Heritage 2033 – our 10-year strategy

As the largest funder for the UK's heritage, our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.
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Over the next decade we will take a longer-term view, investing in heritage for the future as well as for the present. We will invest in places, not just individual projects, to bring about benefits for people, places and our natural environment.

We will strengthen partnerships with governments, local authorities and statutory agencies and create new collaborations with those who share our vision.

These ambitions are set out in a simplified investment framework and form the foundation of our shared vision for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone.

- Quick look: strategy overview
- Explore and download our 10-year strategy

Delivery plan 2026–2029

In our latest three-year delivery plan, we set out how we'll invest £1.4billion in heritage and communities between 2026–2029 and our priorities for that funding.

- Explore and download our delivery plan 2026–2029

Our investment principles

Four new investment principles will guide all our decision making through open programme funding, our strategic initiatives or when entering new collaborations and partnerships.

- **Saving heritage**: conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future.
- **Protecting the environment**: supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.
- **Inclusion, access and participation**: supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.
- **Organisational sustainability**: strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

We will ask projects we fund to take all four investment principles into account in their applications.

Addressing our investment principles in your application

Insight

Explore the research, feedback and analysis that's informed our new strategy:

- an analysis of our engagement survey results
- a report of our sector and general public research
- our equality impact assessment of Heritage 2033

Impact

Discover the difference Heritage 2033 is making for the heritage sector after the first full year of grant making under our 10-year strategy. Read our 2024–2025 impact report.

Heritage 2033 overview

See all updates

Want a quick overview of our 10-year strategy? Explore our short video and our 'strategy in page' below and in the attached PDF.

Attachment	Size
PDF View Heritage 2033 strategy in a page as PDF(723.63 KB)	723.63 KB
PDF View Strategaeth Treftadaeth 2033 mewn tudalen as PDF(137.16 KB)	137.16 KB

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Our vision

We want heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.

Our investment principles and what we'll achieve by 2033

Saving heritage:

- improved condition and understanding of heritage
- reduced amount of ‘heritage at risk’
- delivered transformational long-term projects
- made digital heritage more accessible

Protecting the environment:

- put landscapes and habitats into recovery
- increased understanding of and connection to nature
- reduced the negative environmental impact of our funding portfolio
- improved heritage’s ability to adapt to climate change

Inclusion, access and participation:

- increased diversity of heritage workforces and audiences
- reduced barriers for people under-served by heritage
- enabled more people’s heritage to be recognised
- championed digital technology to improve access

Organisational sustainability:

- increased organisations’ commercial and governance capabilities
- developed skills and capacity across heritage
- embedded resilience in projects we fund
- strengthened heritage’s contribution to local economies

Our approach

- Open programmes for all types of heritage projects with the majority of decisions made at local level.
- Strategic interventions to tackle issues at large and cross-territory scale.
- Partnerships that combine resources and expertise to create investments with greater impact.
- A focus on place, landscape and nature, heritage in need and responding to opportunities and emergencies.

Heritage 2033

See all updates

The National Lottery Heritage Fund strategy 2023–2033.

Attachment	Size
PDF View Heritage 2033, The National Lottery Heritage Fund strategy 2023–2033 as PDF(11.17 MB)	11.17 MB
PDF View Treftadaeth 2033, Strategaeth Cronfa Treftadaeth y Loteri Genedlaethol 2023–2033 as PDF(3.11 MB)	3.11 MB

Foreword

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's 10-year strategy sets out our ambitions to support projects of all sizes that connect people and communities to the UK's heritage.

Our consultation found that people wanted us to do even more to address the challenges heritage faces and to increase the positive contribution it makes to life in the UK.

Over the next decade we will take a longer-term view, investing in heritage for the future as well as for the present. We will invest in places, not just individual projects, to bring about benefits for people, places and our natural environment.

We will strengthen partnerships with governments, local authorities and statutory agencies and create new collaborations with those who share our vision.

These ambitions are set out in a simplified investment framework and form the foundation of our shared vision for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone.

– The National Lottery Heritage Fund Board of Trustees

Introducing our strategy

As the largest funder for the UK's heritage, our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

In summer 2022, over 4,000 stakeholders and members of the public shared their views on heritage and our future direction. This powerful feedback, combined with our own experience, has shaped our new approach.

We will strengthen and focus our support for the UK's heritage using four principles that will underpin our investment:

- saving heritage
- protecting the environment
- inclusion, access and participation
- organisational sustainability

We will use these principles to create a more flexible framework to guide our funding.

