

# Have your say on the future of UK heritage

Welcome to our online survey to give us your feedback on the Heritage Fund's strategy refresh. We welcome your views on both current and future issues for UK heritage and how we should respond to these through our new 10-year strategy.

This online survey has five short sections:

- about you and your organisation
- UK heritage and Heritage Fund support
- the Heritage Fund's objectives and outcomes
- priorities including place investment, approaches to funding, partnerships and our approach to environmental sustainability
- workshop invitation

We expect the survey to take around 30 minutes to complete.

Some of the questions refer to our current [Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024](#).

## 1. Before starting the survey, please let us know if you are sharing your own views or responding on behalf of your organisation? [select one] \*

- My own views
- **On behalf of organisation**

## 2. Where are you / your head office based? [select one]

- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- England: North East
- England: North West
- England: Yorkshire & the Humber
- England: West Midlands
- England: East Midlands
- England: East
- England: South East
- England: South West
- **England: London**
- outside of the UK

## About you and your organisation

This section of the form asks you for information about your organisation so that the Heritage Fund can understand who is responding to the survey.

### Already registered with us for UK Heritage Pulse?

UK Heritage Pulse is a collaborative research project which consults with heritage organisations on an ongoing basis. If you already provide regular feedback to us by participating in UK Heritage Pulse, we can use the information we already hold about your organisation. If you would like us to do this, please go straight to the next section and provide the email address you use for UK Heritage Pulse at the end of the form.

If you are not a member of UK Heritage Pulse, please tell us about you and your organisation.

**3. What is the name of your organisation?** **Historic England**

**4. What is your job title / role?** **Chief Executive**

**5. Where do you operate?** [select all that apply]

- **England**
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- overseas/global

**6. Which one of the following best describes the type of heritage you support or manage?** [select one]

- community Heritage
- **historic buildings and monuments**
- industrial, maritime and transport
- cultures and memories (intangible heritage)
- landscapes and nature
- collections (museums, libraries and archives)
- sector support (supply chain, advocacy, training)
- none of the above

**7. Do you support any other types of heritage as well?** [select all that apply]

- no
- **community heritage**
- historic buildings and monuments
- **industrial, maritime and transport**
- **cultures and memories (intangible heritage)**
- **landscapes and nature**
- **collections (museums, libraries and archives)**
- **sector support (supply chain, advocacy, training)**

**8. How many employees work for your organisation?** [select one]

- sole trader
- 2 to 9
- 10 to 49
- 50 to 249
- **250+**

- don't know

## UK heritage and Heritage Fund support

**9. What are the top 2 or 3 changes to heritage you would want to see in 10 years' time? Please focus on the heritage that you are responsible for.\***

### 1. Partnership working

Historic England hopes NLHF's renewed vision will enable us to work more collaboratively, as recommended in our respective Tailored Reviews (NLHF 2017 and HE 2020). Together we offer the sector a strong combination of NLHF's experience as a funder and HE's expertise in developing skills, supporting innovative public engagement with heritage places and providing technical conservation advice. Partnership was important to our relationship between 1994 and 2010, when budget cuts forced EH (HE's former title) to stop funding the Repair Grants for Places of Worship Scheme, and our positive and robust collaboration, vital to achieving good outcomes and value for public money, reduced.

Our combined delivery of the Culture Recovery Fund has rekindled positive collaboration. Together we effectively addressed a problem, found shared solutions and, as equal partners, agreed a collaborative approach. The successful CRF delivery was based on honest appraisal of our organisations' respective skills and areas of expertise, capacity to deliver and willingness to work together to meet DCMS's demanding criteria for different but complementary programmes. HE would welcome further strategic partnerships with specific focus, particularly if NLHF identifies targeted grant programmes e.g. places of worship, parks and landscapes, skills, marine, industrial and response to climate change.

HE also wants to build on our partnership with NLHF on major projects, such as Shrewsbury Flaxmills, which would have been impossible without lottery support. At the other end of the scale, we are keen to take our learning from High Street Heritage Action Zones to partner with other small, community-based investments building capacity and enjoyment of heritage, making it more sustainable, resilient and able to withstand climate change. Our partnership with NLHF on the HSHAZ cultural programme has made it the largest ever community-led cultural programme, helping local people rediscover pride in place and play a more active role in the future of that place. Participating local authorities have been able to build stronger cultural infrastructure supporting economic growth.

Both organisations have ambitions regarding inclusion and diversity, improving the condition of heritage so it is enjoyed by everyone in their communities, not just the already-interested audiences.

### 2. Targeted funding programmes for the benefit of people and places

HE hopes NLHF will continue to fund large, nationally significant sites at risk of loss alongside recognising that communities want more investment in their locally important but run-down heritage. We need to work with communities to understand what they need/want, co-operating to deliver valued local environments that are a focus of pride and identity; repaired, maintained and managed so social, economic and community life thrives.

Investment in local heritage would counter the increasing perception that NLHF has moved its focus from heritage sites, buildings and places to promoting short-term high-profile activities and 'attractions'. Often these last for the life of the project but do not achieve the sustainable long-term benefits for people and places that come from having heritage in good condition, serviceable for a wide range of community uses and long-term public benefit.

