Future Heritage Leadership programme recruitment pack

05/11/2025

See all updates

Are you 18-30 years old and passionate about heritage? Get paid to gain heritage sector experience and help us ensure our funding reflects the diversity and perspectives of the communities we serve.

Attachment	Size
PDF View Future Heritage Leadership Programme overview as PDF(1.12 MB)	1.12 MB
PDF View Rhaglen Arweinyddiaeth Treftadaeth y Dyfodol as PDF(1.16 MB)	1.16 MB

Role description

Role title: Future Heritage Leader

Location: multiple (England London & South, Midlands & East and North, and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Number of roles: 12 (two per area/nation)

Length of role: 18 months

Pay: £200 per committee meeting attendance, plus travel, accommodation and food expenses

Start date: 1 March 2026, plus one induction day in February 2026

Time commitment: 12 days over 18 months, including:

- 3 days of induction and training (including coaching sessions)
- 6 committee meetings (held every three months)
- 1 Board meeting
- 2 project visits
- Board Boost training workshops (September–November 2026), delivered by the Young Trustees Movement
- meeting preparation, such as reading committee papers in advance

Application deadline: 10 December 2025 at 11:59pm

Apply for the Future Heritage Leadership programme via our recruitment portal.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

We are the largest funder for the UK’s heritage. Since 1994, we’ve awarded over £9.5billion to projects that protect and celebrate the UK’s rich and diverse heritage, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

Heritage is anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations – from historic buildings, our industrial legacy and the natural environment, to museums, collections, traditions, stories and more. 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. Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.

One of the core themes of our 10-year strategy, Heritage 2033, is inclusion, access and participation. We want to ensure everyone has opportunities to learn, develop new skills and explore heritage. We can do that by increasing the diversity of heritage workforces and leadership and providing more equitable opportunities for active involvement and participation.

About the Future Heritage Leadership programme

It's an opportunity for people aged 18–30 to gain meaningful experience in heritage funding and governance processes by shadowing our committees.

The programme is designed to empower the next generation of heritage leaders, to help you get your foot in the door and kickstart your career. You will get experience in decision making and grant giving, insight into how a UK-wide funder operates, contribute to the delivery of our strategy and help shape the future of the heritage sector.

Over 18 months, you'll actively participate in our committee meetings, taking part in discussions and supporting collaborative decision-making. These meetings are where funding applications are reviewed and decisions are made about which heritage projects we'll invest in. While you won't hold voting rights or be legally responsible for any decisions made, your fresh voice and perspectives will be valued in shaping outcomes. You'll also observe one of our Board of Trustees meetings.

You don't need any previous experience on boards or committees. We'll provide you with a comprehensive induction and training workshops, and you'll be supported throughout by a buddy and a welcoming group of peers. If you're curious, passionate about heritage and want to make a positive impact while building valuable career skills and confidence, we'd love to hear from you.

Am I eligible?

If you can answer yes to all these questions, you're eligible to apply to be a Future Heritage Leader:

- Are you **18–30 years old** at the time of application?
- Do you **have little or no experience** on boards or committees?
- Do you **understand and support diversity and inclusion**, especially the challenges faced by young people and under-served groups?
- Are you **available to attend** committee meetings, observe a Board meeting and take part in training and peer support sessions over 18 months?

What will I do?

As a Future Heritage Leader shadowing one of our committees, you will:

- **attend six committee meetings**, actively take part in discussions and learn how decisions are made

- **read and reflect on committee papers** supplied before each meeting so you can meaningfully contribute (with support from your buddy – a member of the committee)
- **share your views** about heritage project applications and gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by the sector
- **attend one Board meeting** to see how strategic decisions are made at the highest level
- **visits two heritage projects** to see how funding decisions impact people and places
- **join training and development sessions** to build your understanding of governance processes and develop your personal and professional skills.

What will I gain?

As a Future Heritage Leader, you will:

- **get paid** £200 per committee meeting and coaching session attended, plus travel, accommodation and food expenses
- **gain knowledge** of heritage governance and the key factors influencing heritage policy and decision-making
- **build confidence and leadership skills** by playing an active role in discussions and grant-making
- **receive coaching** to support your development, grow your skills and make the most of the 18-month programme
- **attend Young Trustees Movement Board Boost training workshops** between September and November 2026
- **build connections in the heritage sector** through your buddy, other committee members and heritage leaders
- **receive dedicated support** from your buddy, who will help you understand the area your committee covers, how committees work and answer questions about committee papers
- **join a network** of like-minded future leaders committed to creating a diverse and inclusive heritage sector

Person specification

We're looking for Future Heritage Leaders who are:

