

World Heritage in the UK 2024 – 25

This year's review starts with some of the key nation-wide developments that have influenced and shaped the UK's World Heritage sector during 01 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

New Government

A new Government was elected in July 2024, meaning a new Secretary of State for DCMS - The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP - and Heritage Minister - a role initially occupied by Sir Chris Bryant MP until April 2025, with Baroness Twycross taking over as Minister for Gambling and Heritage and Lords Minister.

46COM

A UK Delegation, including officials from DCMS and Historic England, attended the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in July 2024 in New Delhi to defend UK Government interests, which included successfully ensuring that 'Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites' World Heritage Site was not placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

State of Conservation Reports (47COM)

Looking ahead to the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee, taking place in Paris in July 2025, five State of Conservation Reports were submitted by the UK to the World Heritage Centre between November 2024 and January 2025. This required close collaboration across DCMS, Historic England and site coordinators, as well as other partners, with all reports submitted on time and with grateful acknowledgement from the World Heritage Centre.

UNESCO correspondence

Other correspondence with UNESCO continued to be plentiful, with nearly 50 'paragraph 172/174 notifications' submitted to the World Heritage Centre between April 2024 and March 2025, and two Mission Reports published following Advisory Missions that took place to Derwent Valley Mills and Bermuda, both in early 2024.

Tentative List sites

DCMS has continued to support sites on the UK's Tentative List. The 'City of York: historic urban core' was selected, following a review by an expert panel, to submit a Preliminary Assessment to UNESCO in September 2024 for review by the Advisory Bodies, with their report expected in October 2025. Material from 'Little Cayman Marine Parks and Protected Areas' and 'Birkenhead Park, the pioneering People's Park', has also been reviewed and given feedback from an expert panel.

World Heritage Advisory Group

The World Heritage Advisory Group, chaired by DCMS, continued to meet approximately every six months to gather key UK World Heritage organisations and discuss strategic, national level issues,

including new processes for Tentative List sites and progress on planning reform led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

World Heritage webpages

In early 2025 Historic England published a number of new and updated webpages focused on implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the UK. These pages include content about the Tentative List and nomination process, reporting and monitoring mechanisms and roles and responsibilities of different international and UK organisations in relation to World Heritage.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

The UK's ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage officially came into effect on 7 June 2024. Most recently, the UK's response to the consultation on the implementation of the Convention, which ran December 2023 to February 2024, was published on GOV.UK in April 2025. The response details how DCMS will use the responses gathered during the consultation to create inventories of intangible cultural heritage across the UK.

Guidance on the Production of World Heritage Property Management Plans

In April 2025 Historic England published guidance on the production of World Heritage property management plans. The guidance provides a framework for management plans, drawing on international guidance. This is primarily designed to support properties in England but may also be relevant to other properties.

Governance and Financial Resilience Review

In 2024 Historic England commissioned CBA Studios to undertake a review of the governance and financial resilience of World Heritage properties in England. The project researched and analysed different governance and financial models currently in place at World Heritage properties and in equivalent sectors. The project concluded in late 2024 and some of its findings will be shared in 2025.

Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS



Access for All

Cornish Mining WHS (CMWHS) secured some funding via Cornwall National Landscape (CNL) for projects that make Protected Landscapes more accessible for people of all ages and abilities and from all socio-economic backgrounds. Working with Sensory Trust they focused on two of their areas which overlap with the CNL to provide pre-visit information to enable visitors to make informed decisions about the facilities and accessibility of those areas. Sensory Trust were also keen to provide alternative locations for people to visit; for example, visitors wanting to see clifftop engine houses only reached via uneven paths (like Botallack), would be provided an alternative with paved walkways and parking nearby (eg Geevor). CMWHS are looking to see how they might extrapolate this to their other eight areas.

Cousin Jacks

In collaboration with Screen Cornwall and with MHCLG Devolution Deal funding for Cornish distinctiveness, CMWHS commissioned a short documentary about the WHS. It was quite a tall order to capture all 10 areas but Crow Creative did a great job and the film 'premiered' at the WHUK Annual Conference held in Redruth in October 2024 and has been entered into the Celtic Media Festival 2025, short form documentary category.

[Welcome to the amazing Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site](#)

Plymouth station hoardings

In collaboration with the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership, CMWHS has images and a map of the WHS' areas on one of the mainline platforms at Plymouth station. There are also display boards for the Tamar Valley National Landscape on the adjacent platform with whom CMWHS share some of the landscape in Area 10, Tamar Valley Mining District with Tavistock.

World Heritage UK annual conference

CMWHS were delighted to host the WHUK annual conference in Redruth with Site visits to Levant and Geevor down in Area 1, St Just Mining District. The weather could have been kinder but we like to

think of it as atmospheric as we walked between the mine sites and heard the tales from the mines, modern and historic.

Cornwall Heritage Awards

In March 2025 CMWHS celebrated the Cornwall Heritage Awards, an annual event run by the Culture and Creative Partnerships team within Cornwall Council to recognise museums and heritage centres across Cornwall for their work with volunteers, with their collections etc. CMWHS sponsors the “Spirit of the Awards” which recognises those organisations who have taken particular steps towards sustainability and inclusivity over the preceding 12 months. Many of these institutions are within the CMWHS Areas hence our involvement and support. This year there was also a symposium which we spoke at, talking about our work with Screen Cornwall from the perspective of encouraging others to think about using film to promote their own work.

Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

The DVMWHS Partnership project to look at alternative viable options for the Belper Mills complex has been completed. The work was led by Amion Consulting who worked in partnership with Mosedale Gillatt Architects and Aspinall Verdi Property Development Consultants to consider different uses for the site and also taking into account the feedback from the public consultation.

There was a shortlist of three scenarios that were judged the most appropriate and financially viable: residential, multigenerational living/working scheme, and mixed use/commercial option. All of the scenarios included a potential space for a visitor centre or museum.

The findings of the detailed work undertaken by the consultants was that taking into account the construction costs and the development value, none of the scenarios were financially viable in their own right, each having a significant conservation deficit (where the cost for conserving and repurposing a structure or building is greater than its market value once the works are completed). This shows that the most likely way to progress any development for Belper Mills will be by a public/private partnership. More information about the report and key findings can be found at www.derwentvalleymills.org/belper-mills-future/. The DVMWHS Partnership is committed to finding a viable, sustainable and appropriate solution to this important central hub of the World Heritage Site and responding to concerns and recommendations raised about the Belper Mills Site in the 2024 UNESCO State of Conservation of Reporting for the Site.

Back in May 2024 the team from the BBC’s Antiques Roadshow came to Cromford Mills with their leading antiques and fine arts specialists. A rainy day did not dampen the spirits of hundreds of visitors who brought along family heirlooms, household treasures and car boot bargains for inspection. In all three episodes were filmed for broadcast which included presenter Fiona Bruce exploring the Cromford Canal, viewing Birdswood the trip boat, pretending to be on a carriage (with no horses!) and exploring special artefacts from the Arkwright Society archive. A really great showcase of the Derwent Valley Mills, Cromford Mills and the rich heritage of the area and some excellent items. Catch up on BBC iPlayer.

Historic objects, originally on display at Belper North Mill Museum, have a new home at Cromford Mills visitor centre. Volunteers, staff and university students worked together on a project led by Dr Sophie Campbell using cotton machinery to curate social history stories about the mill workers, enslaved cotton labourers and the global impact of expansion of cotton spinning that started in the Derwent Valley. New interpretation brings the story of the machines to life and the award-winning Global Cotton Workers mural by Brian Gallagher has been revealed for greater impact. Explore for [Cromford Mills](#) before joining a tour to find out more.



The Forth Bridge World Heritage Site

The Forth Bridge 135th Anniversary

The 135th anniversary celebrations were focused on 4th March with a school visit, temporary exhibition, and online and in person engineering and heritage presentations. The exhibition was reopened on Saturday 8th March.

The exhibition displays included many items on loan from local history and heritage groups, as well as private collectors. A highlight was a demonstration of riveting and a showing of original magic lantern slides taken during the construction of the bridge. A total of 316 people visited during the anniversary events.



School Education Programme

The Forth Bridges School Education Programme is open to all schools across Scotland and comprises a mix of in-person school visits to the Contact and Education Centre adjacent to the Forth Road Bridge, online classes (since 2022) and other online resources.

The Contact and Education Centre is a purpose-built facility which served as a focal point for community engagement and education during the construction of the Queensferry Crossing. The

centre provides an excellent learning environment with detailed bridge models, audio-visual resources, interactive learning challenges and spectacular panoramic views of the Forth Bridges and Forth Estuary.

