



Historic England

# Valuing Our Past Enriching Our Future

Historic England Corporate Plan  
2015 to 2018

# The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (now Historic England) was established by the National Heritage Act 1983.

## Our purpose is to:

- secure the preservation of ancient monuments and historic buildings;
- promote the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas; and
- promote the public's enjoyment of, and advance their knowledge of, ancient monuments and historic buildings.

## What we do:

- Advise government on which parts of our heritage are nationally important, and promote the importance of heritage in making places distinctive and valued.
- Advise local authorities on managing changes to the most important parts of our heritage.
- Provide grants to reduce the amount of our heritage at risk.
- Support English Heritage (a charity) in its care of over 400 historic properties owned by the nation and open to the public.
- Pass on our expertise through training and guidance, practical conservation advice and by providing access to our resources.

We are sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which has overall responsibility for heritage policy in England and from whom we receive the majority of our funding. We also work closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

# Foreword



Historic England has a crucial role in championing the importance of the historic environment as a vital source of national enrichment. The heritage sector is estimated to account for approximately two per cent of GDP. It employs around 750,000 people and has the support of more than 500,000 volunteers. The historic fabric of England is a unique and valuable national capital asset that provides a dynamic base for sustainable economic growth. It contributes to our social and environmental welfare, it enhances the quality of our surroundings and it provides the foundations for a national and local sense of identity.

This plan, covering the three years from 2015 to 2018, starts with the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England dividing its functions between two organisations:

- Our statutory and other responsibilities – including advice on listing and planning, research and guidance, grant making, saving heritage at risk, education and training – will be provided under the name Historic England.
- The care (but not ownership) of our National Heritage Collection will transfer to a charity, the English Heritage Trust, which will have exclusive use of the English Heritage name.

It is a key objective that the English Heritage Trust should become financially independent within eight years.

Historic England is committed to support the new charity in this endeavour.

This plan re-affirms Historic England's commitment to support its many stakeholders – central and local government, private owners, developers, charities and volunteers – in identifying and protecting the historic environment whilst encouraging constructive solutions for conservation projects which enable important buildings to be adapted for a sustainable use. It harnesses the expert knowledge of our staff, often gained over many years, together with the resources of our extensive research and archives.

The plan is based upon finding practical solutions and focusses on some particularly pressing priorities, including the financial difficulties faced by local authorities, the demands of economic growth and the challenges for heritage at risk. It embraces the increasing popularity of volunteering and the exciting opportunities offered by the application of digital technology.

The plan is only achievable if we can work successfully with all of those who value and care for our heritage, in a spirit of genuine collaboration and partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Laurie Magnus'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Sir Laurie Magnus**  
**Chairman, Historic England**

# Who we are

We are the government's independent expert advisory service for England's historic environment. We give constructive advice to local authorities, owners and the public. We champion historic places and help people to understand and care for them, now and for the future.

Many of our functions go back more than a hundred years. In 1984 they became the responsibility of a new Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England that adopted English Heritage as its operating name and in 1999 merged with the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments for England. On 1 April 2015 English Heritage will become the name of a new charity licensed to care for the National Heritage Collection of more than 400 historic properties and their collections and we will take the name Historic England. Historic England's statutory responsibilities will remain as set out in the 1983 National Heritage Act and other relevant legislation.

# Our purpose

The historic environment is the world around us made by our forebears. It begins with the places where the earliest inhabitants of these islands lived, worshipped and were buried. It embraces the homes in which we live, the schools in which we learn, the offices and factories in which we work and the shops where we spend our money. The historic environment also includes the waters around our shores that contain the submerged evidence of human activity. It embraces not only the villages, towns and cities in which we live but also the landscapes that we farm and the treasured open spaces and parklands that have been created for our pleasure.

This rich and diverse heritage has a profound effect on the way we feel and behave. It influences how we think about our past and our aspirations for the future. Above all, it is an irreplaceable resource that has the power to improve places and enhance people's lives.

Some parts of this inheritance have been protected by the state for their value and significance for everybody – now and in the future. Our system for protecting heritage assets is designed not only to preserve the best of what we have inherited from the past but also to explore opportunities for positive and creative change. This is why Government has put constructive conservation at the heart of its objectives for a sustainable future.

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## **Intricate horse's head from the Staffordshire Hoard**

A tiny part of a treasure find which weighed 6.5kg when found by a metal detectorist in 2009. We are funding an extensive programme of research into this wonderful find in the context of seventh century English life. © *Guy Evans/Barbican Research Associates*









## Our role

The conservation of our historic environment depends on the efforts and decisions of many people and organisations, including owners, local and national government, heritage organisations, professional bodies, universities and an estimated 500,000 heritage volunteers.