The UK faces challenging economic, social, health and climate-change issues, plus international pressures. The urgency of these critical times gives NLHF the opportunity to take radical action with its investment programme and to support the implementation of the Sector Resilience Plan Resourcing heritage to be well stewarded, properly adapted (e.g. climate and energy-efficient) and sustained by a skilled, confident and proud workforce, whether employed or volunteer, would be a massive contribution to the nation's resilience and sustainability and individual's wellbeing..

Resilience would be enhanced by:

- avoiding the dis-benefits of three-yearly funding cycles by offering longer-term support so learning and experience is thoroughly embedded
- focussing on weak skills pipelines e.g. dendrochronologists, or need to be nurtured e.g. consultants that understand contested heritage and can help communities engage with and articulate painful issues
- promoting knowledge exchange and data sharing to encourage a culture of evidence-led decision-making.

NLHF could use investment to improve the economic contribution of heritage as an employer; sponsoring more diverse and flexible opportunities for entry and progression, equipping the workforce to adapt in enterprising and entrepreneurial ways that reduce dependency on capital grants.

### 3. Simplification of the application process

The introduction of Expressions of Interest to simplify the first stage of NLHF application was good in principle but feedback suggests applicants still find reaching the initial application stage complex and expensive . Many could benefit from small project planning/development grants, to secure professional advice or feasibility studies to inform proposals. Such grants would reduce NLHF's administrative burden by improving the quality and articulation of applications. It would also encourage more diverse applications, demonstrating that NLHF is committed to helping communities that otherwise lack expertise, confidence and capacity.

NLHF also needs to address the criticism that the current NLHF framework has unrealistic expectations of applicants. This is especially significant in levelling-up areas, where capacity is limited, and among voluntary groups that manage and fund heritage for the benefit of their local community e.g. places of worship, public parks and former industrial sites.

Such places and projects require more support to develop good applications and ongoing handholding throughout project delivery and operation to strengthen the legacy of investment. NLHF might fund this but deliver through partners e.g. Historic England or Architectural Heritage Fund. Historic England would be pleased to explore how we can contribute so that NLHF's investment is fairly distributed and achieves sustained impact.

It would be a real achievement if by 2032, those who take responsibility for local heritage buildings, sites and places really enjoy the benefits of their role, making such opportunities attractive to a wide range of people, rather than being an overwhelming burden for a few. Heritage Railways seem to have developed a positive environment for both volunteers and visitors; perhaps offering a model for increasing satisfaction and well-being in the context of heritage benefits for all? HE hopes that NLHF will take this opportunity to raise the morale of those who step-up to care for heritage on behalf of the nation.

#### **10. What would you most like to change in relation to heritage in the next 3-5 years? Please focus on the heritage that you are responsible for.\***

Historic England (HE), NLHF and other bodies need to participate actively in cooperative working and collaboration across the sector so we co-design and deliver collaboratively to address agreed challenges. Currently we are regarded within the sector and beyond, as individual, sometimes competing, organisations whose roles are confusing to decision-makers and the public.

It would be good if we identified immediate priorities on which we could speak with one voice and shared responsibility e.g. climate change, energy efficiency, heritage-based regeneration, skill-building. That would give weight to the sector messaging and our total impact would be greater than the sum of our individual contributions. Longer term we could develop joined-up strategic partnership investment e.g. transforming places, or to support NLHF's targeted schemes.

Collaborative working, including using shared sector assessment models and metrics, would enable:

- better business planning and foresight skills to enhance financial resilience and enable planned prioritisation, increasing Government and sector confidence in our capacity to deliver and evidence-based decisions
- transparent evaluation of investments so that the case for heritage is strengthened and lessons are both learned and recognised, to create a basis for continuous improvement
- recognition of the public benefit and value of heritage, both fabric and landscape, in regeneration projects, as repositories of embodied carbon, in contributing to health, reducing isolation and building community cohesion

- effective demonstration of why financial resourcing is essential for the heritage sector, especially for small voluntary organisations and local heritage that offers public benefits but does not earn income
- greater digital access to resources, research and information so people are able to serve themselves and their communities more effectively

Given the pressures on Government funding and escalation of the cost of living the benefits of 'make do and mend' are clear but it is also important to understand that heritage is a vital part of creating, supporting and sustaining successful places and minimising our carbon footprint. People are very confused as to what steps they can take so clear sector-wide promotion of, and investment in, the maintenance of existing historic fabric would be a strong message in difficult times. Alongside this we recognise the need for new development, especially in relation to housing needs, once a proper assessment of options to reuse existing assets, to reduce waste and minimise carbon footprints alongside protecting, enhancing and sustaining historic fabric and character.

In terms of NLHF's investment in the next 3-5 years, it would help if this changed to include support of projects seeking to maintain existing community activities, rather than the current NLHF emphasis on new activities and greater numbers. Many small communities depend on low-key but vital social engagement made possible by volunteers using heritage buildings or green spaces, achieving great well-being and health benefits. The pandemic has damaged their financial and volunteer reserves, so funding to help them keep going or undertake necessary repairs and improvements that they simply cannot afford would be very valuable. This is a particular problem for groups with older demographics and/or in rural areas e.g. places of worship and industrial heritage sites operated by volunteers who previously were employed in that industry and whose skills, learnt as practitioners, are no longer endemic in the community.