The programme offers a wide range of free, fun and engaging STEM activities for primary and secondary school pupils, from Primary 3 (age 7/8) to Secondary 6 (age 17/18).

Since 2014, the programme has reached over 120,000 learners (2500 visits) from primary and secondary schools across Scotland. The programme has reached across all Scottish Local Authority Areas with at least one school visit from every local authority.

In 2024/25 academic year alone, 12,000 learners engaged with the Programme across 250 schools from 30 of the 32 Local Authorities.

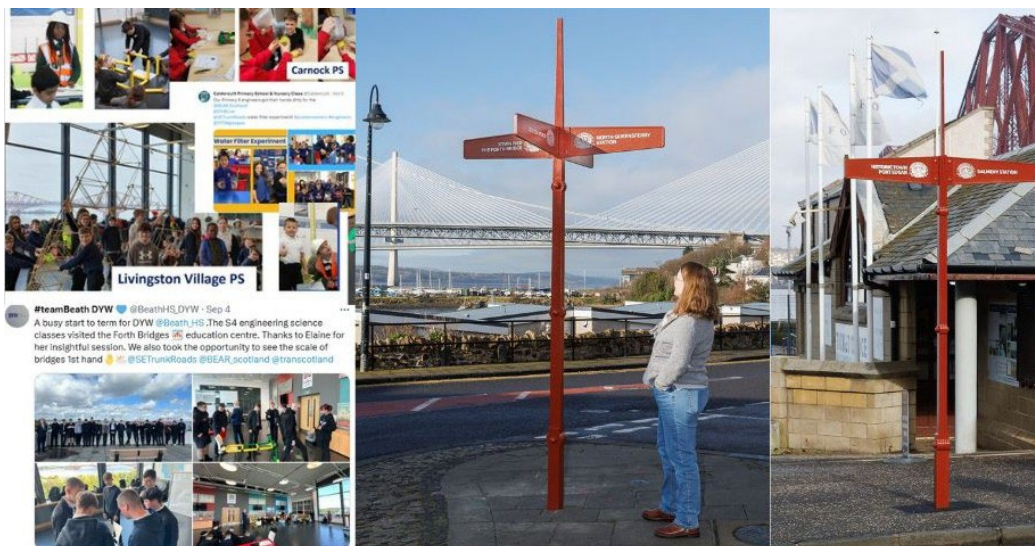
Forth Bridges Trail

The Forth Bridges visitor trail, which showcases Scotland's iconic Forth Bridges and the distinctive historic communities of North and South Queensferry, has new directional fingerpost signs in place to help visitors navigate the route.

The new directional signs help visitors find their way between the more detailed interpretation panels on the Trail. They have been funded through the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and designed to reflect the famous red riveted steelwork of the Forth Bridge.

Management Plan

The Forth Bridge was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in July 2015. A working group was formed in January 2025 to work on an updated Management Plan. Members of the group include Historic Environment Scotland, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, VisitScotland, City of Edinburgh Council and Fife Council.



Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site

In 2024–2025, the primary focus of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS Steering Group was addressing the issue of coin insertion in the iconic Causeway basalt formations.

Visitors have been lodging coins into the basalt formations at the Giant's Causeway for over 40 years, though this has become significantly more widespread in the past decade, with tourists, inspired by the sight of existing coins, inserting their own into the natural joints and fractures of the basalt formations. As these coins corrode, they expand, leading to damage and staining of the rock surface. In 2023, the British Geological Survey assessed the area and confirmed that this is causing both aesthetic and physical harm.

In response, a trial coin removal was conducted by Cliveden Conservation in February 2024. Building on the success of this trial and with funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), a pilot conservation project was commissioned in Summer 2024 by the National Trust and the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, on behalf of the WHS Steering Group.

Stone conservation specialists CONSARC were appointed. Between January and March 2025, they carried out detailed mapping, surveying, and carefully removed coins from test areas. In total 9kg of coins were removed and the project demonstrated that stone masonry tools and techniques offer an effective way to remove coins without causing damage. The project also found that approximately 300-400 linear metres of joints are still affected, and it is hoped that with further funding a second phase of coin removal will commence in Autumn 2025. We plan to train volunteer in removal techniques to support long-term conservation at the site.

Visitor messaging has increased to raise awareness of the issue. An informative video featuring Dr Kirstin Lemon from the Geological Survey Northern Ireland and Dr Cliff Henry from the National Trust explains why the coins have become such a problem. This video is shown at the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre and has been widely shared on social media, contributing to a broader understanding of the importance of protecting the WHS from further harm. The video can be viewed here <https://fb.watch/zJEwdBsxik/>



L-R: Before and after photos of coin removal – note reddish brown staining from corroding coins; coins lodged between joints and fractures of the basalt columns; stonemason team and National Trust volunteers removing coins

The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site

Llewyrch o'r Llechi

Llewyrch o'r Llechi is a cultural investment programme led by Cyngor Gwynedd worth over £27m, 18.6m of which comes from the UK Government. It includes three cultural Hubs – Dinorwig, Ogwen, & Ffestiniog - with projects led by organisations rooted in those communities.



Dinorwig Hub - Redevelopment of the National Slate Museum, to include extensive conservation work, upgrading education and exhibition space and establishing the Museum as the main hub for the World Heritage Site. The museum is now closed whilst redevelopment work takes place.

However, the museum has a presence at Dinorwig Quarry hospital (Llanberis), Cei Llechi (Caernarfon) and Castell Penrhyn (Bangor). Improvements to Parc Padarn Country Park: including the reuse of historic buildings, improvements to footpaths and upgrading facilities (including toilets and parking). Conservation projects: Cadw have granted Scheduled Monument Consent for conservation work on the A1 Incline, Vivian Quarry. Works began in September 2024.

Ogwen Hub - Improvements to Neuadd Ogwen to increase their ability to host world-class cultural events. The Yr Hen Bost Project involves the redesign of the former Spar shop on Bethesda High Street into a community asset. This will include a heritage centre, business units and community spaces. A contractor has been appointed and work has begun. Better connectivity between Bethesda and the Slate Landscape via improvements to Lôn Las Ogwen and other public footpaths: work has been completed on bridges near Porth Penrhyn, further improvements are planned

Ffestiniog Hub - Antur Stiniog have purchased Tŷ Abermawddach through the project, and will also upgrade Aelwyd yr Urdd and renovate 22 & 23 Church St as community assets Llwybr Llechwedd is a new active travel route between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llechwedd Quarry.

There is also funding for conservation works in the three hubs, and town centre improvements across the slate landscape in the main communities of the World Heritage Site

LleCHI LleNI: Our World Heritage Site, Our Pride, Our Future

£2million project over 5 years (2024-2029). Vital part of a broader strategic World Heritage Site effort to use the UNESCO Inscription as a driver for economic and social regeneration, aiming to empower communities across Gwynedd. Activities to conserve and to celebrate slate heritage, opportunities to encourage local pride, develop skills of children and adults, promote wellbeing and to work with a range of groups. National Lottery Heritage Fund grant award of £1,756,555 for the 5-year period, with match funding from Cyngor Gwynedd, Cadw, National Trust, Amgueddfa Cymru, Bangor University and Eryri National Park Authority. Project commenced in September 2024.



The Flow Country World Heritage Site

Inscription

The Flow Country finally achieved inscription at the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in July 2024. Since then, it's been full steam ahead to get celebrations done and begin the business of formally running a WHS.

The Site was inscribed on 26 July 2024 and officially 'opened' by HRH King Charles III on 31 July 2024 who was fortuitously for The Flow Country Team in the area at Castle of Mey. King Charles unveiled a plaque identifying the Site, made from local Caithness flagstone, at an event held at Forsinard in the heart of the Flow Country. We had a gathering of people from the local communities of the Flow Country; a BBQ with locally produced meats and other provisions, teas and cakes, and young people from the local Feis played music for the event.



L-R: Children played music; King Charles III unveils the plaque; the bid team and Partnership members around the plaque

The Flow Country continued the celebrations for inscription with events in December 2024, 28 January 2025 and 2 February 2025 which entailed a collaboration with the makers of an award-winning film 'When Fish Begin to Crawl' co-created and directed by Morag McKinnon (filmography) and Jim Sutherland (score). The film, an immersive visual and auditory experience about human impact in the planet, was initially screened with a soundtrack at Lyth Arts local to the WHS, and subsequently with the RSNO playing the score in both Inverness and Glasgow. All events were well attended.

Awards

The Flow Country Partnership was awarded the Nature and Climate Action award at the Nature of Scotland Awards 2024 for the overall programme of work in joining up protection and enhancement of the peatlands (and WHS recognition) with the work on the green finance initiative to increase scale of peatland restoration undertaken.