- **passionate about your area or nation's heritage** (demonstrated through volunteering, study or personal interest), have an understanding of the value of heritage and its impact on people and places
- **curious and willing to learn**, proactive, want to understand how decisions are made in the heritage sector and grow your skills (no previous experience necessary)
- **good communicators**, comfortable listening actively, asking thoughtful questions and engaging meaningfully in group discussions
- **analytical**, able to review written information thoughtfully, reflect on different perspectives and weigh up information to form opinions
- **team players**, enjoy working with others, sharing ideas and supporting peers in a collaborative environment
- **resilient**, able to learn from challenges, adapt to situations and problem-solve
- **aligned with our** values **and** investment principles
- **committed to equality, diversity and inclusion**, recognise the importance of diverse voices in decision-making and can contribute to creating inclusive spaces

Recruitment process

1. **Applications**: submit a CV and cover letter **by 10 December 2025**.
2. **Shortlisting**: a panel made up of the Chair of our Board of Trustees, the Executive Director of Business Delivery and a Windsor Fellowship graduate trainee will review applications and shortlist candidates.
3. **Interviews**: shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview **between 12–16 January 2026**, in person where possible, however online interviews will be available as an alternative to ensure accessibility and flexibility for all candidates. Interviews will be conducted by a panel made up of your area or nation committee chairperson, the Executive Director of Business Delivery and a Windsor Fellowship graduate trainee.
4. **Appointments**: the interview panel will decide which candidates are appointed to the roles, which will **begin on 1 March 2026**. Your first committee shadowing opportunity will be between 3–12 March 2026, depending on your area or nation.

How to apply

Submit your CV and cover letter through our online recruitment portal by **10 December 2025 at 11:59pm**.

Please refer to our application guidance and questions and answers (below) to help you submit a strong application.

We are committed to ensuring that our recruitment processes are inclusive and accessible and we actively encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds and under-served communities to apply.

If you need to apply in a different format, require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the process or have any questions about applying, please email us: decisionmakers@heritagefund.org.uk.

Apply for the Future Heritage Leadership programme via our recruitment portal.

Future Heritage Leadership programme in detail

Pre-appointment phase (up to 1 March 2026):

- **Group induction** (in person): introduction to your fellow Future Heritage Leaders, learn about how the Heritage Fund and our committees work and set expectations for the 18-month programme **(1 day)**.
- **Local induction**: led by your local area or nation team.
- **Buddy one-to-one meeting**: introduction to committee structure and papers.
- **Committee shadowing**: March meeting **(1 day)**.

Quarter 1: April–June 2026:

- **Virtual overview**: Business Delivery department and grant application cycle.
- **Virtual overview**: Heritage 2033 strategic initiatives.
- **Project visit**: led by local team **(1 day)**.
- **Buddy one-to-one meeting**: preparation for committee meeting and papers.
- **Committee participation**: June meeting **(1 day)**.
- **Action learning set (ALS) peer coaching session 1** (online): led by the Heritage Fund's Director of England, London & South and Workforce Development Manager **(1/2 day)**.
- **End-of-quarter questionnaire**: reflections and support needs.

Quarter 2: July–September 2026:

- **Buddy one-to-one meeting**: continued development and committee preparation.
- **Committee participation**: September meeting **(1 day)**.
- **End-of-quarter questionnaire**: reflections and support needs.
- **External Board Boost training workshop**.

Quarter 3: October–December 2026:

- **ALS peer coaching session 2** (online): led by the Heritage Fund's Director of England, London & South and Workforce Development Manager **(1/2 day)**.
- **Project visit:** led by local team **(1 day)**.
- **Buddy one-to-one meeting**: preparation for committee meeting and papers.
- **External Board Boost training workshop.**
- **Committee participation**: December meeting **(1 day)**.
- **End-of-quarter questionnaire**: reflections and support needs.

Quarter 4: January–March 2027:

- **Mid-point review**: buddy one-to-one meeting.
- **ALS peer coaching session 3** (online): led by the Heritage Fund's Director of England, London & South and Workforce Development Manager **(1/2 day)**.
- **Buddy one-to-one meeting**: preparation for committee meeting and papers.
- **Committee participation**: March meeting **(1 day)**.
- **End-of-quarter questionnaire**: reflections and support needs.

Quarter 5: April–June 2027:

- **Group discussion**: reflect on first year and share feedback to inform future programmes.
- **Committee and Board participation**: June meeting **(2 days)**.
- **End-of-quarter questionnaire, evaluation and feedback**: reflections and support needs.

Quarter 6: July–September 2027:

- **ALS peer coaching session 4** (online): led by the Heritage Fund's Director of England, London & South and Workforce Development Manager **(1/2 day)**.
- **Buddy one-to-one meeting**: final reflections.
- **Celebration and recognition**: sharing experiences and reflections via our communications channels, LinkedIn endorsements and reference letters.
- **Final evaluation questionnaire**.