We will continue to do what we do well: our open programmes with devolved decision-making using the local knowledge and expertise of our six area and nation committees.

In future, we will also take a more proactive approach to strengthen strategic investment, targeting our resources towards the most urgent needs.

The detail of how we will deliver this 10-year strategy will be published through a series of three-year delivery plans.

Our renewed approach has been created through the generous contributions and expertise of many people and partners who care about heritage. We want to continue these conversations, so that National Lottery funding enables heritage to inspire, and challenge, to delight and fascinate, now and in the future.

– Simon Thurley, Chair

– Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive

Achieving our vision

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.

We see heritage as broad and inclusive, adapting to contemporary and future uses and challenges. From the historic and natural environment to our museums, libraries and archives. From our industrial legacy to cultural traditions, stories, memories, celebrations and more. Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations.

It is our privilege to support the UK's heritage with money raised by National Lottery players. Since 1994, we have invested over £8.2bn in more than 45,000 projects. We operate across all four nations of the UK as a non-departmental public body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We work in collaboration with a wide range of statutory bodies across the UK as well as other National Lottery distributors. We receive Financial Directions from DCMS as well as Policy Directions for the UK and England, and from the Scottish and Welsh governments, with Directions in Northern Ireland currently under development.

We deliver additional funding for heritage on behalf of governments and other bodies to achieve our shared aims.

Our four new investment principles will guide all our decision making through open programme funding, our strategic investments or when entering new collaborations and partnerships.

We will ask the projects we fund to take all four investment principles into account in their applications. The strength of focus, and emphasis on each principle, will be for applicants to demonstrate. We will provide greater detail on what this will mean through guidance and our delivery plans.

Investment principle 1

Saving heritage

Conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future.

What we mean

Our support will ensure heritage remains accessible, relevant, sustainable and valued.

What we will do

Heritage at risk: We will commit funding to protect, conserve and revitalise heritage of all kinds that is in poor condition or at risk of loss, decline, damage, neglect or of being forgotten – ensuring it is valued and better understood.

Invest in places: Heritage has a unique role in bringing people together where they live, work and visit. We will increase people's connection with the heritage of their local places through targeted investment in our historic and natural environment.

Revitalise and maintain: We will invite proposals to work with us to develop the skills, capacity and innovation to sustain and manage heritage. We will identify opportunities for revitalising diverse types of heritage.

By 2033 we will have:

- Improved the condition, viability and public understanding of thousands of heritage sites, collections, habitats, species and intangible cultural heritage.
- Measurably reduced the amount of heritage identified as 'at risk', whether through loss, facing extinction, assessed as being in poor or unfavourable condition or at risk of being forgotten.
- Delivered long-term projects to transform local areas, towns, cities and landscapes by taking a targeted approach to improving the condition of heritage and the pride people take in their local environment.
- Ensured that the digital heritage resources we support are open, accessible and discoverable by future generations.

Investment principle 2

Protecting the environment

Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.

What we mean

We will support natural heritage and environmentally sustainable projects that help the UK meet its nature recovery targets and mitigate the impact of climate change on heritage.

What we will do

Landscape: We will increase our support for strategic and landscape-scale projects – both rural and urban – that help habitats and species thrive, reducing and mitigating the impacts of climate change, while helping people connect to our unique natural heritage.

Nature: We will invest through partnerships to help halt and reverse the loss and decline of habitats and species.

Environmental footprint: We will support heritage projects that reduce adverse environmental impacts and help heritage to adapt to our changing climate. If projects involve construction, we will encourage restoration, conservation and reuse, rather than new build.

Mitigation: We will collaborate to bring natural, built and cultural heritage stakeholders together to identify and mitigate climate risks to heritage and involve people in bringing about positive behaviour change.

By 2033 we will have:

- Put landscapes and habitats in both urban and rural places into recovery, so they support abundant natural heritage and healthy natural systems.
- Increased people's understanding and connection with nature across towns, cities and the countryside.
- Reduced the negative environmental impact and carbon footprint of our funding portfolio.
- Improved the ability of natural and cultural heritage to plan for and adapt to a changing climate and helped projects take action for the environment.

Investment principle 3

Inclusion, access and participation

Supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.

What we mean

We will support organisations to ensure everyone has opportunities to learn, develop new skills and explore heritage, regardless of background or personal circumstances.

What we will do

Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage, investing in volunteering, heritage careers, co-creating projects, leadership, governance and developing knowledge and skills.

Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation, particularly for people who are under-served by heritage.