L-R: Official poster image for the film; RSNO playing as the Flow Country is seen in the film; FCP Trustees Roxane Andersen and Graham Neville receiving the Nature & Climate Action award

The Great Spa Towns of Europe World Heritage Site

INTERSPACE Project forms a Youth Forum

The Great Spa Towns of Europe (GSTE) ran the first ever project involving young people – INTERSPACE (Inter-Spa Town Celebration of European Heritage). The project gathered nearly 100 young people living across GSTE to engage them with World Heritage and their shared spa culture through activities, tours and workshops.

With online workshops and three-day educational programmes in Baden bei Wien and Mariánské Lázně, INTERSPACE encouraged young people to discover their own and others' spa town heritage,

Alongside, INTERSPACE gave the reins to the young citizens to shape a Youth Forum, providing them with a platform from which to share their ideas and perspectives at our General Assemblies. They worked in a manner that exemplified European cooperation, in the same way spa culture has connected nations in the past.

As the current residents and future custodians of the spa towns, bringing the next generation into decision-making about the management of the towns they live in not only recognises the value of their ideas, but ensures fairness and sparks their enthusiasm for protecting irreplaceable cultural traditions.

Enrolment in Preserving Legacies

Preserving Legacies is an organisation that empowers natural and heritage Sites around the world to develop resilience against the effects of climate change and support community adaptation.

GSTE enrolled in its climate adaptation programme with four custodians; Tony Crouch (Site Manager, City of Bath, UK), Anke Matthys (Site Manager, Vichy, France), Anne Pirard (Site Manager, Spa, Belgium) and Chiara Ronchini (Secretary General of GSTE).

This is the first time Preserving Legacies have worked with a serial, transnational site and marks an important step forward in scaling up their work. The insights learned from the programme will be amplified across our international network, offering a model for future collaborations on a regional and global scale.

State of Conservation Report

A major achievement was the submission of our State of Conservation Report in November 2024, as requested by the World Heritage Committee. This included minor changes to the Site's boundaries, which was approved at the 46th World Heritage Committee in Delhi in July, a combined management plan for the City of Bath and a shared monitoring system.

The report represents a significant milestone in demonstrating the consolidation and strengthening work we have undertaken to protect GSTE since inscription. We look forward to the Advisory Bodies' review of our continued commitment to safeguarding this extraordinary World Heritage property, and to receiving the official response at the 2025 World Heritage Committee session in Paris.

Development of a Shared Monitoring System

A new shared monitoring system, the 'Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0', will establish an effective way to protect the state of conservation and identify emerging trends across the property.

Our Secretary General, Chiara Ronchini, was invited by ICCROM to present the new shared monitoring system at the 46th World Heritage Committee session in Delhi, organised by the ICCROM World Heritage Leadership Programme Team.

While still a work in progress, the iterative and participatory approach used to establish this joint, transnational monitoring system was well-received and may serve as a model for other serial transnational sites. The Site Managers and the Secretary General will test this in 2025.

Celebrating World Heritage

Celebration of GSTE takes place at different times of year in the different towns. Vichy celebrates the inscription anniversary every year in July, spotlighting another of the 11 towns in the property (they celebrated Baden-Baden in 2024). Bad Kissingen, and other German towns, celebrate World Heritage on the first weekend in June, while others take the ICOMOS International Day for Monuments and Sites on 18th April as the date for celebration and education.

These celebrations focus on engaging with the local community, sharing spa traditions and connecting with other spa towns. Guided World Heritage tours, scavenger hunts, trail walks on the terrain cure trails, musical performances, street theatre and demonstrations by local artists. Ongoing conservation projects are also opened up for the public to engage with.

New Appointments

Catherine Lloyd, Communications Coordinator for GSTE, finished her contract in December 2024. The Association welcomed her successor, Naomi Jennings-O'Toole, at the General Assembly in Baden bei Wien, before taking up her new role in January 2025.

In the City of Bath, a new chair was appointed in May 2024 to lead the City of Bath WHS Advisory Board. Prof. Marion Harney from University of Bath will serve a 3-year term. Prof. Harney is an expert in building and landscape heritage, is a resident of Bath and is a highly experienced member of the Advisory Board. The Board was established in 2001 and has since been adapted to accommodate the inscription of GSTE. This long-established forum has 28 members from 19 local and national organisations. The UNESCO WH status provides non-political objectives which key stakeholders can agree upon. This participative approach ensures the preservation of Outstanding Universal Value is a community goal. Whilst Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council act as chief steward of the WH agenda, the role of Advisory Board Chair is an independent and voluntary position. New terms of reference were also put in place for the Board in 2024.

The University of Bath and B&NES Council have collaborated on an 18-month pilot scheme to establish an Architect in Residence position for the City of Bath, funded by a £60,000 private donation. Renowned architect Bob Allies was appointed in September 2024 to promote design excellence through new guidance, advice and discussion to help preserve and enhance the WHS. As founding members of the City of Bath WHS Steering Group, the University demonstrates the direct role academic institutions can play in World Heritage conservation.



Studley Royal & Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site

Planning permission granted for 'Studley Revealed'. A project to improve the welcome to the WHS Studley Royal Water Garden

The National Trust team don't think they've ever heard a visitor say that they're '*off for a day out at Studley Royal Water Garden*'? Much more likely that they're '*going to Fountains Abbey*'.

The National Trust team are delighted to say that North Yorkshire Council has given planning permission for Studley Revealed, a project that will deliver world-class facilities to the Studley Water Garden.

It will provide more information about the garden and include improved visitor facilities, to ensure visitors are given a welcome to the garden worthy of a World Heritage Site. The Studley Revealed project will also deliver conservation benefits by restoring historical sightlines and vistas that have been lost over time.

This project is part of the Trust's longer-term vision to offer historical information about the World Heritage Site and the story of what makes this place special. Their plans are rooted in history and the detailed study of historic maps, images and accounts of how the water gardens have looked and been used since the 18th century.

The application process has certainly raised some of the challenges of building in a World Heritage Site. With multiple revisions and a lengthy consultation process complicated further by the Covid-19 pandemic.



The new building also has some impressive green credentials, with a green roof and carbon efficient materials built around an existing building; the Trust is doing all they can to plan for the future.

To learn more about the Studley Revealed project and follow progress at Studley Revealed project, please click [here](#).

Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site

It's been a packed year for the Jodrell Bank Centre for Engagement, marked by record visitor numbers across multiple months – including March, June, July, October, November, December, and February – as guests came to experience the site's unique fusion of science and culture.

The December Winter of Wonder event – a nostalgic Christmas light trail, and February Half Term programme – packed with brand new science shows and Space Dome films, were a particular highlight for families looking to engage the next generation of scientists.

Jodrell Bank's public events calendar has continued to grow, notably through its collaboration with leading academics on the Lovell Lecture series. These engaging talks, delivered in the Wolfson Auditorium against the iconic backdrop of the Grade I listed Lovell Telescope, offer the public a unique glimpse into the ground-breaking research supported by the observatory.

The site also embraced its cultural role by welcoming local creatives, from writers and musicians alike. For example, Summer Solstice 2024 was marked by a day of panels, lectures, and workshops dedicated to esteemed local writer Alan Garner, offering a unique look into how Jodrell Bank shaped his celebrated body of work. In spring 2025, Wilmslow band Doves launched their much-anticipated new album with a special listening party at the site, revealing Jodrell Bank's influence on their creative journey. Another cultural milestone was the 50th anniversary celebration of Pink Floyd's The Dark Side of the Moon album. Taking guests of a journey through the Solar System with iconic music with cutting-edge visuals in the Space Dome, the event was a spectacular success – selling out multiple times and returning due to overwhelming demand.



Finally, it's been a successful year for Jodrell Bank's expanding commercial arm. Following the successful launch of birthday party and wedding packages in 2024, the site has gone on to win awards for its business event hire services at both the Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards and VisitEngland.

Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site

The Strategic Partnership Board published the new Management Plan Prospectus in autumn 2024, outlining projects planned under three themes to: Conserve, Share and Regenerate the site.

Conserve: The major conservation project on the Norman chapel was completed and the University started work on re-roofing buildings on Palace Green completing Palace Green Library, the Wolfson Building and the Music School in time for the King and Queen's visit to lead the Maundy Service in the Cathedral and distribute Maundy money at a reception in the Castle Great Hall.



Share: Durham University Archaeological Services announced the exciting findings of the excavations that took place Under the Library at St John's College revealing that the peninsula has been in use not for 1000 years – but for 7000 years, with evidence also of Romano-British settlement, medieval occupation before the arrival of the Cuthbert community and burnt thatch radio-carbon dated to around the time of the Norman conquest. The WHS Youth Ambassadors (pictured) were the first to see the finds when they arrived at the Museum of Archaeology

and co-created a museum display and online exhibition.

