

Big Pit National Mining Museum of Wales

From our public parks to our shared memories, our historic houses to our landscapes, heritage means a lot to people across the UK.

Today, new research conducted for us by Britain Thinks has revealed how our heritage is firmly at the heart of shaping and improving local quality of life. We've found that investing in heritage is making people happier about where they live and that it encourages local pride.

The in-depth research concentrated on 12 towns and cities chosen at random and representative of the UK population. It examined people's views on whether £6billion of National Lottery investment over the last 20 years had helped to make where they live a better place to be.

[quote: Deborah Mattinson] "The research showed that people react to heritage not only because of the practical benefits it brings, but also in emotional terms." [/quote]

Key findings

- 80% think local heritage makes their area a better place to live

- 64% think heritage has improved in recent years in terms of how well it is looked after and what it has to offer
- 50% answered 7 or more out of 10 when asked to rate the impact local heritage sites have on their personal quality of life
- Strong support for heritage investment with 76% of regular Lottery players rating the HLF projects in their area a good or excellent use of Lottery funding
- Heritage plays a powerful role in bringing people together and helping to improve perceptions of quality of life
- Benefits of heritage seen as both transactional and emotional, encouraging local pride and fostering social cohesion

Deborah Mattinson, founder director of Britain Thinks, said: “The research showed that people react to heritage not only because of the practical benefits it brings, but also in emotional terms. In those places where heritage has a deep, emotional resonance, it provides a way of helping people better understand where they come from, their family and their community. This really matters in the UK today."

All the findings - including a UK summary report, an essay of the main findings, research slides, reports for each place with films plus more detail on the methodology – are available on the 20 years in 12 places research pages.

You can also follow the debate on Twitter - #20Years12Places.



School children exploring the heritage of the Painted Hall in Greenwich

‘20 years in 12 places’ – New research reveals UK’s heritage helps make us happier