Other, marginalised or overlooked communities, have strong connections to local places where they first lived, worked or gathered together and consider those to be part of their heritage. Such groups address specific needs that no national or local authority can provide but are essential for their particular local demographic. NLHF's reviewed vision could make it possible for essential repairs or alterations to be completed to allow the activities to continue at the heritage site, rather than requiring new and additional activities that the volunteer group simply cannot offer and for which there is no local requirement. This would be a major contribution to the sustaining of public benefit and enjoyment of heritage so that people and place continue to thrive.

## **11. How can the Heritage Fund play a role in those changes?\***

NLHF has a key role to play in effecting those changes:

1. Lead by example:
  - Invest in people as well as places, providing support and practical handholding working alongside inexperienced local groups to improve their

proposals, applications and longer-term resilience. Prioritise projects where NLHF is embedded with inclusive collaborations trying to create improvements that give wider benefits to audiences beyond those of the applicant organisation/s main priorities.

- If NLHF becomes more collaborative and participates in active partnership with other organisations in the sector, including HE, that will demonstrate a positive example of the inclusive approach NLHF expects to see from applicants
  - Historic England (HE) would like to suggest the development of new strategic partnerships and the continuation of existing ones, e.g. High Street Heritage Action Zones.
  - Use evaluation data in decision-making and place more emphasis on qualitative and quantitative monitoring to gain evidence of the long-term impact of funding. This will help shape the market for quality evaluation, setting higher standards and encouraging critical reflection.
  - Work with the sector to make 'heritage' better understood. Shared research and data would be a good starting point but there is also a need to an agreed definition of what 'heritage' is. Taking these steps would make a massive difference to the sector's effective communication with Government, other agencies and the public.
2. Provide clear messages about what NLHF offers and expects:
- NLHF has the opportunity to change the culture of funding for heritage and change behaviour by being more explicit about what it will and won't fund. For example, it could determine that it will not fund new development without independent evidence that reusing existing assets is absolutely not financially feasible. It could also insist on sourcing local products and labour wherever possible and ask for evidence of carbon-reducing commitments from applicants/contractors.
  - Show-case good practice in historic environment adaptation, retrofit and energy efficiency and net carbon zero measures
  - Target funds towards, and actively promote, initiatives that will achieve long-term change by increasing investment in maintenance, skills, diversity, financial and climate-change resilience, health, well-being, community cohesion and connection to the natural environment.
  - Clear audience-targeted messaging, more inclusive branding and engagement on social media setting out what is eligible for specific grant programmes and NLHF's expectations of applicants.
  - Greater proportionality in terms of what is achievable given that applicants' ability to meet outcomes and outputs will be variable depending on local resources, demographics and capacity of the applicant. Clarity about this would encourage many applicants who are currently unwilling to apply because they cannot meet specific inclusion and numerical targets.
3. Identify specific themes based on evidence of need
- Be flexible to enable NLHF to address regional variations of need within the historic environment e.g. areas of coastal erosion, river valley flooding, changes to the way wildlife interacts with heritage.
  - Support more digital infrastructure projects.

- Invest to address systematic challenges in the workforce e.g. the lack of resources and capacity to train new skilled work, make more people aware of the wide-ranging work opportunities and progression within the heritage sector.

**12. Beyond funding, what other support can the Heritage Fund provide that would achieve those changes? Examples include consultant support, sharing best practice across organisations, cohort learning and/or building partnerships with other funders.**

1. NLHF could actively support positive behaviours in the sector:
  - The examples identified in the question may not require additional funding in terms of grant provision but will nevertheless depend on some resourcing both from NLHF and partner organisations, so expectations have to be achievable and agreed.
  - Agree standards for evaluation with partners and adhere to them, so there is cumulative evidence across organisations to help make the case for continued investment in heritage. Greater synthesis of methodology and access to data sets between partners in the sector would be particularly helpful. HE is exploring innovative evaluation methods that might be mutually beneficial.
  - NLHF could liaise with other funding organisations to establish clear corporate behaviours shared by all parties, so that there would be better communication between them, if not a 'sector service standard'. This might make it easier for applicants applying to several bodies to access funding e.g. currently many funders expect applicants to have already raised 50% of the project costs before applying for a grant, which is a major barrier for many voluntary or low-capacity groups.
  
2. NLHF could initiate learning opportunities across the sector and reach out to expand knowledge sharing
  - As a partner NLHF could access appropriate expertise from across the sector, if it were more open to receiving input from other organisations. This is something HE would be pleased to discuss. There may be potential for leadership cohorts to come together across statutory and third sector bodies, securing a pipeline of future leaders e.g. ACE Clore Leadership Programme.
  - Share NLHF leadership and administrative skills with sector partners through work shadowing, coaching and mentoring programmes that would increase individual skills and liaison between organisations.
  - Provide training opportunities for the sector and a diverse range of communities e.g. facilitating for a discussion of major issues such as inclusion, climate change and well-being. This would be an important means of developing connections with young people and 'hard to reach' groups, allowing NLHF, HE and other organisations to learn from them as well as provide opportunities to share knowledge.
  - Create opportunities for peer to peer learning and support networks for people at different stages of engagement with the heritage sector, including those



that do not traditionally get involved with heritage or are engaging with it for the first time.