Regenerate: Work with the National Trust expanded to include two other Green Corridors in Tees Valley and Tyneside with a joint bid (following the THRIVE approach) to the Arts and Humanities Research Council submitted in January for a 3-year programme of research and public engagement linking the Trust's property at Crook Hall with Finchale Abbey and the World Heritage Site following the pilgrimage route of the Camino Ingles. This ties in very well with the Cathedral's announcement of investment in a new Cuthbert Centre for Pilgrimage and Prayer and further development of the Northern Saints' Trails, a regional project which will support ambitions to achieve a tenfold increase in the value of the visitor economy over the next 10 years.

Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site

In February 2025, the UK UNESCO Ambassador, Ms Anna Nsubuga, visited Blaenavon. The visit arranged by Welsh Government, was an opportunity for the Ambassador, who had never visited Wales, to understand more about how Wales currently interacts with UNESCO activities and objectives, in preparation for a visit to Paris UNESCO HQ by the First Minister later in the year. The purpose of the visit was to show the Ambassador the role that the WHS plays for Wales and communities today and included a tour to focus on community involvement such as volunteering activities, events and Young Ambassadors. The visit was considered to be very successful and a fantastic accolade to the community spirit in Blaenavon. It demonstrated the meaning of the World Heritage Site status to the town and how much ownership the community feel in it.



Throughout this year, the work of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Partnership has been ongoing. The partnership is governed by a Board of the executives of 8 partners, but the work of the site is overseen and managed through the steering group and working groups, which meet regularly. The Steering Group have continued to meet quarterly and are a proactive group with strong representation from various partners, ensuring robust governance.

The Caring for Blaenavon Group has been re-established and are focusing on built and natural heritage, the proactive management of the Commons. The Commons remain an active part of the landscape management, with proactive efforts to manage the 33-kilometre World Heritage Site effectively. The Exploring & Enjoying the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape Group has been inactive until recently. A Chair has been appointed, and the group are in the forming stages. Tourism remains active in the World Heritage Site especially landscape tourism.

Blaenavon World Heritage Site has a strong reputation for community engagement and youth participation, as well as its involvement in a national pilot program. This involves sharing data and creating a national toolkit for World Heritage audience engagement. The site has a strong focus on youth participation, with various programs and initiatives aimed at involving young people in the management and promotion of the World Heritage Site. The Learning & Community Engagement Group continue to meet regularly to deliver the action plan.

Plans for the 25th anniversary of the Site are underway, including a National Lottery Heritage Fund bid to deliver a learning program, community engagement activities, volunteer support, and landscape heritage projects. The project aims to support and recognise heritage volunteers, provide training, and increase organisational resilience, with a focus on promoting and supporting heritage volunteering within the community. The landscape heritage projects include refurbishing and conserving walks, creating an accessible walk for people with mobility issues, and linking landscape conservation efforts with community reporting and heritage crime prevention.

This year has seen the conclusion of the Townscape Heritage Program which delivered capital works on key buildings in the town and significant community engagement initiatives, such as the hidden

histories of Blaenavon film and the Broad Street memories tapestry, which have renewed community pride and engagement. The program has had a positive impact on the town, with the renovated buildings attracting new businesses and enhancing the overall appearance and vitality of the area.

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site

Our Picturesque Landscape - Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB

This year saw the conclusion of the [Our Picturesque Landscape](#) project. A landscape partnership scheme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, that centred on the landscapes of the Dee Valley and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site.

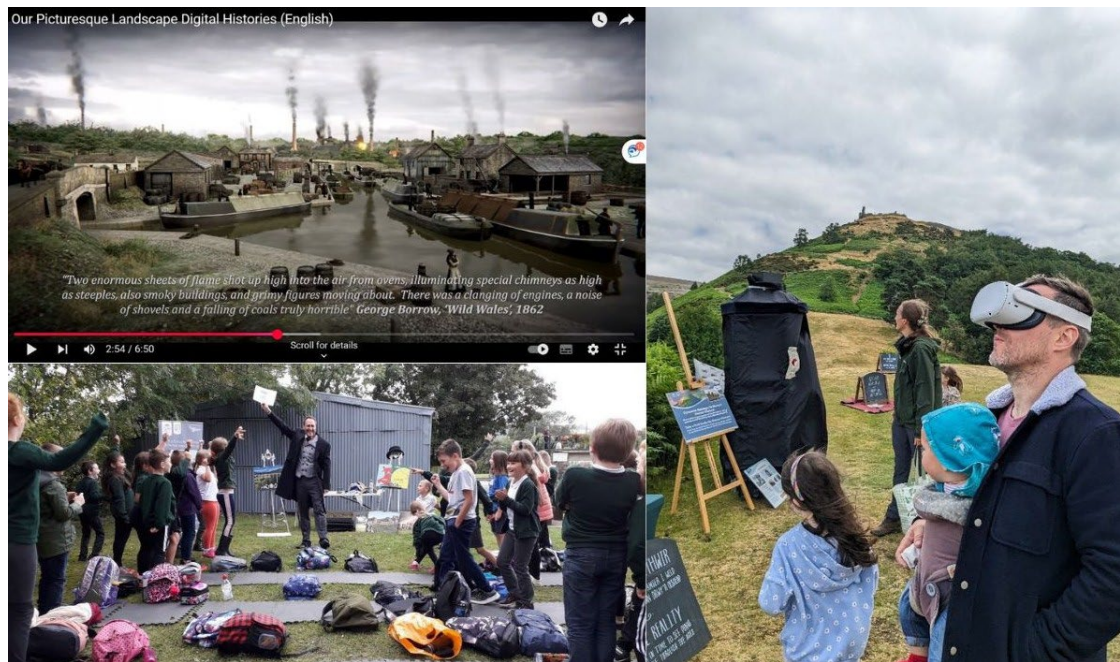
The engineering ingenuity and ambition of the Pontcysyllte aqueduct combined with the picturesque beauty of the Dee Valley made the area a source of inspiration to artists, poets and writers for centuries, and it continues to attract tourists in search of the sublime. This project has worked to conserve and improve access to this inspiring landscape and engage communities with the rich heritage of the area.

The £2.4 million project brought together a strong partnership between the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape, Denbighshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Shropshire Council, Natural Resources Wales, Cadwyn Clwyd, Canal and River Trust, and the Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley.



The project developed and delivered a full interpretation plan for the 11 miles of the World Heritage site sharing the stories of some of the pioneering engineers, artists, tourists, entrepreneurs, and canal labouring navigators who have helped to shape the landscape over the centuries.

The World Heritage Site was brought to life through a combination of live open air theatre and interpretive events as well as the production of digital animation and Virtual Reality experiences. Education material has also been produced.



In all 7,195 people attended community, school and outreach events throughout the project.

Working with both professional artists and community groups over 60 original works of art have been produced reflecting the relationship of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal in the wider outstanding landscape.



The project carried out critical restoration of key historic buildings and structures of the World Heritage Site and has made them accessible to the public for the first time decades. Together these buildings are part of the fabric of the World Heritage site and reflect its Outstanding Universal Value.



The Bridge that Connects

Canal & River Trust have led a [community art project](#) funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with Wrexham County Borough Council. The project has developed a collaborative community film, bringing together stories from residents around the Llangollen waterways and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Levelling Up Projects

Clwyd South [Levelling up project](#) progresses with various improvements to accessibility along the 11-mile stretch of the World Heritage Site. The project brings together a number of interventions being delivered by the partners Canal & River Trust, Denbighshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

The Tower of London World Heritage Site

The Moat in Bloom

In summer 2024, the Tower of London hosted the third and final year of The Moat in Bloom, a vibrant wildflower display that transformed the historic moat into a haven for biodiversity. Originally created in 2022 by Historic Royal Palaces to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, the project replaced lawn of turf with a meadow grown from 20 million seeds. This sweeping display not only offered a peaceful escape in the heart of the city but also included new interpretation, highlighting the moat's rich history, from medieval times to World War II. Access was included with standard admission.

Jewish History

As part of Historic Royal Palaces' commitment to sharing lesser-known histories, a major research project exploring the medieval Jewish community's connection to the Tower of London was completed in 2022. The project has already produced a published catalogue, dataset, journal article, and podcast. In 2024, this research was brought to life on site through two new interpretation panels, available in 11 languages. One panel tells the story of Jewish prisoners held at the Tower, while the other explores the Tower's complex role in both protecting and exploiting the Jewish

community. This important work has also fed into a new display in the Tower’s Medieval Palace, ensuring that these narratives are integrated into how the Tower’s history is understood and experienced by visitors.



