Conservation Areas and large expanses along the coast. It was clear that protecting heritage and historic assets was important to communities, but there was frustration about how different policies interacted with each other and left some areas and buildings more exposed.

Specific locations – The Guildhall, Norris Castle, East Cowes Esplanades, and Osbourne House were popular places that respondents highlighted as places that should be protected on the island.