### **13. Tell us what you think about our existing priorities for heritage (landscape and nature, community heritage and heritage at risk) and our current funding approach as set out in our Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024?**

#### 1. Focus of the priorities and outcomes

- These priorities are very asset-focussed; it would be more helpful to think about themes and outcomes e.g. diversity, participation, skills, health, well-being, resilience, combatting climate change and increasing biodiversity.
- NLHF's approach to landscape and nature embraces both historic and cultural values as well as the role of the historic environment, where 'nature' has been managed for generations. Thus, it has a special role as a funder that can work with a broad definition of heritage and therefore take a holistic view of the public benefits of outcomes and outputs in each case. NLHF can therefore encourage projects to offer multiple benefits across a range of themes.
- HE is concerned that the proposed landscape and nature programme appears to be more restrictive, exclusive and narrow in its ambition and delivery, so is consequently less collaborative, efficient or sustainable than the predecessor Landscapes Partnership Programme. The latter was conditional upon the applicants demonstrating multiple benefits/outcomes across the historic and natural environments, not allowing them to focus on one to the exclusion of all others. It would be helpful to return to such an approach, particularly in light of the exclusion of heritage from the Environment Act.
- HE hopes that NLHF recognises the importance of water to heritage; it is a major element in both coastal and inland landscapes, designed parks and gardens.
- HE suggests that, running through all themes, NLHF needs to consider issues relating to managed loss of heritage through climate change, erosion, flooding and drought. These may have a major impact on our heritage in the next decade.

#### 2. Areas for greater clarification

- NLHF still retains a crucial and valued role as the funder of last resort for heritage. However, some recognition that an effective approach to Heritage at Risk incorporates prevention, as well as major intervention, would be welcome. As would acknowledgement that working in partnership with other funders and sector organisations can best deliver this approach.
- More clarification is needed around respective roles for heritage and its management, including tangible fabric, intangible significance, recording, conserving and managing. Clarity around NLHF's approach to these would help to avoid duplication and increase the sharing of knowledge and best practice across the sector.
- Whose heritage and what impact? Supporting a local community to rescue an unprepossessing town park may have huge impact on the every-day quality of life, pride in place and sense of belonging in that place. NLHF's great strength is its capacity to do both 'grand' projects and valuable but local schemes but the criteria for evaluation in each case need to be clear.

## Objectives and outcomes

14. In our current Strategic Funding Framework, we have six objectives and nine outcomes.

We propose to revise the wording of the six objectives to – Ensure:

- a better future for the UK's heritage
- heritage is a source of inspiration and enrichment
- heritage is for everyone
- heritage is valued, resilient and sustainable
- heritage enables people and places to thrive
- local economies are strengthened through heritage

Changes to the objectives may lead to subsequent changes in the nine outcomes.

**Do you broadly agree with the revised objectives?**

**Ensure better future for the UK's heritage**

- **strongly agree**
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

**Ensure heritage is a source of inspiration and enrichment**

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

**Ensure heritage is for everyone**

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

**Ensure heritage is valued, resilient and sustainable**

- **strongly agree**
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

**Ensure heritage enables people and places to thrive**

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

**Ensure local economies are strengthened through heritage**

- strongly agree
- **agree**
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

**Please explain your answer.**

If the Heritage Fund seeks to align more closely with Government levelling up priorities, resulting in more focus on pride in place and local repair leading to regeneration, Historic England is broadly supportive, but has some specific queries:

What definition of 'heritage' is being used in question 14? In questions 1-13 the term 'heritage' has been used to mean a set of activities in relation to inherited resources. This set of objectives, however, vacillates between heritage as things and heritage as activities. Some changes to the wording could make it consistent and therefore clearer to interpret.

How does NLHF's terminology relate to the Sector Resilience Plan's definition of heritage, which states that:

- heritage is a source of inspiration and enrichment
- heritage is for everyone
- heritage is valued, resilient and sustainable
- heritage enables people and places to thrive
- local economies are strengthened through heritage

Were NLHF to use this definition to underpin how it articulates its own objectives it would promote sector consistency and messaging.

Similarly, there is confusion regarding the use of the term 'local economies': does this really mean 'communities', intending to refer to a far broader set of outcomes, rather than exclusively simply financial?

HE appreciates that there may be a tension between the NLHF's obligation to lottery players in all localities and the desirability of using its funding and influence to address inequalities. However, wherever heritage activities are supported they can be achieved in ways that reduce inequality – social if not socio-spatial. Could the Fund commit broadly to reducing inequality through its strategy?