Poppy Fields

In November, The Tower hosted Poppy Fields at the Tower, a powerful sound and light installation commemorating the First and Second World Wars. Visitors explored the fortress after hours as the inner walls were illuminated with projections of historic photographs, documents, and artwork, accompanied by music and poetry. The display drew on archives from both Historic Royal Palaces and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, reflecting the Tower’s wartime roles—from military stronghold and prison to target of the Blitz.



By You Tapestry

Historic Royal Palaces has worked with local Tower Hamlets charity Stitches in Time for over 20 years, and in 2024 we were proud to display the By You Tapestry—a powerful community reflection on life during the coronavirus pandemic. Comprising over 250 embroidered pieces, the tapestry was created by 190 stitchers from around the world. It captured a range of experiences, from panic buying toilet paper to the vaccine rollout, interwoven with the personal stories of those who lived through it. The result was a poignant, collective record of a global moment in history.

Sustainability

In 2024, Historic Royal Palaces launched a new Sustainability Action Plan, outlining a clear commitment to becoming Nature Positive and Carbon Net Zero by 2050. This ambition is already

being put into action, with key projects underway across the six sites. Sustainability is shaping everything from garden design and energy use to the way exhibitions are delivered. While the journey to a more sustainable future is a long one, Historic Royal Palaces is working closely with scientists, conservationists, and heritage professionals to ensure these iconic sites remain resilient, relevant, and accessible for generations to come.

Conservation work

In 2024, the Tower of London began the first phase of vital conservation work on Broad Arrow Tower and its adjoining curtain wall, following concerns first identified in a previous State of the Estate survey. This included renewing the lead roof, structural repairs to the turrets, masonry cleaning and repointing, and restoring water-damaged ceilings. Conservation treatments were also carried out on original Reigate stone arrow loops. Modern paint was carefully removed from the first floor to reveal original masonry, while the temporary closure of the wall walk enabled internal electrical upgrades.



In July 2024 two new bespoke oak doors were installed in the White Tower, securing the fire compartmentation at the triforium level of the Chapel of St John the Evangelist, as part of the Towers Fire Safety Improvements Project. In order to contain potential fire-spread and retain the existing doors, two new oak doors have been installed on the inside of each opening. The conservation of the existing doors formed part of the works, and the production of the new door was undertaken using traditional skill and traditions of heritage carpentry.

Birkenhead Park World Heritage Tentative List Site

Technical Evaluation and further developments to the nomination document

Since the last review, Birkenhead Park's preliminary nomination document went through two rounds of Technical Evaluation undertaken by the panel appointed by DCMS, and made of knowledgeable experts in World Heritage Sites, World Heritage management systems, historic landscapes, cultural and natural heritage and sustainable tourism. Feedback received from the panel have significantly helped the improvement of the nomination document, while highlighting additional work required on the Statement of OUV and Comparative analysis specifically, which will remain the focus on the weeks and months to come.

Publication of the first comprehensive history book about Birkenhead Park

Birkenhead Park: The People's Garden and an English Masterpiece, by Professor Robert Lee, was published by Liverpool University Press on behalf of Historic England in May 2024. The book is

beautifully illustrated with 60 colour images, drawing on a wide range of contemporary material and the professional skills of local photographers. Professor Lee's work establishes the Park's significance through his long-term research of the Park, emphasising the how Birkenhead Park was a pioneer in the development of urban public parks, designed for use by everyone. It also celebrates the creative genius and design skills present in Paxton's original design of Birkenhead Park. Professor Robert Lee's work identifies the Park's significant contribution to the public park development and nineteenth-century landscape history on both regional and international scales.

Wirral Borough of Culture 2024 – The Earth “Gaia” Artwork in Birkenhead Park *(images: Mark McNulty and Ron Thomas)*

As part of the City Region's Wirral Borough of Culture 2024 programmes events, Birkenhead Park hosted the artwork “Gaia” created by UK artist Luke Jerram from May 28th to May 30th 2024. The floating planet Earth replica measuring seven meters across its diameter and slowly rotating like the blue planet, allowed everyone to enjoy the detailed view of the Earth's surface based on the 120dpi NASA imagery. The installation was presented alongside three days of entertainment and activities themed around ‘Dance Around the Globe’, ‘Love Your Earth’ and ‘Wirral Sings’. The event was a great success, with more than 30,000 people attending over the three days.



University of Liverpool links and collaboration

Over the past few months, Birkenhead Park strengthened its relationship with the University of Liverpool through several student projects, work placement opportunities, as well as further involvement in academic/practice heritage talks and debates, across various university departments e.g. Architecture, Planning, and Environmental Sciences. In September 2024, as part of the launch of the new Heritage Institute, the World Heritage project officer for Birkenhead Park was invited to join a round table discussion on the future role of heritage from a global perspective. The project BUGS- Birkenhead Urban Green Spaces completed by the MSc students as part of their Environmental Planning and Management Project Module, took place for the third year in a row. As always, this year's students reflected commitment and passion, way beyond expectations. Finally, Charlotte Cheadle, M.A. in Sustainable Heritage Management, conducted a comprehensive study on Birkenhead Park's current contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals as part of her Spring work placement, thus providing a strong baseline for the assessment and the further integration of SDGs into Birkenhead Park's World Heritage Site management system.

The English Lake District World Heritage Site

The English Lake District World Heritage Site Partnership has just produced its Interpretation Strategy and Action Plan outlining how it will promote World Heritage and engage with visitors, local communities and businesses for the next 5 years.



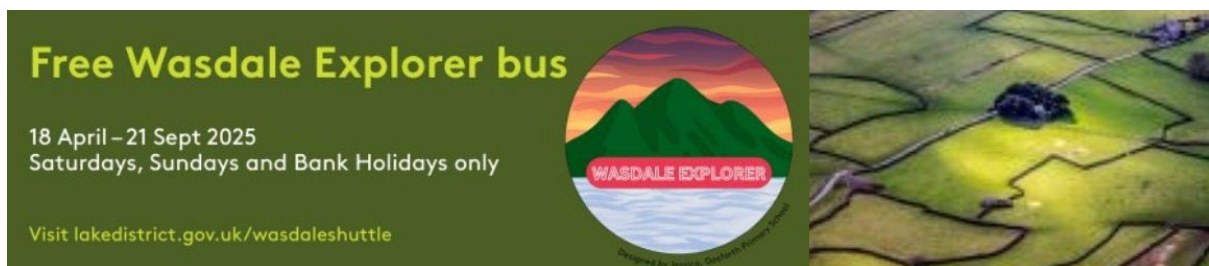
It is intended for use by the Lake District National Park Partnership, and for parties working with them on the interpretation of the ELDWHS to better communicate the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, and to ensure that interpretation becomes a key management tool.

As part of the promotion of the World Heritage Site a 13 Valley Trail has been developed which visits all 13 valleys in the WHS and provides details of why these valleys are special and contribute to the WHS. There are QR codes on way markers that link to information on the Lake District National Park website.

A new walk has been created, The Wordsworth Way, a 14-mile trail that can be completed in one day or split into sections. The trail starts at Glenridding, passing through Grasmere and Rydal, finishing in Ambleside – tracing some of Wordsworth's and his sister Dorothy's favourite walks. Another new walk to encourage people to leave the car behind as it links with both bus and boat transport. The West Windermere Way traces the rugged shores of Windermere and meanders among its quiet woodlands. At 6km this is one of the longer routes, with sections of Miles without Stiles that are for some or for many.



Visitors to the English Lake District WHS can take advantage of the free bus from Ravenglass (both part of the English Lake District WHS and the Frontiers of the Roman Empire WHS!) to the head of Wasdale. This initiative reduces vehicles traffic up this iconic valley and relieves pressure on residents at the head of the valley. And is one of many initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of visitors.



The English Lake District WHS is currently embarking on reviewing the Lake District National Park Partnership Management Plan for both the National Park and World Heritage Site. It is expected to go out for public consultation in September for adoption in 2026.

Moravian Church Settlements Gracehill World Heritage Site

After many years of effort, the small Moravian village of Gracehill in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the 26th July 2024 at the 46th World Heritage Committee of UNESCO held in New Delhi, India. This is Northern Ireland's first cultural designation, the only other World Heritage Site in Northern Ireland being the Giant's Causeway which is a natural site.

Gracehill, the only complete Moravian Settlement in Ireland and Northern Ireland's first designated Conservation Area, is part of a Transnational Designation. This means there is one site but several component parts in different countries. The designation is entitled "Moravian Church Settlements" and includes Bethlehem, (Pennsylvania, USA), Herrnhut (Germany) and the already inscribed Christiansfeld (Denmark) in addition to Gracehill (NI/UK).

