Getting to Know the National Lottery Heritage Fund

20th October 2026
Joined-Up Heritage Sheffield

heritagefund.org.uk

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Agenda

- Who are we and what do we do?
- Heritage 2033
- Investment Principles
- National Lottery Grants for Heritage
- Questions

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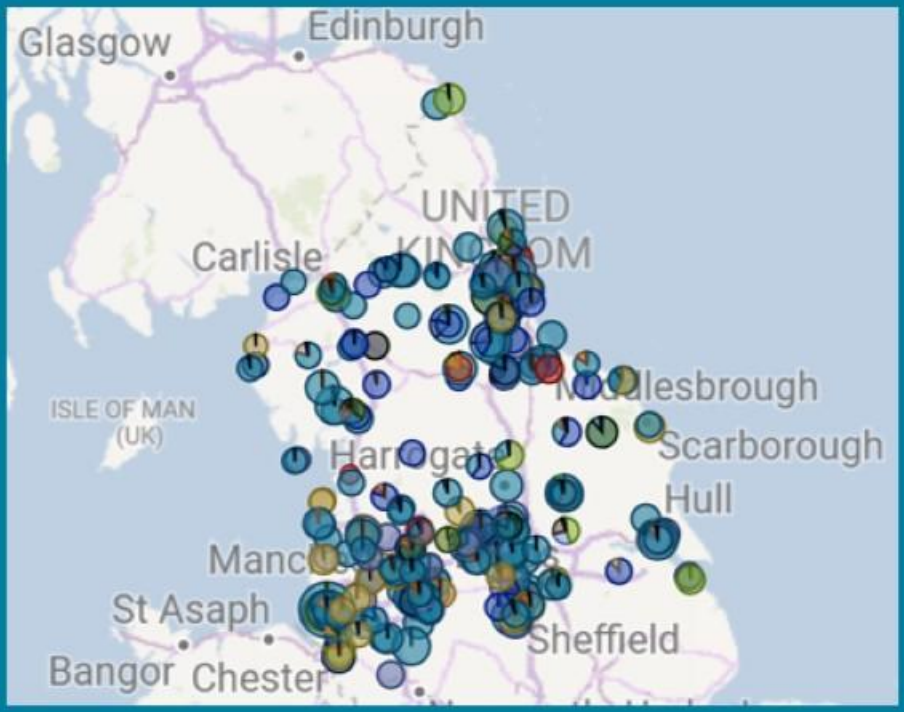
Who are we?

- Steven Henry, Hazel Curtis
- Engagement Managers, North Team
- We connect organisations to our funding opportunities and provide pre-application support.

10/12 members of the Engagement Team in March 2024

Map of Heritage Fund projects since 1994 to 1 April 2025



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And what do we do?

- UK's largest funder of heritage
- Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.
- Since 1994 we have invested £9.2 billion in 52,000 heritage projects across the UK

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Who do we fund?

- not-for-profit organisations
- private owners of a heritage assets
- partnerships

And what do we fund?

Projects that connect people and communities to the UK's heritage.

Image credit: Big City Butterfly / Chris O'Donovan

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Heritage can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations.

Break Out Arts £33,055 in 2022

Finding Lost Norton Park: Digging Deeper for All, Friends of Graves Park, £142,770

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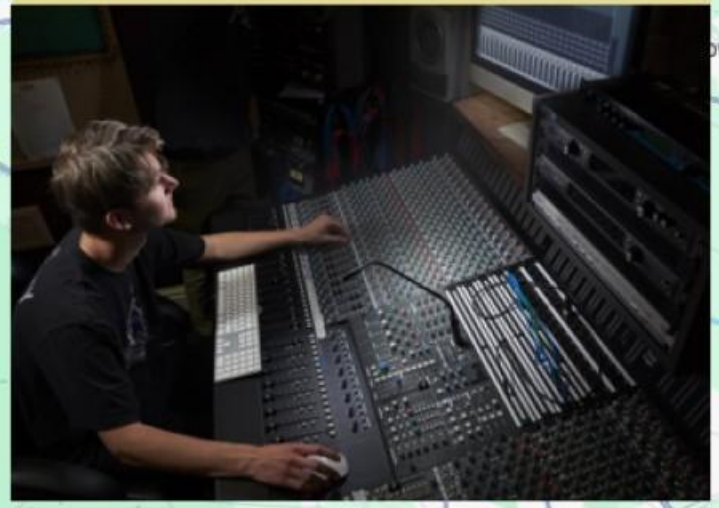
Higher Rhythm £177,806 in 2024



Epworth Old Rectory £191,160 in 2024

Harcourt Road, Bloc Projects, £47,930

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Heritage 2033

What we plan to deliver in 2026–2029

Invest a total of around

£1.46bn

in heritage

Invest over

£130m

in strategic initiatives

Invest at least

£20m

in projects aimed at engaging young people in heritage

Deepen investment in the

places that need it most

Make approximately

95%

of grant decisions in the area or nation where the applicant is based

Continue to make funding for heritage available in

every local authority

in the UK

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Delivery priority: grant funding

We'll support heritage to be more resilient and relevant to communities across the UK by continuing to invest in projects that deliver all four of our investment principles and the ambitions set out in Heritage 2033.