**What do you think is missing from these objectives?**

These objectives are not SMART and some of them seem to say similar things, but HE appreciates that these are high-level statements. HE shares NLHF's commitment to "heritage for everyone" but achieving this in relation to each objective will require sensitive prioritisation to make deliverability feasible in the timeframe. Which demographic groups, communities or audiences does NLHF regard as priorities if the benefits of heritage are to reach everyone?

Some public benefits are not mentioned at all, despite being supported by growing evidence e.g. the value of volunteering to individuals as well as organisations; the benefits of the parks, gardens and forests to mental health and well-being; the increasing recognition of heritage as part of social prescribing to address a number of challenges and build a range of competencies.

Historic England regrets that there is no explicit reference to supporting those who take care of heritage, in whatever form, or recognition of the need to build capacity, skills and diversity in both professional and volunteer workforces. Much of our heritage is utterly dependent on the goodwill and generosity of people who are desperate that heritage is 'not lost on my watch' but their morale has been damaged by the pandemic and the sector needs to invest in them and their successors to secure the future of heritage. NLHF could make a big difference to capacity and recognition of achievement, thereby inspiring more people to get involved and take action for heritage.

There is no specific objective about nature recovery or quality of the environment, despite this being a major Government priority.

NLHF and the whole heritage sector needs to engage with development of 'adaptive release' approaches. In some cases, the 'best' future for heritage might not involve its physical survival. This is especially true of some heritage at risk from climate change (e.g. coastal erosion) or other 'natural' processes that we may be able to slow at large expense, but not halt.

## Priorities

### Place

**15. We expect to be doing more to prioritise and invest in places that have a greater need, opportunity and/or potential for heritage. What information should help us shape that emphasis? Select the three that are most important to you. [Select 3]**

- heritage needs
- social and economic needs
- opportunities for the Heritage Fund to align with other funders and partners
- the potential of heritage in an area
- readiness of a place for partnership and investment (for example: existing delivery networks, stakeholders, etc)

- low levels of engagement with heritage, especially among under-served groups
- other (please state)

Historic England notes that the approach to prioritisation set out by NLHF echoes the Arts Council's prioritisation methodology.

HE agrees that funding needs to flow to places where there is greatest need due to lack of social infrastructure, knowledge, or capacity to take up the opportunities that the NLHF and other potential partners offer. Historic England is aware that many groups with potentially good projects are currently unwilling [corrected from 'willing'] to apply for NLHF grants because the process is felt to be too daunting and the required outcomes unrealistic. There are also communities and organisations that are so under-resourced they are unaware that they could be eligible for NLHF grants and these need proactive investment in developing their capacity and confidence to even reach the point of completing an EOI. Such places and people need time and handholding support to build up from a very low base: in this context three-year funding cycles may not be appropriate.

Adopting a place-based approach is likely to increase access to a wider range of communities and individuals than focussing on specific sites but the priorities still require definition: to which 'under-served groups' is NLHF referring or seeking to prioritise? Depending on the group different issues will be raised, including cultural and language barriers. In some situations, especially for migrant or refugee communities, gaining the confidence local leaders will be made more difficult because of NLHF's link to Government as an ALB. Partnership working with trusted local agencies to build relationships will often require a considerable pre-application investment of NLHF resources. Grants may need to provide buddying/mentoring schemes to support under-served groups through both application and delivery stages of projects.

HE also has a particular concern about the implications of 'greater need, opportunity and/or potential in relation to marine heritage and other types of heritage that lack an immediate constituency because they are hard to access or invisible. In the case of marine heritage its location on the seabed requires specialist and expensive access arrangements. Such heritage is no less significant for being out of sight, so it is important that NLHF's emphasis on 'greater' does not introduce barriers for important heritage where demonstrating 'greater' may be problematic. That said, the reach of distant and physically hard to access heritage is being increased by digital access: this may seem less obvious, but HE encourages NLHF to build the evidence-base in such situations.

The social and economic priority is important, but will that be defined in terms of the Government's Levelling Up programme or other criteria set by NLHF? Great clarity will be needed to ensure that only eligible applications are made, to avoid NLHF stimulating huge interest and a considerable administrative burden.

NLHF may also wish to include prioritising areas or places that are particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, whether under a specific themed programme or as an element of assessment throughout its funding.

## Approaches to funding

16. We currently deliver the majority of our funding through our open programmes, National Lottery Grants for Heritage. Looking ahead, we are planning to make larger scale investments and direct some funding to issues or types of heritage where there is a strategic need.

**Do you agree we should invest at a larger scale (over £5million) where our investment will have a greater impact?**

- **yes**
- no
- don't know

**Do you agree we should direct more of our funding to specific issues or types of projects in line with specific strategic need?**

- **yes**
- no
- don't know

**What issues or types of projects, if any, do you see as needing dedicated or targeted funding?**

Specific proposals

1. NLHF's role as a major investor in large scale projects is critical. Historic England gives qualified support to NLHF's proposal to continue such investments, as we recognise the importance of NLHF grants for Heritage at Risk projects such as the Piece Hall, Halifax, and Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, where NLHF investment has been both essential and transformational. We appreciate that NLHF has the capacity to fund at this scale and welcome the partnership support that it offers.