Gracehill Settlement is an early example of town planning reflecting the timeless values of education, equality, industry, tolerance and spirituality that have been at the heart of the community since 1759. The intact core of historic listed buildings, Moravian church, central square, and burial ground or God's Acre as it is known, featured in the nomination. Each of the Settlements nominated demonstrate different phases in the development of Moravian planning. Gracehill stands out as having been constructed in a grid plan with a central square and a very clear and complete 'gender axis'. Since its foundation Gracehill was well known for its international links which continue today.

Gracehill is historically renowned for its principles of religious and political tolerance, neutrality, and reconciliation, first manifested significantly during the 'United Irishmen's Rebellion' of 1798 when Gracehill was seen as a place of refuge for all.

Following the designation there was significant media interest and visits from Councillors, politicians, Government Ministers, the US Consul General and many other interested parties and tourists. It has been a very busy time!

The Local Management Group have continued the work to bring plans, devised in anticipation of successful inscription, to fruition. The first stage of pathways and a car park to facilitate visitors and help create a sustainable model for visitors is underway. New guides have been commissioned and there is ongoing consultation and discussion about the future including the appointment of a site co-ordinator.

The Transnational Coordination Group met monthly via Zoom as plans for joint activities were considered and developed further.

Happily, however there was also time for celebration. An international Church service was held simultaneously with live readings and music shared across the nations. Representatives from Gracehill visited the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington DC to highlight the new designation and the links with the United States. A group representing Gracehill attended the formal international celebration and presentation of certificates in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA in October. There was a further visit to Herrnhut, Germany in November to see the wonderful restoration work which has recently been completed on a number of buildings there. Herrnhut community also held a dinner featuring food from the four nations involved in the World Heritage Site – Irish soda bread was a highlight!

2024 will certainly be a year to remember. Over 20 years of effort has reached its conclusion. We had a vision, we built local partnerships and we developed international networks. The prize of a transnational World Heritage Site is a huge good news story locally, nationally and internationally, something that everyone can share in and be proud of, with the potential to promote understanding and reconciliation and bring social, economic and cultural benefits now and for generations to come. Far from being the conclusion, we believe this is just the beginning!

Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site

Work on the latest Management Plan is entering the final stages. An in-person community consultation was held in February 2025, followed by an online consultation which closed on May 13th. The next stage is to analyse the consultation feedback and use this to inform the final version of the Management Plan.



Community Consultation for the Heart of Neolithic Orkney WHS Management Plan (copyright K4 Graphics)

Currently in development is the Orkney WHS Gateway Programme (OWHSGP), intended to explore ways to improve the visitor experience at and around HONO while safeguarding the OUV. This is a component of the Islands Growth Deal and will deliver some of the aims of the Management Plan.

Frontiers of the Roman Empire: The Antonine Wall World Heritage Site

Over the past few months, FRE have been building a new and improved Antonine Wall website. The website is now live and ready to be explored!

The Rediscovering the Antonine Wall (RtAW) Project will continue until September 2025. Existing digital resources that were made by the project team will be made available on the new Antonine Wall website. Recently, the team have spearheaded many signage, and interpretation works such as path works and new signage at Polmont Woods near Falkirk, and a new Antoninus Pius bench for Goldenhill Park.



L-R: The Antonine Wall website landing page (Copyright Historic Environment Scotland); New Antonine Wall bench in Goldenhill Park near Duntocher Fortlet (Copyright West Dunbartonshire Council)

Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site

The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh (ONTE) Management Plan was officially adopted in November 2024, with the final version of the document ready for publishing sometime in the coming weeks.

This year Edinburgh Castle, part of the WHS, was host to a celebration of Scottish World Heritage Sites. There was a family-friendly drop-in event on April 18th, with various craft activities, artefact handling, ancient games, and information tables. There was a total of 420 visitors throughout the day – much higher than anticipated.



World Heritage Day event at Edinburgh Castle (copyright Neil Hanna)

Another highlight on-site, was the visit of undergraduate students studying Geography and Tourism Management at York St John University. The students came to speak with staff from the World Heritage Team at Historic Environment Scotland and learn about the history of the Old and New Towns, and how it is managed as a WHS.

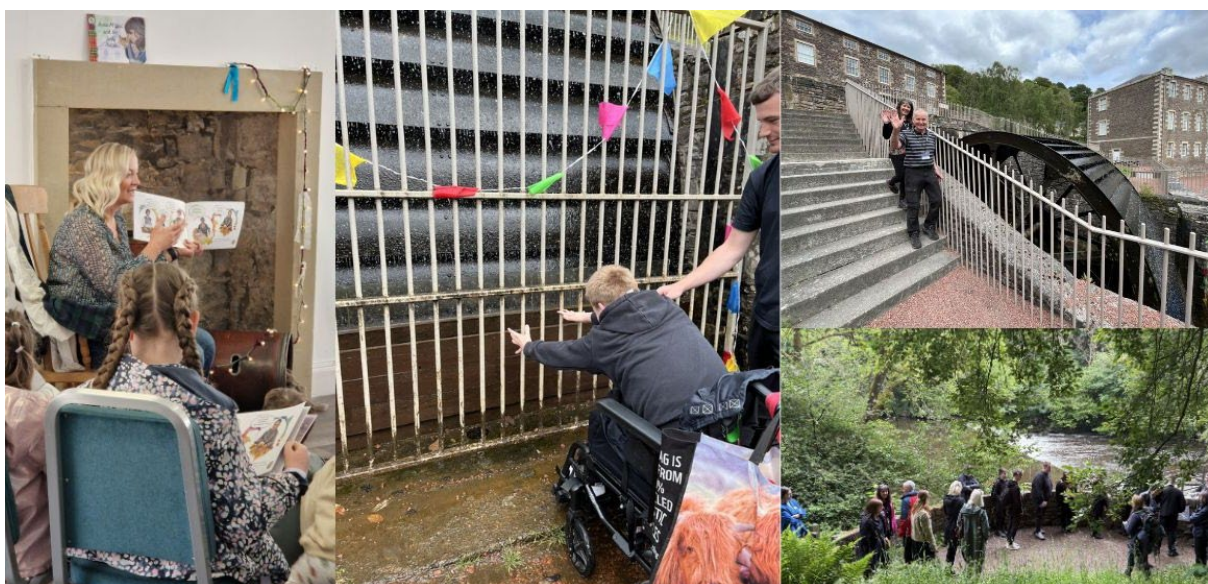
New Lanark World Heritage Site

Organisational Developments

New Lanark's Management Plan 2025-2030 is in its final phase of consultation, with a view to officially launch the document in late summer 2025. Recent research insights from Scottish Enterprise have played a pivotal role in shaping their future direction, particularly around domestic and international tourism trends and visitor engagement. These findings are now influencing several of their strategic developments. NL has also successfully automated group visit bookings and restructured roles within their learning programme, freeing up vital capacity within the heritage team to focus on strategic planning and innovation. NL's planning processes have been refreshed and streamlined with the introduction of a new seasonal calendar model. This allows for a tailored quarterly offer that reflects the unique priorities and themes of each season. Strong partnerships remain at the heart of their work and they have been working on establishing local, national and international connections to support key areas development and engagement. Notably, NL has completed a full 3D scan of the site in collaboration with Site Network, which opens up exciting opportunities in digital tourism, education, accessibility, and inclusion. Meanwhile, the success of the Annie McLeod book launch has paved the way for continued creative collaboration.

Learning and Engagement

New Lanark's learning offer continues to grow in both scope and accessibility. They are co-developing a sensory storytelling session with local specialist schools, forming part of their wider PMLN/ASN learning programme. Future phases will include scalable workshops, and an inclusive evaluation model aligned with Education Scotland's foundational milestones. NL are expanding their engagement work with visitors with ASN needs by introducing a sensory site map among other provisions. They are marking Volunteer Week (2–8 June) with a fresh recruitment drive and the launch of new volunteer roles. In heritage, NL are developing a new permanent exhibition for the School for Children, tracing the evolution of education at New Lanark. Local schools will be invited to help shape the final exhibition, ensuring a co-curated and community-rooted approach. NL also launched their postgraduate student placement scheme in January, with more joining the site this summer, including international placements, further strengthening their research and engagement capacity.