Historic England champions and supports that effort through research, knowledge, technical expertise, grants and advice. As the official body with a national overview and a duty to consider all aspects of heritage conservation, we help people achieve better outcomes, and work with our partners to deploy our collective resources where they are most effective.

Historic England will concentrate on those activities that it is best placed to deliver and that are beyond the capacity of others. The most important of these is the designation of the historic buildings, monuments, parks and gardens, battlefields and shipwrecks that make up the National Heritage List for England. We will continue to advise government departments, local authorities and owners on any significant changes proposed to them. Our Heritage at Risk programme will continue to report annually on the state of the nation's historic buildings and places. People tell us that what they value most about us is our expertise and we will strive for it to be ever more effectively, pragmatically and proportionately applied.

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### **Church of St Mary the Virgin, Jackfield, Telford and Wrekin**

This Grade II listed church has been at risk for a long time and first appeared on the *Heritage at Risk Register* in 2011. We provided grant aid to complete the first phase of repairs to the spire and roof and the church building is now valued and supported by the community as a whole.

# What we want to achieve

Our heritage is central to our success as a nation. It has inherent worth, engendering a sense of identity, history and place. It is a powerful stimulus for domestic and international tourism and attracts businesses and enterprise from across the world. It stimulates and inspires our creative industries and adds value to our national brand.

None of these benefits come about by accident. They are the product of centuries of care and investment. For more than a century the state and its agencies have contributed to this success and now it is the turn of Historic England. We will make policy makers and politicians aware of the accumulated national capital value represented by our heritage and recognise that it should be respected, cherished and enhanced as part of the very soul of our nation. We will support owners as custodians of our heritage. We will use our assets and resources, including harnessing the power of digital media, to increase everyone's understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of England's historic environment.

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## Lincoln

A great historic place. Lincoln's long past is expressed in outstanding archaeology, townscape and public places, culminating in the world-famous cathedral. We will continue to bring our national expertise to bear locally to foster deeper understanding of Lincoln and to help owners, developers and the local community manage the long process of appropriate change – such as the University's successes in the docks. © *Tom Martin/JAI/Corbis*







# Our values

## We are **expert**

We have the knowledge, experience and technical expertise to speak and act with authority on managing change to the historic environment.

## We are **constructive**

We respond to challenges and work with others to develop approaches that benefit both people and the historic environment.

## We **champion**

We stand up for the historic environment, and have a responsibility to help create beautiful and inspiring places for everyone.

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### **Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings**

The Grade I listed Flaxmill Maltings is the world's first cast iron-framed building and the forerunner of all modern skyscrapers. We are working in partnership with Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings, Shropshire Council and others to secure the future of the mill. It will stand, secure for the long term and dominant, at the centre of an important regeneration site to the north of Shrewsbury's historic centre.

# Current factors affecting heritage conservation

This is an important time for England's heritage. Public support and enthusiasm for the historic environment has never been greater. Its economic benefits and its role in defining our success as a nation are more clearly acknowledged than ever before. Sustainable development is now at the heart of national planning policy, although we need to make sure that the value of heritage is properly taken into account in individual decisions. We espouse the principle of constructive conservation which argues that heritage can be a dynamic force in society. Most historic places need to be used and re-used if they are to have a future; in many cases they may need to be adapted for this purpose.

However there are significant challenges. Public finances are under severe pressure. There is an urgent need to stimulate prosperity, to provide new housing, to renew infrastructure and to respond to climate change. Historic places can often be adapted to meet these changes in ways that enhance rather than detract from their inherited character and identity. But in some parts of the country the local expert advice and experience necessary to achieve this has been lost. In other areas historic assets are threatened by continued economic stagnation and a lack of understanding of the ways in which history and heritage can contribute towards regeneration.

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## **30 Cannon Street, City of London**

Designed by Whinney, Son & Austen Hall and built between 1974–7, 30 Cannon Street was recently listed at Grade II as part of our work in listing 14 of the finest post-war office buildings in England.







# How we decide our priorities

Five years ago English Heritage launched a National Heritage Protection Plan for the sector to agree its shared priorities for heritage in England and to co-ordinate efforts to address them. In deciding our priorities we consulted widely on the successor to the National Heritage Protection Plan, *Heritage 2020: Strategic Priorities for England's Historic Environment 2015-20*.