However, we would like to see some rebalancing/refocusing of major grants towards repairing and adapting heritage assets for the contribution they make to their local place rather than the past focus on museum development projects that constitute the majority of past NLHF major project investment. Some of those museum projects have proven to be unsustainable, and a surprising proportion of major funding was awarded to national museums in London or other UK cities where, arguably, existing local museums had far greater need for NLHF funding than these new regional centres for national institutions.

2. Local area projects are very effective. HE suggests that NLHF invests in a new round of High Street Heritage Acton Zones (HSHAZ) in partnership with HE, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other sources, supporting the entire project, not only the Cultural Programme element. This will build on the evidence of the current HSHAZ projects' huge impact on people and places;,,

delivering very good value in terms of engagement with heritage, capacity building, improvement to historic fabric and economic regeneration of high streets. HSHAZs are clearly targeted, using socio-economic indicators to identify places where communities could grasp opportunities to co-produce projects to improve the quality of cultural and natural heritage where they live.

3. Some specific types of heritage need urgent help, HE strongly encourages NLHF to introduce focussed grant streams, with appropriately tailored outcome/output requirements, for types of heritage that were made more vulnerable when NLHF lost specialist interest personnel and funding programmes, e.g. the industrial, transport and maritime groups, places of worship and parks and landscapes. There may be opportunities to create new partnerships to resource these e.g. the Parks Fund.
4. To build resilience and sustainability capacity building is vital. NLHF is well aware of the vulnerability of many current applicants and their dependency on NLHF's staff to navigate application processes. There is a strategic need for capacity building; such seeding heritage infrastructure needs prolonged, small-scale support but would invigorate the sector and help to widen the distribution of high-quality applications from more inclusive and diverse project teams.

In some instances, NLHF may be able to use its oversight of a broad range of projects to encouraging mentoring and skill development between such groups through collaboration with much larger NLHF projects. This may also be a useful approach in building capacity in specialist small enterprises, that have limited resources to invest in developing craft or other skills but, with short term investment, such as an apprenticeship bursary, could be a long-term asset to both heritage and the economy

5. Capacity building is also needed by volunteer groups, especially those caring for specialist assets. Investment is needed to achieve recovery from the pandemic, which not only reduced the number of volunteers but also caused a 'three winters' effect of lost engagement and fundraising opportunities.

Targeted capacity building would recognise the specific heritage context and characteristics of those groups e.g. industrial, maritime, places of worship, inspiring more people to get involved. There are particular technical and operational issues (training steam train drivers, deep water divers and the maintenance of unique buildings) alongside general issues; fund-raising, marketing, technical and operational expertise, digital confidence, succession planning.

6. Adaptation of heritage to serve new purposes is a crucial issue for the sector that would benefit from targeted funding and NLHF's engagement in cross-agency co-operation. Many heritage assets are at risk but have potential, if the conservation deficit can be addressed, to be transformed into places that make a strong creative, social and economic contribution to their locality. Industrial heritage and its conversion to provide housing is one example but

there are other sites and assets that could, with capital investment, enrich communities with educational, cultural and well-being facilities.

7. Interpretation of heritage is an increasing worry for many organisations. The growing awareness of contested heritage and of the need to tell the stories of groups that have not previously been articulated is increasing. This is a very specialised area of engagement; even major heritage organisations find it hard to strike the right note and engage with appropriate interested groups. NLHF may wish to work with sector and academic partners to build expertise in this area as it is likely to be a theme running through many projects that will be funded in the next decade. Linked to this, communities need increased skills in sharing their stories digitally and equally across the population.

#### General points

8. Whatever the project size or focus there must be demonstrable heritage need relating to the quality of the heritage, its condition and value to the community but there is no point investing in an asset or place where no impact will ever be possible. Equally, there will be small projects where relatively little funding will have a disproportionately large outcome. What matters is that NLHF is very clear about what it will fund and the eligibility criteria. It is important that, wherever funding is invested, it is focussed on growing resilience, not propping up organisations that cannot survive.
9. The types of project that have greatest impact depend upon the evaluation criteria used in each case. What does evaluation evidence to date show - is this the most cost-effective approach? Does NLHF have mechanisms in place that can estimate the impact of scale and types/issue? If not, can gathering such data be an evaluation priority in the future, so this decision is based on the evidence NLHF collates? Is it possible, through partnership working, to develop better evaluation and joint research to improve learning and evidence-based advocacy across the sector?

**17. The cost of living crisis and rising inflation are resulting in increased costs for many heritage projects. Thinking about what would most benefit the heritage you support, what balance should we strike between investing in existing funded projects and supporting new projects over the next three years?**

- keep the balance as it is currently
- re-balance to increase support for existing projects
- re-balance to increase investment in new projects
- **none of the above (please specify below)**
- don't know

**Please provide any comments you want to add to your response above.**

It is hard to predict, even in the short term, what will happen in the face of significant pressures and challenges e.g. climate change, recession, international unrest, so



taking binding decisions now could be mistaken. The Heritage Fund demonstrated its ability to respond flexibly during the Covid-19 pandemic so is in a strong position to keep options open, providing freedom to respond creatively to developments in the next decade. This could, ironically, mean that NLHF has more money to distribute if, as has happened in the past, recession means more people play the lottery.