L-R: Annie McLeod Book Launch (Copyright New Lanark Trust); Pupil during sensory learning visit (Copyright New Lanark Trust); Volunteers by the water wheel (Copyright New Lanark Trust); Launch of the Power Trail (Copyright New Lanark Trust)

New Lanark has launched The Power Trail, a new outdoor experience that invites visitors to explore the story of waterpower at New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde, tracing centuries of engineering innovation and sustainable energy. This initiative is a collaboration with Lanark Community Development Trust, Scottish Wildlife Trust, and Drax Group, with support from SSE's Sustainable Development Fund, which is also supporting our STEM learning work. Interpretation panels are now in place at key points along the site and trail, enriching the visitor experience and showcasing their legacy of renewable energy. NL's tours have also been expanded to include a variety of themed experiences, from the General and Hydropower Tours to People of New Lanark, Hidden Histories, and Restoration Tours, providing visitors with deeper insight into the site's heritage.

Training and Capacity Building

Team training remains a key priority, with key staff completing multiple relevant programmes aligning with NL's current and prospective projects. Staff and volunteers are also set to benefit from upcoming Autism Awareness training in partnership with the National Autistic Society, with further training such as Makaton in the pipeline.

St Kilda World Heritage Site

The St Kilda archipelago is really only accessible between late April and mid-September so all works on island have to be carried out within this period. The National Trust for Scotland have a core of three staff on island all summer, supplemented by contractors and volunteers.

Like all seabird colonies in northern Europe, St Kilda had been badly hit by avian flu in 2021 and 2022, with Great Skuas being particularly affected. The seabird populations on St Kilda are a key attribute of the World Heritage Site. Colonies are now more intensively monitored, especially those most badly affected by avian flu and St Kilda is working with researchers to understand more about how this virus is spread and how seabirds are affected.

The use of technology is opening up new ways to record wildlife and they are trialling some of these to monitor populations and behaviour. A time-lapse camera was installed overlooking a Kittiwake colony and artificial nest boxes with an integral motion sensor camera have been placed in the Leach's Petrel colony. These cameras will give the WHS the opportunity to view behaviour constantly, something that cannot be done with people.

St Kilda was delighted to finally start work on the roof of the church and schoolroom in June. The early 19th century church was the heart of the community on St Kilda, until the people left in 1930, but St Kilda is one of the windiest and most exposed places in the UK and the roof had a number of missing and loose slates as well as missing rainwater goods, all this was causing damp on the inside.

Although it was unlikely that any of the slates on the roof were original, as records show major works to the roof in the 1950s and 1970s, the site still hoped to reuse as many slates as possible. In the end, only one of the smaller aspects of the church roof was slated in 'original' slates and the remainder in Burlington slates from a quarry in Cumbria that were a good colour match to Scotch slates already on the roof.

Even though the original church didn't have rainwater goods, these had been installed in the 1970s, the decision was made retain them and the new cast iron gutters and downpipes were securely fixed.

This has already made a noticeable difference not just to the look of the building but also to the damp interior, which is much improved. The interior works are scheduled to be undertaken in 2026.

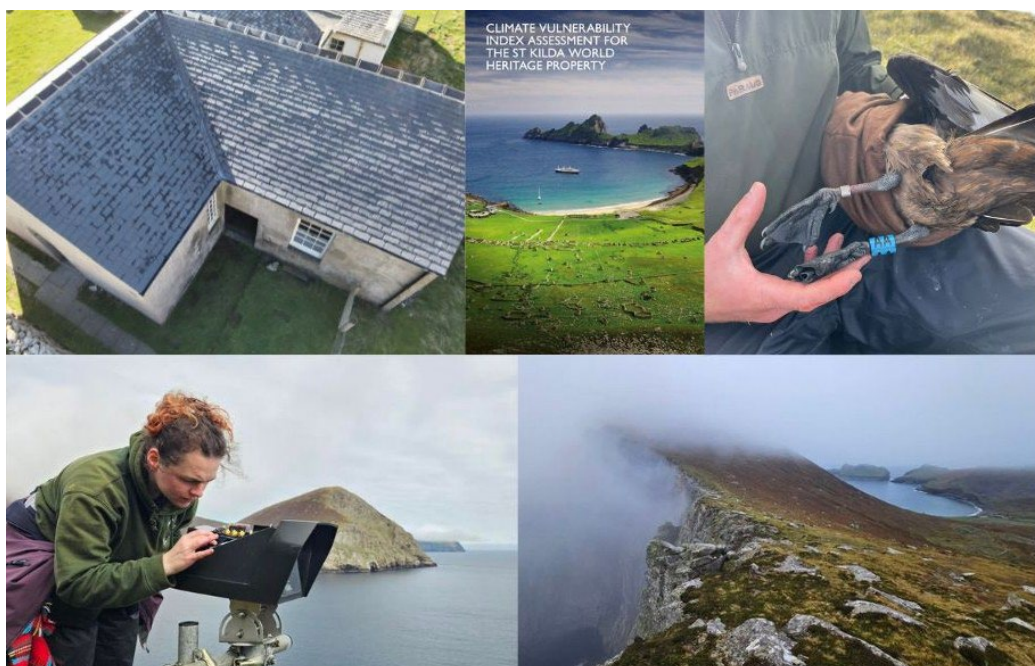
In May the site published the Climate Vulnerability Assessment for St Kilda; this is the report from a workshop carried out in 2022. In the workshop St Kilda focused on the impacts on the attributes of the World Heritage Site until around 2050 in a high emission or 'do-nothing' scenario. The workshop was run by Scott Heron, UNESCO Chair on Climate Change Vulnerability of Natural and Cultural Heritage and Jon Day, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University, who have developed the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) model; a rapid assessment tool to systematically assess climate change vulnerability.

The workshop identified the three key stressors for St Kilda:

- Increasing temperatures – particularly in the sea; this impacts on the whole eco-system and affects the habitats and species in the ocean as well as on land
- Increasing storminess – this impacts on cultural heritage; increase rainfall and stronger winds will affect buildings and wildlife as well as the ability to get to and from St Kilda
- Changes to ocean currents - this is a potential for the ocean currents that keep the climate temperate to change and so the site would be looking at a much cooler climate

The report details the process and how each aspect of St Kilda will be affected: the landscape and scenery, the marine life, the seabirds and other wildlife, the buildings and the community and the social and economic impact. It is not surprising that the natural environment – particularly the seabirds and marine environment will be impacted and may be less able to adapt than the buildings and cultural landscape.

The report outlined an adaptation strategy that the site managers can adopt which included practical responses such as: increasing the active conservation programmes and repair more frequently; improve drainage and gutters; increase research into seabird foraging patterns; and better understand the surrounding marine ecosystem and widen the biosecurity plan. It also helped identify some of the research and policy gaps, where the site just did not know what the impact of climate change would be as there was not enough information or data.



Historic Town of St George and Related Fortifications, Bermuda World Heritage Site

Mitchell House Museum, St. George's Historical Society

The Society continues to make their historic building, located within the UNESCO World Heritage Town of St. George, open for visitors and locals alike to learn about our history and culture.

Thanks to the foresight of local residents, this building was saved for future generations when the St. George's Historical Society was formed in the 1920's to save the house, which was up for auction. The building is now Grade 1 Listed. It can thus be claimed that this is the oldest Museum in Bermuda and has been open to the public for more than 100 years.

It is particularly important to share this space, and the associated stories, with local schoolchildren, who will be the future stewards of historic buildings such as Mitchell House.

The Museum showcases numerous aspects of times past:

- Use of local resources, particularly limestone, cedar and palmetto
- Early architectural features, including our outside tank, roof construction and windows and doors set high without lintels
- Extensive trade, with artefacts from many parts of the world
- The influence on society with the availability of books, with a replica Guttenberg-style press on display, along with associated type, etc

As every year, maintenance has been carried out to keep the building in good repair. The biggest job tackled in 2024 was funded by a grant from UNESCO funds managed by the Corporation of St. George's. The job was the painting of the entire outside of the Museum, its ancillary roadside walls and cottage next door, including both the roofs and all exterior walls. Sources of other funds include pre-booked tours as well as donations from both corporate and private citizens. Tours help the "bottom line" with a contribution exceeding \$3,000. Even with that addition the cost of wages alone far outstrips the income from visitors.

Fundraising events help to fill the financial gap. During Mike Jarvis' archaeological dig on Smiths Island, he gave a talk at the Museum about the 1612 settlement under excavation, including the exciting discovery of daub with palmetto leaf imprint. Peter Barrett gave a most informative talk on the fate of the survivors of the wreck of the Sea Venture and he is donating half the proceeds of the sale of his book 'Virginia and Bermuda, Colonial Siblings' to the Society.