*Heritage 2020* builds on the strengths of the first National Heritage Protection Plan to maximise the impact of everyone's investment in heritage. Historic England's Action Plan, available online from April 2015, sets out in more detail how we will take forward and resource the aims and objectives below and is our contribution to *Heritage 2020*'s priorities.

We prioritise those actions that we are best placed to take and that will make the greatest contribution to sustaining the value of the historic environment to society. We will work in partnership wherever that helps us to achieve our aims.

We want to do more to ensure that collectively we have the skills and resources to invest in, and care for, England's

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## **St George's Theatre, Great Yarmouth**

Built in 1714 as a chapel of ease, St George's is one of the most important examples of Baroque church architecture outside London. The Chapel was closed in 1959, then converted to a theatre in the 1970s. Structural defects forced its closure in 2006. Following major refurbishment, St George's Theatre has reopened as a multi-purpose arts venue.

heritage and support the growth of our economy and our communities. So, while we will continue to offer the expert advice which we know people value, we will also prioritise the following actions:

- Support local authorities to develop new ways of delivering local authority heritage services and target our support in those places where growth offers the biggest opportunities and challenges for heritage.
- Make data and information about the historic environment more accessible and nationally consistent.
- Identify the skills Historic England needs and support initiatives to build capability in the heritage sector.
- Encourage the public to help improve our information base by adding to the National Heritage List for England online and to get involved in identifying heritage at risk.

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### **The junction of Steep Street and Trenchard Street, Bristol, 1866**

This photograph by John Hill Morgan is one of over 200 images which in July will feature in *Picturing England*, a new publication which draws on the collections of the Historic England Archive to explore how photography has changed the way we understand the historic environment.







THE  
CHIMNEY  
HOUSE

# Our aims and objectives

This plan sets out the aims of Historic England over the next three years.

## Aim 1: Champion England's heritage

England's heritage enjoys tremendous popular support. It is our role to champion its value to those who make decisions about its future, including central and local government, private owners, developers and the wider public.

### We will:

1. Make the case for the value of heritage and constructive conservation.
2. Ensure that the value of heritage is reflected in relevant laws, government policies and planning practice.
3. Use our research, archive collections and education programme to engage and enthuse people about the history of places.
4. Stimulate greater participation to improve our understanding of what heritage is at risk and why.
5. Support collaboration in the heritage sector through *Heritage 2020: Strategic Priorities for England's Historic Environment 2015-20*.

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#### **The Chimney House, Sheffield**

We are working to secure regeneration by supporting the repair and adaptive reuse of key metal trades sites in South Yorkshire. Once a rolling mill, the Grade II Chimney House in Sheffield is now an award-winning events space and meeting room.

## Aim 2: Identify and protect England's most important heritage

Identifying heritage assets and increasing people's understanding of their significance through designation is the foundation of constructive conservation. Designation celebrates the special interest of our most important heritage and provides protection. Accurate and accessible information about all heritage improves the quality of decisions when people want to make changes to it.

### We will:

1. Provide expert advice to government on which assets should be protected through designation, based on strategic and risk-led programmes.
2. Identify, record and define the significance of heritage that is poorly understood, under-represented or most at risk.
3. Improve the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) to make it more useful and accessible and enable others to add content.
4. Encourage others to research and articulate the significance of heritage.
5. Ensure that our archive collections inform identification, analysis and understanding across the heritage sector and preserve the results of survey and investigation for future use.
6. With our partners, improve access to information through local Historic Environment Records and explore ways of moving towards a single means of accessing historic environment information nationally.

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#### **Preston Bus Station, Preston**

In September 2013 Preston bus garage was granted Grade II listing status following our recommendation. Threatened with demolition, we had recommended it for listing twice before. We will continue to work with Preston City and Lancashire County Councils to advise on how the bus station can be incorporated into the regeneration strategy for the city centre.







## Aim 3: Support change through constructive conservation

We champion a constructive approach to conservation. We want people to continue to use and enjoy historic places in ways that reveal and reinforce their significance and their setting within a wider landscape. We also have a key role in ensuring that threats to our heritage are understood so that policies, effort and investment can be targeted effectively. We help to broker solutions that aim to prevent risk in the first place and tackle it where it appears.

### We will:

1. Help national government, local authorities and local communities create planning policies that support constructive conservation as part of sustainable development.
2. Promote constructive conservation with those who have broader objectives such as local authority members and senior officers and developers.
3. Advise constructively and consistently on proposals for change at every stage of design and decision-making.
4. Target dedicated resources to support Heritage Action Zones in those places where growth offers the greatest opportunities and challenges for heritage.
5. Invest our expertise and grant aid to unlock solutions for heritage at risk.
6. Act as the agent of last resort to save heritage of the utmost importance.