However, flexibility needs to be set against the desirability of a clear and stable framework that enables forward planning by prospective applicants. Existing recipients need to know that NLHF will help and support them. Future applicants must be given confidence that, if they submit a successful application, NLHF will see the project through.

This carries risks for NLHF, especially if it decides to opt for sympathetic flexibility to protect current investment commitments. Reassuring grant recipients that value-engineering may be necessary if increased costs mean projects cannot be delivered as first agreed, will give security to applicants but may jeopardise some of the benefits that secured the funds in the first place.

Careful monitoring of existing projects and realistic funding terms and levels to new ones may be a prudent way forward. In particular, as fewer people have enough income to pay for leisure activities, there is a risk that many heritage sites operating as visitor attractions will struggle, making new investments on this front imprudent. Cost of living considerations may mean it would be preferable for NLHF to focus on enhancing local heritage that gives people pleasure everyday e.g. high streets, parks, landscapes and places of worship.

NLHF will also have to take on board new threats to the historic environment caused by climate change. This includes the incursion of pests and diseases that have not previously survived in the UK but may increasingly damage heritage fabric, collections and archives, and attack the natural environment e.g. trees and native plants. These could have major impacts on the resilience of previously supported sites, places, landscapes and gardens and increase the risks for new projects.

Sudden storms and other climate-related events may also increase the number of assets, sites and places that are put at risk of loss unless emergency funding is made available to stabilise their condition. This will raise hard questions for NLHF and the whole sector about resourcing urgent recording and the management of loss.

## **Partnerships**

18. We are looking to deliver our objectives both through our existing investment mechanisms (Lottery funding and Grant in Aid) and, where appropriate, through more partnership work with other organisations.

## **How do you think the Heritage Fund will need to change about how we work to shift from grant giver to partner?**

The Heritage Sector Resilience Plan 2022-24 makes it clear that the sector needs to work together if it is to play a full part in helping the UK deal with the major challenges of our time. It identifies skills, strong governance, climate change, diversity and inclusion and the need to embed heritage in wider public policy as key themes and priorities for action. This is closely allied to NLHF's objectives and should therefore be a strong basis for developing partnership relationships.

Proactive cooperation and communication are key for successful partnerships. All involved need time to: identify areas of potential collaboration; understand the needs and opportunities; align interests, objectives and planning /delivery cycles; commit the necessary resources to ensure positive outcomes. Mutual respect and clear public messaging about the partnership is essential.

Resourcing is a serious consideration for all partners, even where grant funding itself is not involved. In addition to strategic commitment partnership working demands ongoing investment at project level to build and maintain effectiveness. This is important whether working with sector colleagues, such as HE, or organisations outside the existing heritage establishment. It means that staff need to be available to attend project meetings, provide handholding support where necessary and become genuinely involved in delivery, which is not something NLHF has been able to do recently. The current model of delegating responsibilities to external consultants or monitors may need to be revisited.

It would be good if, in future, NLHF and partner bodies could align research projects, rather than work without reference to one another. This would be an effective way of sharing resources, focussing on specific themes and pooling data. This would strengthen the evidence base, send positive messages to policy makers, and reduce unnecessary duplication. Partners may still commit to individual research projects but they could be designed to address particular knowledge gaps to enrich the whole as well as specific organisational requirements. Climate change is a good example of a theme that could be explored together, bringing different organisations' research and expertise together to create focussed reporting and data analysis.

## **What organisations, or types of organisation, would you like to see us work in partnership with?**

Specific NLHF and HE partnership

Historic England (HE) is committed to such working and hopes to develop new partnerships with NLHF as recommended in our respective Tailored Reviews (NLHF 2017 and HE 2020).

HE expects that, whatever parameters NLHF adopts, there will be many opportunities for us to engage in complementary partnership for the benefit of heritage in all its diversity. We are keen to discuss what this means and how we can help one another to reach our respective objectives. A good starting point would be

to reflect on what we used to do together and consider whether learning from it is still relevant and what new opportunities have arisen e.g. Repair Grants for Places of Worship, where HE staff provided technical appraisal, expertise and monitoring of works and NLHF administered the grants.

HE strongly encourages the NLHF to build on recent Culture Recovery Fund collaboration. Together we effectively addressed a problem and found shared solutions, working on issues as equal partners from the outset to agree a collaborative approach to addressing them. The successful delivery of the CRF was based on honest appraisal of our organisations' respective skills and areas of expertise, capacity to deliver and willingness to work together to meet DCMS's demanding criteria in relation to different but complementary programmes. We would be glad to explore further ways to implement this approach.

It is important to note that NLHF partnerships with HE already exist: the High Street Heritage Action Zone cultural programme has worked well; we are in conversation about tackling isolation through volunteering and in Thurrock a stakeholder partner group was set up as a model others could follow. We are also working together to enhance sector skills and could identify other priorities we hold in common. There is good precedent for working together, especially if NLHF has, or intends to employ, staff with the skills and diversity to be able to work in new ways. HE shares the Heritage Sector Resilience Plan's positive approach to developing partnerships.