Additional opportunities (TBC):

- As a result of interests and needs identified in peer coaching sessions and one-to-one meetings with your buddy, there may be opportunities for Future Heritage Leaders to attend staff knowledge briefings and heritage project events to further support your learning and development and experience the impact of our funding.

Application guidance

All potential applicants should read this recruitment pack carefully.

Please pay special attention to the **person specification** section. We will use these criteria to assess whether you have the skills and qualities to undertake the role, both at shortlisting and interview stages.

Cover letter

As part of your application, you'll be asked to submit a cover letter that answers the question: Why are you interested in participating in the Future Heritage Leadership programme and how do your skills, experiences or perspectives align with the role and the aims of the programme?

Your cover letter should **answer this question** and **demonstrate how you meet the person specification** in the role description. We recommend using clear, specific examples to show how you meet the criteria.

We welcome **examples from any area of your life.** This can come from paid work, volunteering, academic studies or personal experiences. You don't need to have worked in heritage or governance before. We're looking for potential, passion and a willingness to learn.

You don't need to follow a strict format, but we encourage you to reflect on your motivations and interests, what heritage means to you and what you hope to learn or contribute. We're looking for thoughtful and authentic responses.

If you're invited to interview, we'll send you the questions in advance along with additional guidance to help you prepare.

Key dates

Please make sure you're available for the interview period (12–16 January 2026) and the programme's core activities (March 2026 – September 2027), as set out above.

If you have any concerns about availability, please email us: decisionmakers@heritagefund.org.uk.

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting panel will assess how closely your application meets the criteria for the role and each application will be scored against the role description and specifications. The panel will use scores to shortlist candidates they wish to interview. Interviews will be held in person where possible, however online interviews will be available as an alternative to ensure accessibility and flexibility for all candidates.

Apply for the Future Heritage Leadership programme via our recruitment portal.

Answers to further questions you might have

*??*What happens in a committee meeting?

We have six area and nation committees: one for each English area (London & South, Midlands & East and North), and one each for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each committee has up to 10 members who meet four times a year,

usually in June, September, November or December and March.

At these meetings, members review and discuss funding applications. Committees make decisions on heritage project grants between £250,000 and £5million. They also recommend funding priorities to our Board, providing crucial local knowledge and insight.

Before each meeting, our Investment teams assess funding applications and prepare ‘case papers’ that explain each heritage project. During the meeting, Investment teams present the applications and committees discuss and decide whether to approve or reject the grant requests.

As a Future Heritage Leader, you will receive the same papers and guidance as committee members, including how to handle confidential or sensitive information.

Following discussions, committees vote on applications using the options: high, medium, low or reject. The final funding decisions are based on these votes.

While you won’t hold voting rights or bear legal responsibility for any decisions made, your fresh voice and perspectives will be valued and influential in shaping outcomes.

How long are committee meetings?

Meetings usually last a full day, including time for discussion, decision making and breaks including lunch.

What is the meeting etiquette?

Committee meetings are professional but welcoming environments. While there is a formal structure to how meetings are run – including agendas, presentations and voting – the atmosphere is collaborative and respectful. More specifically:

- **Dress code** is smart casual. This is more relaxed than a formal suit or skirt suit, but dressier than jeans and trainers. If you're unsure, check in with your buddy ahead of the meeting.
- Committee discussions and papers are **confidential**. You’ll be briefed on what this means and how to handle sensitive information.
- **Participate actively** in discussions by sharing your perspectives. Your voice is valued equally alongside all other members.
- **Be punctual –** arrive on time, whether attending in person or virtually.
- If joining remotely, **check your tech setup is working** before the meeting and we ask that you keep your camera on during the meeting.

Where do committee meetings take place?

Our six areas and nations include a range of locations and meeting venues may vary.

For example, the London & South area includes Greater London, the South East and the South West of England. Midlands & East covers the East Midlands, West Midlands and the East of England.

We always run hybrid meetings for those who can’t attend in person.

You may need to travel and stay overnight for meetings, but all travel and accommodation costs will be covered in full by the Heritage Fund.

Explore more about the areas and nations we support, including a map of how they're divided.

Can I choose which committee I shadow?

No, placements are based on your location and connection to your area or nation. Committee members must live in the area and have a strong understanding of the local context to effectively support decision-making. Shadowing your local committee ensures the experience is useful and meaningful for you and the committee.

Will I be reimbursed for travel expenses?

Yes, we will cover all travel, accommodation and food expenses, in line with our expenses policy. Local teams will support you with booking travel and accommodation to make the process as smooth as possible.

Am I expected to actively participate in meetings straight away?