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#### **Astley Castle, Warwickshire**

Devastated by fire 30 years ago, Astley Castle had been one of the most seriously 'at risk' buildings in the Midlands. With the Heritage Lottery Fund and others, we provided financial support and advice to the owners, the Landmark Trust, on an innovative scheme that has transformed the ruined building into holiday accommodation. In 2013 the castle won the much lauded Stirling prize for architecture. © *Landmark Trust*

## Aim 4: Support owners and local authorities to have the expertise to look after England's heritage

At the heart of constructive conservation is sound understanding and good judgment: understanding of why a place is significant and judgment as to how to sustain it physically and economically. Without this expertise, the planning system cannot work effectively.

### We will:

1. Ensure that Historic England's expertise is accessible, relevant and of the highest standard.
2. Work with others to provide time-limited support for local authorities to develop new ways of delivering their heritage advice and services.
3. Work with others to assess and deliver the heritage skills required.

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#### **Members of the residents group, Burton Manor Village Conservation Area, Stafford**

We produce guidance to help others protect and adapt historic places through active management. We call this 'constructive conservation'. By identifying what was significant about their village, the residents of Burton Manor were able to secure conservation area status for their estate, ensuring that any future development takes into account Burton Manor's distinctive local character.







## Aim 5: Achieve excellence, openness and efficiency in all we do

We need to use our resources and expertise cleverly and efficiently to allow us to do more for England's heritage. We need to listen to those who use our services in order to improve them and so that we can work together more effectively. We will continue to provide our statutory advice free of charge to everyone but we will offer customers who want more the opportunity to buy enhanced services. We want people to understand what we do and why.

### We will:

1. Be transparent in our decision-making processes and run an efficient, self-critical organisation that has a constructive approach to risk.
2. Encourage and support volunteering with Historic England.
3. Increase our resilience by developing non-Government sources of income.
4. Look for ways to use our resources as a catalyst for greater inward investment, for example through partnerships.
5. Care for our archive collections in an exemplary way.
6. Support English Heritage in its care of the National Heritage Collection.

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#### **Aerial view of Exmoor**

Aerial photography showing regular planned and rectilinear fields of parliamentary enclosures on the west side of Exmoor National Park. Better understanding of large areas assists with the protection and management of the historic environment, as well as promoting public enjoyment of the heritage in this special place.



# Money

The following table summarises the anticipated headline revenue cash budget for the period of this plan. The Grant in Aid figure for 2015/16 has been confirmed by Government. Allocation figures for the remaining years remain to be determined by the government in future Spending Reviews. The figures shown below for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are based on the Commission's own projections which were shared with Government in 2014 as part of the negotiations on the New Model.

'EH shared services' income is the net charge payable by the English Heritage Trust for the provision of shared services including use of office space. The 'Grant to EH charity' line is the grant payable by Historic England to English Heritage to underpin its operations in line with the English Heritage Trust's business plan. This grant has been capped by Government at no more than £90.8 million in total between 2015/16 and 2021/22.

	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m
<b>Income</b>			
Grant in Aid	85.2	85.2	85.4
EH shared services	10.8	11.2	11.8
Earned income	2.5	2.8	3.0
	<b>98.5</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>100.2</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Grants programme	17.7	17.7	17.7
Operating costs	65.2	67.5	68.0
Grant to EH charity	15.6	14.0	14.5
	<b>98.5</b>	<b>99.2</b>	<b>100.2</b>



**Inside the Bank of England, Threadneedle Street, City of London**

This photograph is one of a number of ours used in a publication called *London's Hidden Interiors* (Atlantic Publishing, 2012), part of a project to record the interiors of some of London's most well-known buildings.



# Our relationship with English Heritage

The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England retains overall responsibility for the National Heritage Collection. It has granted the English Heritage Trust an eight-year licence to manage the Collection on its behalf. By the end of the licence period we believe that the Collection will have become self-financing.

We will support the English Heritage Trust as it seeks to improve the state of conservation of the National Heritage Collection and reach financial self-sufficiency. Our work will focus on providing high quality and efficient shared services to the charity, for example in finance, human resources and information technology.

There will be a review of our arrangements with the charity after the first three years, at the end of 2017/18.

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## **Dunstanburgh Castle, Northumberland**

English Heritage cares for more than 400 sites in the National Heritage Collection, including Dunstanburgh Castle in Northumberland which is owned by the National Trust. Historic England provides English Heritage and others with expertise and guidance on the conservation of historic buildings, monuments, parks and gardens, battlefields and ship wrecks.