#### Wider considerations

NLHF will need to determine how its resources can best be committed. Partnerships need not be limited to the heritage sector and wider relationships could be very positive. For instance, NLHF could play a major role in providing leverage to working with national funding streams e.g. the levelling up Towns Fund and the Parks Fund or Defra's post-Brexit funding arrangements.

There will also be opportunities for joint working on specific concerns arising from current circumstances. For instance, there is increasing concern that rural communities, caring for important heritage assets and landscapes, may feel demoralised because they are not priorities for government funded schemes. Equally, many volunteers caring for heritage outside of levelling up priority areas are increasingly anxious because local demographics make it hard to meet NLHF's current criteria for new activities-focussed outcomes in relation to heritage assets in urgent need of repair. Some cross-sector discussion of these issues could be very productive.

There are rich benefits and responsibilities in working with national agencies, local government and a range of groups or organisations best placed to contribute creatively specific projects. Each situation may require a unique blend of appropriate agencies, including local community groups and networks that are links to parts of the community that will not otherwise be reached. Where this includes community groups that can deliver strong local impact at a small scale, they are likely to require a great deal of support: is NLHF planning to provide that level of involvement or does it intend to keep partnership working at a more institutional level?

## Environmental sustainability

19. Our current approach to environmental sustainability is that we expect all applicants – regardless of heritage type or project size – to tell us how they will limit any potential damage to the environment and how they will make a positive environmental impact, particularly for nature. We expect funded projects' environmental sustainability actions to be proportionate to the level of grant, meaning the larger the grant, the more we expect.

**Please tell us your views on how we can strengthen our current approach to environmental sustainability. What are the most important things we can do to support projects to reduce their carbon footprint?**

Climate Change is a critical issue, but reduction of the carbon footprint is only one factor. As the [Joint Heritage Sector Statement on Climate Change 2020](#), to which NLHF and HE are both signatories, made clear, the historic environment can contribute to mitigation by; reducing greenhouse gas emissions, understanding and adapting to the changing climate, communicating clear messages and engaging people with the behaviours that reduce carbon emissions or help us adapt to the new environment.

HE suggests that NLHF could offer active support with strong outcomes in the following areas:

### 1. Demonstrate that heritage is part of the solution, not the problem

- Ensure that every project has the minimum feasible carbon footprint and promote the circular economy as part of project development: rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse, refurbish, redesign, recycle, recover and rot.
- Encourage actions that demonstrate heritage's role as part of the solution and provide evidence of public value e.g. factor embodied carbon into assessments, where appropriate, and make it clear that materials and labour will be locally sourced, if possible.
- Include environmental measures in the required monitoring data for each grant-aided project. This has the potential to lead to the development of sector-wide standards/templates for measurement and tracking.
- Underpin all projects with good monitoring and evaluation evidence.

### 2. Bolster heritage's positive contribution to increased resilience

- Seek, wherever possible, to avoid funding projects that increase carbon emissions. HE recognises that there will often be a difficult balance to strike e.g. Historic Railways, where emitting carbon is intrinsic to function.
- Encourage and advise applicants to integrate appropriate adaptations into all projects, whether or not their primary purpose is to address climate change.
- Help applicants to understand the importance of taking an holistic approach to buildings/sites/places and recognise that the cumulative effect of small

changes may be more effective than more dramatic and obvious interventions.

- Support organisations to achieve financial and climate change resilience through smaller, lower cost 'quick win' adaptations, for which it is hard to raise money, rather than major changes. The demonstration that these works will reduce impact on the planet and increased sustainability for the site, place or landscape should be the primary required outcome.
- Offer support for projects that will help recipients to reduce their carbon footprint and become more financially resilient where circumstances mean NLHF is being asked to fund the practicalities of effecting change rather than large capital costs e.g. the replacement of current lighting with LEDs in public spaces may not cost much per bulb but becomes impossibly expensive if it requires professional access to existing fittings at very high level or the upgrading of the entire electrical system. NLHF funding towards the costs of installation could remove that barrier, resulting in both reduced carbon use and lowering the organisation's ongoing electricity costs, building resilience as well as reducing emissions

### 3. Investment in skills to equip people and places to cope with climate change

- Fund skills programmes training contractors that already have the technical knowledge to improve the energy efficiency of heritage assets to understand the constraints and challenges of working with historic materials, traditional construction and heritage significance.
- Invest in training for the volunteers and owners who manage or own historic assets, so that they are equipped to manage the site or place with more confidence in the future, plan adaptations and understand the importance of maintenance in defending heritage from climate change.
- Offer funding to projects relating to adaptive release, helping communities to prepare for the likely/inevitable loss of heritage sites, places or landscapes due to climate change. This could be through practical adaptive planning or working through issues to help them come to terms with change and providing capacity to cope with it e.g. through recording of threatened assets, collection of narratives and oral histories, understanding of changes that have taken place over millennia and how the threats they are experiencing contribute to the story of the place