Support all communities to explore and share their heritage, with a focus on making the stories of our four nations more inclusive of everyone's heritage.

Accessible digital heritage resources: Support greater use of digital technology to make heritage more accessible and enjoyable, and promote better access to heritage information, enabling projects to increase impact and reach.

By 2033 we will have:

- Increased the diversity of heritage workforces, leadership and audiences.
- Addressed the barriers to access for people under-served by heritage, providing more equitable opportunities for active involvement and participation.
- Enriched people's lives through our investment, enabling everyone's heritage to be recognised.
- Supported people to creatively use digital technology in heritage to promote access and reach.

Investment principle 4

Organisational sustainability

Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

What we mean

We will support organisations to develop the skills and capacity to ensure a sound long-term future and encourage new heritage investment that benefits communities and economies.

What we will do

Support financial sustainability: We will continue to offer funding to build resilience, providing organisations with capacity and expertise to develop their long-term organisational and financial plans.

Support heritage skills development: We will collaborate with partners to identify opportunities to build capacity, skills and expertise in heritage, to contribute to thriving communities and economies.

Provide flexible funding: We will offer flexible financial support in the early planning stages of projects for preparatory analysis and activities. We will also make available follow-on funding for time-limited periods on completion of significant capital projects to help embed operational stability.

New finance and investment: We will champion the use of more diverse income sources such as green finance and commercial approaches and help build the capacity and skills needed to deliver this.

By 2033 we will have:

- Supported organisations to increase their financial and organisational sustainability by developing their commercial and digital skills and strengthening governance and leadership.
- Supported the development of skills and capacity in the heritage sector.
- Used our flexible funding model to embed resilience in the projects we fund.
- Enabled the heritage sector to strengthen its contribution to economies and local communities.

Our funding portfolio

Open, responsive, devolved

We will continue our current approach of offering open funding programmes – from small grants up to multi-million-pound projects – for all types of heritage.

Most funding decisions will continue to be delegated to our six area and nation committees and operational staff across the UK. This will enable differences in heritage character in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to benefit from local expertise.

Scale and reach

Our funding programmes have had a ceiling of £5million for over 20 years, which is limiting opportunities for some initiatives to come forward. From 2023, we will introduce a higher investment threshold of £10m to allow for larger-scale investment and will consider investing in projects above this threshold to support truly exceptional heritage projects across the UK. We will adapt our investment thresholds and approach through the 10-year strategy to respond to the needs and requirements of heritage.

Strategic interventions across the UK

We will also introduce new strategic funding streams with the aim of:

- Proactively tackling long-standing heritage issues at a large scale.
- Supporting projects that boost pride in place and connection to heritage.
- Strengthening our focus on heritage at the heart of places, nature and the environment.
- Enabling a coordinated cross-territory approach that will strengthen delivery.
- Allowing us to respond to emerging opportunities and emergencies at speed and at a national level.
- Supporting projects and addressing heritage gaps where proposals are not coming through into our open programmes.
- Accelerating new ideas and interventions where a deliberate approach is needed.

We will regularly review our strategic interventions through three-year delivery plans.

Early initiatives will include:

Place

We will target place-based investment that boosts pride in place and connects communities and visitors with heritage. Drawing on national indicators, combined with local intelligence about the need, opportunity and potential for heritage, we will invest at least £200m over the life of this strategy. We will boost the capacity of local places and communities to develop partnerships and seek out areas that have the potential to draw in and benefit from wider investment.

Landscape and nature

We will support large-scale projects that revive landscapes, support nature recovery and enhance connectivity for people and wildlife. We will work with partners including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, conservation organisations, communities and landowners to put entire landscapes and habitats into recovery so they support abundant natural heritage, rich cultural heritage and healthy natural systems. We will invest across rural, suburban and urban areas to enhance landscape character by funding new approaches, sustainable activities and capital improvements.

Heritage in need

We will take an evidence-based approach to identifying gaps in support to the heritage sector, particularly where there is heritage at risk and in need of conservation – for example places of worship or industrial heritage. We will provide targeted support to build capacity, develop approaches to project planning and diversify income streams to help build a future project pipeline.

Acquisitions, opportunities and emergencies

We will ensure we can respond swiftly and act when necessary to respond to unique situations and opportunities. This could mean supporting acquisitions of exceptional heritage, marking significant events or supporting heritage areas and organisations dealing with an unforeseen emergency. We will work flexibly when the heritage sector needs to come together to secure the future of the most important heritage of all types for future generations.