# Conclusion

The Commission believes that, through this plan and working together with all our partners, we will be able to make the best use of our collective resources and expertise. We owe it to the future to face up to today's challenges and to leave a legacy of heritage every bit as good as the one left to us.

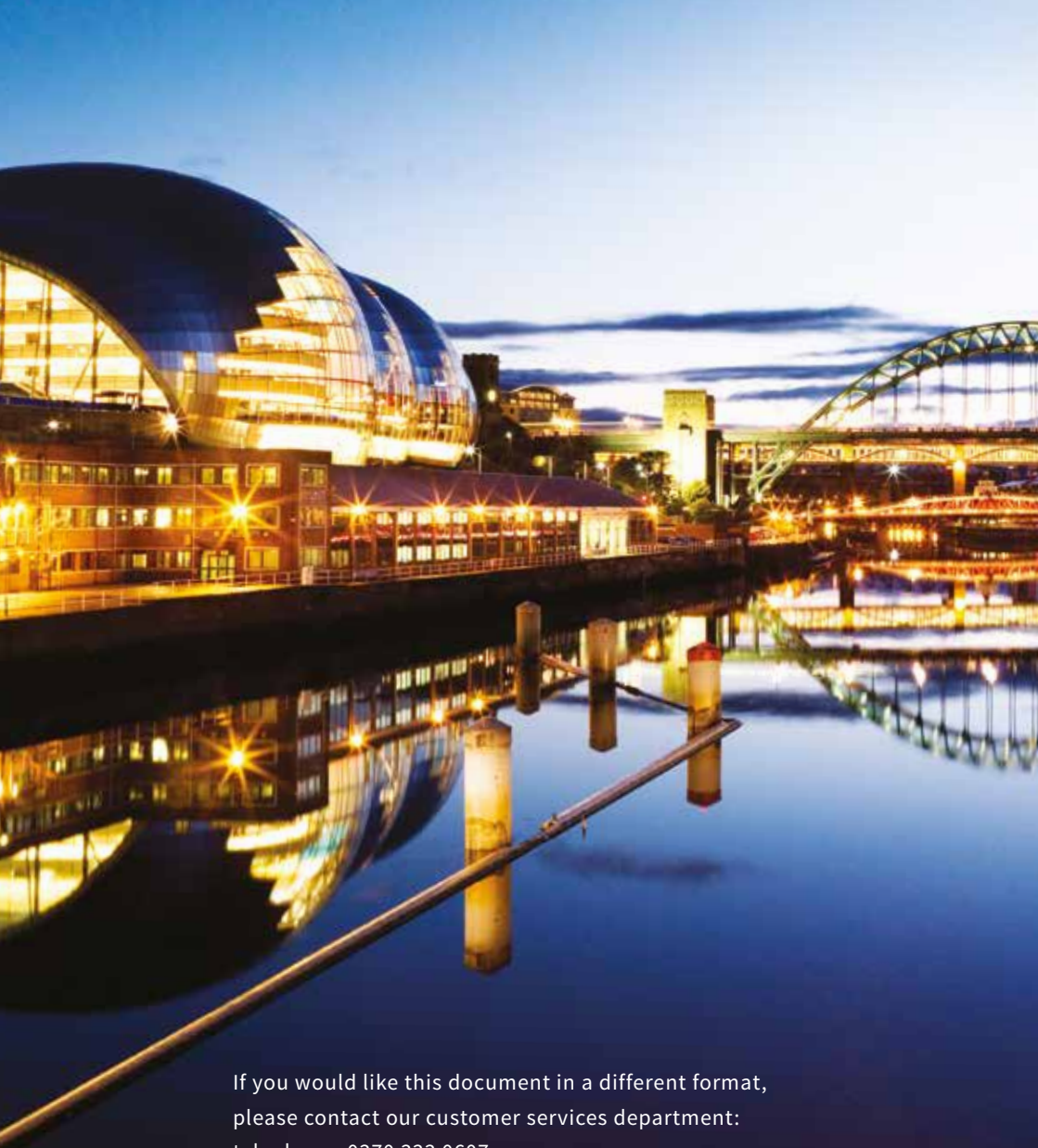
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## **Memorial to the 24th Division, Battersea Park, London, by Eric Kennington (1924)**

We are committed to the preservation and respectful celebration of England's war memorials. Working with partners across the country, we are designating war memorials, administering grants and giving conservation advice.







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