Headlines from the first three years include:

Awarded
£885m
to 1,750 projects

Supported
4,125
grant applications through the transition to deliver National Lottery Heritage Grants under the four Heritage 2033 investment principles and new grant thresholds

Streamlined
our application, assessment and post-award processes

In the next three years we will:

Attract a strong pipeline of projects of all sizes between
£10,000 and **£10m**
through our marketing and engagement work, monitoring success rates and providing equitable access to funding across the UK

Use our grant funding to complement
DCMS priorities
and funded initiatives for heritage such as Places of Worship Revival Fund and Heritage Revival Fund, supporting strategic investment in places, assets and communities

Support cross-cutting, strategic projects with potential to be transformational for the sector, as well as projects rooted in particular places or types of heritage

Continuously improve our application, assessment and post-award processes

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Investment principles

1. Saving Heritage
2. Protecting the environment
3. Inclusion, access and participation
4. Organisational sustainability

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Saving Heritage

Conserving and valuing heritage for now and the future.

Why? To ensure heritage remains accessible, relevant, sustainable and valued.

How? Commit funding to protect, conserve and revitalise heritage.

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Hyde Park Picture House / Ollie Jenkins

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Protecting the environment

Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.

Why? To help the UK meet its nature recovery target and mitigate the impact of climate change.

How? Support natural heritage and environmentally sustainable projects.

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Back from the Brink / Neil Aldridge

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Inclusion, access and participation

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

Why?

To ensure everyone has opportunities to learn, develop new skills and explore heritage.

How?

Investing in volunteering, heritage careers, co-creating projects, leadership, governance and heritage skills.

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Big City Butterfly / Chris O'Donovan

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Organisational sustainability

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

Why?

To develop skills and capacity leading to a sound long term future that benefits communities and economies.

How?

Providing organisations with capacity and expertise to develop their long-term organisational governance and leadership plans.

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National Lottery Heritage Grants:

- £10,000 - £250,000
- £250,000 - £10 million

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Sheffield Environmental Movement

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£10,000 – £250,000

- One application for a project that lasts up to 5 years
- Optional project enquiry service
- No deadlines to apply
- Decisions made by senior staff in the North Team

- Find out 8 weeks from passing application checks
- Payment terms 50% in advance, 30% in advance and 20% in arrears
- Private owners can apply

Find out more on our website: www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding

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Application

You submit your application and supporting documents through our application portal.

Checks

Your application is checked to make sure it is complete. You will receive a decision within 8 weeks, once this is confirmed.

Case Paper

Our investment team review your application and write a 'case for funding' based on our funding criteria and the evidence you provide.

Meeting

This goes to a decision meeting where your project is considered alongside other grant requests, against a limited budget.

Decision

The outcome of your application is communicated to you by an Investment manager.

8-week assessment period

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£250,000 - £10,000,000

- Mandatory Expression of Interest
- Two stage application process – development phase and delivery phase
- Development phase up to 2 years, delivery phase up to 5 years
- 5% contribution under £1 million, 10% contribution over £1 million
- Not for profit organisations only

- Quarterly deadlines for Area or Nation Committee decision
- Decision in 12 weeks
- Development grants over £250,000, and all delivery grants, are made in arrears.
- Development grants under £250,000 payment terms 50% in advance, 30% in advance, and then 20% in arrears

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What you'll need:

1. Application form
2. Supporting documents, including:
   - Project Plan
   - Risk Register

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Beamish Museum, County Durham

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What makes a strong application?

- The application includes a **form**, a **project plan**, and a **risk register**.
- Your application form explains **what you will do and why**, and the project plan explains **how you will deliver it**
- They must align, showing a clear and shared purpose
- Consistency builds confidence, inconsistencies raise concerns and cause delays
- Helps assessors understand how your activities lead to outcomes and whether your project is realistic and achievable

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10 questions every applicant should ask themselves before applying…

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Before you apply ask yourself...

1. Do we understand the guidance well?
2. Can we describe what we hope to achieve in 8-10 sentences?
3. Does our project align with all four investment principles?
4. Can we explain how we know our plans will work?
5. Have you considered what challenges you could encounter?
6. Can we commit to the funding requirements?
7. Do we understand what participants and partners might need from the project?
8. Do we know how we will evaluate our project?
9. Do we know how we will thank lottery players?
10. Have we taken all the advice available?

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What support is available?

You can submit a **Project Enquiry Form** through our online portal to get feedback and advice from us before you start working on a full application (£10,000-£250,000).

You can attend one of our **'Helping You Apply' Webinars** where we explain what we're looking for in strong applications.

You can contact your local North Team to discuss any **reasonable adjustments** you may need during the application process, e.g. BSL interpretation, translated materials or digital accessibility.

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Back from the Brink, Neil Aldridge

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Thank you

For more information please get in touch north@heritagefund.org.uk

Any questions?
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on our website's
homepage!