No, this programme is all about learning and development, so we don't expect you to actively participate from day one. You will observe/shadow your first committee meeting in March, where you can ask questions and get a feel for how things work. If you feel confident and would like to contribute during the March meeting, you're very welcome to, but there is absolutely no expectation.

Our aim is that you gain knowledge, confidence and leadership throughout the programme and actively participate in meetings when you feel ready. We don't expect you to know everything and we will support you with training and coaching.

What support will I receive during the programme?

You will be supported by a buddy (a member of your area or nation committee) and a separate Heritage Fund staff member.

You will have online one-to-one meetings with your buddy, who will help you understand committee papers, the structure of committee meetings and answer any questions before and after each meeting. Your staff contact will provide practical support, such as around attending meetings and events, submitting expense claims and be another person you can ask questions of.

You'll join four action learning set (ALS) coaching sessions delivered by the Heritage Fund. These online group sessions will allow you to explore any challenges in a supportive environment. The sessions' aims will be defined by you and the other Future Heritage Leaders and tailored to your group's specific learning and professional development goals. Each session will last 60–90 minutes.

This coaching approach has been designed to empower you to take ownership of your challenges while benefiting from the insight and support of your peers. It will foster trust, build confidence and enhance personal resilience.

What other training will I receive during the programme?

You will take part in a full induction to help you understand the Heritage Fund (including how committees work, our strategic priorities and decision-making processes) and your role.

Virtual Board Boost training workshops, aligned with learning objectives, will take place between September and November 2026. This is an external training opportunity delivered by the Young Trustees Movement. Further details will be shared following your appointment. This part of the programme is unpaid, but we cover the cost for you to receive this training package.

You'll also have opportunities to visits heritage projects in your local area to deepen your understanding of how our funding is used and the positive benefits it has for people and places. These visits are designed to enhance your learning and development alongside the broader coaching and peer learning throughout the programme.

Committee meeting dates

England, London & South:

- Thursday 5 March 2026
- Thursday 11 June 2026
- Thursday 10 September 2026
- Thursday 26 November 2026
- Thursday 4 March 2027
- June 2027 TBC
- September 2027 TBC
- Board meeting shadow date TBC

England, Midlands & East:

- Wednesday 4 March 2026
- Wednesday 17 June 2026
- Wednesday 16 September 2026
- Wednesday 2 December 2026
- Wednesday 10 March 2027
- June 2027 TBC
- September 2027 TBC
- Board meeting shadow date TBC

England, North:

- Thursday 12 March 2026
- Thursday 18 June 2026
- Tuesday 8 September 2026
- Thursday 3 December 2026
- Thursday 11 March 2027
- June 2027 TBC
- September 2027 TBC
- Board meeting shadow date TBC

Scotland:

- Tuesday 10 March 2026
- Tuesday 16 June 2026
- Tuesday 15 September 2026
- Tuesday 1 December 2026
- Tuesday 9 March 2027
- June 2027 TBC
- September 2027 TBC
- Board meeting shadow date TBC

Wales:

- Wednesday 11 March 2026
- Wednesday 10 June 2026
- Wednesday 9 September 2026
- Wednesday 25 November 2026
- Wednesday 3 March 2027
- June 2027 TBC
- September 2027 TBC
- Board meeting shadow date TBC

Northern Ireland:

- Tuesday 3 March 2026
- Tuesday 9 June 2026
- Thursday 17 September 2026
- Tuesday 24 November 2026
- Tuesday 2 March 2027
- June 2027 TBC
- September 2027 TBC
- Board meeting shadow date TBC

What other in-person visits are required?

Site visits are often arranged to explore projects you'll be discussing at upcoming committee meetings. These visits will give you a better understanding of the teams involved and what the projects aim to achieve, and can help you feel more confident and informed.

Will I receive feedback or a certificate at the end of the programme?

You will receive a certificate celebrating your participation in the Future Heritage Leadership programme and recognition on LinkedIn, helping you showcase your achievements and development and use the experience you gain in future job applications.

Can I participate if I have a full-time job?

Yes. Most of the key dates for the programme are listed above, and we'll give you as much advance notice as possible of those still TBC, so you know what to expect, can plan ahead and fully commit to the full 18-month term of the programme.

Is there an opportunity to join a committee in the future?

Yes, committee vacancies are advertised widely and anyone is welcome to apply. While joining a committee after the programme isn't guaranteed, your experience will give you valuable insight and skills that will support your application.

What happens if I need to withdraw from the programme?

We expect participants to commit to the full 18-month term. We've provided as much detail and specific dates as possible in this recruitment pack so you know what's expected from the beginning. However, we recognise that circumstances can change. If you need to withdraw from the programme, we ask that you have a conversation with your area or nation committee chairperson as soon as possible to discuss next steps.

Apply for the Future Heritage Leadership programme via our recruitment portal.