Bermuda National Trust

During 2024, the Bermuda National Trust (BNT) continued its advocacy, management, and research efforts in support of the Historic Town of St. George and Related Fortifications through the following roles and projects:

World Heritage Advocacy:

- BNT played an active role in the UNESCO Advisory Mission events and meetings held in March, with the mission's report tabled and made public in November
- Three BNT appointees served on the St. George's Preservation Authority, which reviews all applications within the St. George's Preservation Area—contiguous with the World Heritage Site town (though not including many of the related forts)

- BNT's Archaeological Research Committee advised formal representations and objections to planning applications, and conducted archaeological assessments and watching briefs, within the World Heritage Site

World Heritage Management:

- BNT managed eleven historic buildings, including two museums. The Globe Museum on King's Square was open all year with volunteer support and exhibits were enhanced with new collections, including a historic portrait of Sir Thomas Gates and archaeological finds. Down Water Street, Tucker House Museum was temporarily closed for safety reasons ahead of building conservation and museum re-curation planned from 2025
- BNT managed four historic cemeteries in partnership with the Department of Parks. This included working with the landscaping firm who maintains the historic landscapes, monitoring Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorials, and overseeing masonry conservation work on memorials and boundary walls
- BNT's Archaeology Lab was relocated to the cellar of the Globe Museum to provide more space and improved conditions for research, storage, display, and public engagement with archaeological collections from the World Heritage Site. A \$25,000 grant from the Corporation of St. George's supported the purchase of shelving, collections housing, and processing equipment. Another local donor sponsored an industrial dehumidifier to stabilise the lab's climate

World Heritage Research:

- The Smith's Island Archaeology Project (SIAP), led by Dr. Michael Jarvis of the University of Rochester, had a successful 2024 season. Activities included ground-penetrating radar surveys, further excavations, faunal and daub analyses, and national recognition as the cover story of the December issue of Smithsonian Magazine
- Professors Emma Waterton and Jason Dittmer from the Heritage for Global Challenges Research Centre partnered with BNT to continue their study of the World Heritage Site, engaging east-end residents through focus groups hosted at the Globe Museum
- BNT and Long Story Short provided curatorial support for the Unsettled Freedom mural in King's Square by Bermudian artist Shanna Hollis. The project was supported by the Bermuda Tourism Authority, Norwegian Cruise Lines, and the Corporation of St. George's

World Heritage Education & Engagement:

- BNT hosted educational field trips for hundreds of students, exploring a range of themes including early settlement, enslavement, architecture, and maritime and military heritage
- Thousands gathered in St. George's for BNT's annual Christmas Walkabout, enjoying decorated historic homes, live entertainment, and local food vendors during this festive celebration

City of Bath World Heritage Site

The big news story for Bath in this period is the new Combined City of Bath and Great Spa Towns of Europe World Heritage Sites Management Plan 2024-2030 and replaces the previous Plan that covered the period 2016-2022. The process of review from 2024 to 2025 involved significant participation with the WHS Advisory Board, and its appointed steering group made up of key stakeholders from the Board including, Great Spa Towns of Europe, Historic England, National Trust, ICOMOS-UK, Bath Preservation Trust and Bath and North East Somerset Council. The public were consulted during an eight-week consultation and the amendments to the Plan arising from the year and half of extremely positive participation has resulted in a strong and worthwhile document that identifies over 50 actions to enable the successful management of both World Heritage Site inscriptions. This is thought to be the first ever World Heritage Site management plan on the UNESCO World Heritage List combining multiple inscriptions and it was recently unanimously endorsed by the WHS Advisory Board and the Council's Cabinet.



In addition to this, the Advisory Board was privileged to be able to appoint Prof. Marion Harney from the University of Bath as the new Chair at the beginning of 2024 and is the first female Chair since the City of Bath WHS inscription in 1987. Prof. Harney has been a member on the Advisory Board since 1997 and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that has already hugely benefitted the Advisory Board and WHSs.

The built heritage of Bath continues to attract a high number of filmmakers and associated film tourism. The Netflix series *Bridgerton* regularly uses Bath locations, as does the police drama *McDonald and Dodds*. The global reach of these productions gives the city significant positive exposure.

The long running proposal from Bath Rugby to redevelop their city centre stadium continues. The live application has now been the subject of three ICOMOS Technical Reviews and a full Heritage Impact Assessment. At time of writing a planning decision is still awaited, but there is general agreement that the UNESCO/ICOMOS involvement has improved the proposed scheme.

Multiple carbon mitigation measures continue across Bath, with the latest being a successful bid for funding to investigate the possibility of generating hydro-electric power from the river sluice gate immediately downstream of the iconic Pulteney Bridge. This initiative follows earlier schemes from the Roman Baths and Bath Abbey to draw energy from the hot springs.

Stonehenge & Avebury World Heritage Site

In July Amesbury Town Council held its **Mayor Making Service at Stonehenge**, working with English Heritage, Mayors and Chairs from around Wiltshire along with Amesbury Town Council staff and councillors. Attendees embarked on an early morning procession to the monument.



The **Avebury Papers** is a four-year Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project to **digitise, explore, and share the multimedia archive** of Avebury's Neolithic origins and its subsequent life-history. It is a collaboration between the universities of Bristol and York, the National Trust, and the Archaeology Data Service, with support from Historic England and English Heritage. The archive will be made available online on an 'open access' basis for research, enjoyment, and artistic projects. The project's digitisation is recently complete, inspiring a number of projects.

English Heritage **volunteers re-thatched a Neolithic house at Stonehenge Visitor Centre**, with support from the Ancient Technology Centre. The work took about four weeks, using 400 bundles of water reed and provided a good way for visitors to understand more about Neolithic building techniques.



Sam Frost Photography / English Heritage

Wiltshire Council has launched public consultation on the draft **Setting of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Sites Supplementary Planning Document**. The document informs decisions relating to development that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS through changes to the setting of the WHS, or to the settings of the monuments within it that contribute to its OUV.

Over the Autumn, English Heritage explored the connection between the Moon and Stonehenge during the **Major Lunar Standstill** - a rare astronomical event that occurs every 18.6 years and provides a unique opportunity for **exploration, research, and community engagement**. Experts believed that the Major Lunar Standstill may have played a pivotal role in the design and purpose of Stonehenge. The partnership between English Heritage and the universities of Bournemouth, Leicester and Oxford to deliver this work was recognised as a **Partnership of the Year Finalist** in the Museums + Heritage Awards.



To launch a season of lunar activities, **90 children from Larkhill Primary and Stonehenge School** gathered with experts for a special aerial photo to capture the possible alignment of the moon at Stonehenge.



The Moon Festival, one of the largest festivals in mainland China, had been celebrated for over 3,000 years. The **Chinese Association of Southampton brought their Moon Festival celebrations to Stonehenge**, featuring dance, music, dragon performances, Kung Fu, and Tai Chi.

In December English Heritage welcomed 60 Muslims from local mosques for a **Crescent Moon sighting event at Stonehenge to mark the start of the Islamic month**, which attendees described as emotional and unforgettable. There was an inspiring presentation on Moon sighting techniques and the similarities in alignment between the Kaabah and Stonehenge. The Kaabah stone structure is located at the heart of Islam's most sacred mosque in Mecca. After sunset prayers, attendees experienced a magical moment as the crescent Moon rose above the stones.



Sam Frost Photography
/ English Heritage

Imad Ahmed, Director of the New Crescent Society, said: *"One thing I have been reflecting on is that our event was a very good example of a partnership between a heritage site and a community who often don't engage with heritage institutions, perhaps due to their socioeconomic background or other barriers. Yet at this event, you had a Muslim community who were absolutely engaged, and able to view the history of Stonehenge in a way that was very relevant to them. The event brought Stonehenge alive to the attendees."*

The National Trust in partnership with Bournemouth and Southampton universities is launching a series of **locative digital games at Avebury** created as part of the LogaCulture research project, enabling visitors to experience the site in new ways. Designers from across the world have created 20 games, featuring everything from interactive stories to virtual tour guides. The project is funded by the European Union and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and visitors can try out the games for the first time at an open day event this summer.

Natural England continues to support landholders and groups across the WHS through funded agri-environment schemes. Recent **major habitat creation to protect the WHS's archaeology** includes enhancements around East Kennet Long barrow and within the Stonehenge landscape. Work with WHS partners has also included species recovery grant aided projects to **help the marsh fritillary and Duke of Burgundy butterfly**, and working with the Wiltshire Chalk Partnership to develop potential Landscape Recovery grant applications.

In the Stonehenge area, baseline natural capital assessments within the Porton to Plain Farmer Group area are providing information to support wider landscape and nature recovery projects and

funding. **Integrating the management and protection of the historic and natural environment** can achieve much more for people, nature, places and the economy.



The National Trust continue their work to **restore species rich chalk grassland**, with all National Trust land within the Stonehenge Landscape no longer cultivated by ploughing and now seeded, with further work ongoing to enhance the biodiversity of the existing grassland.

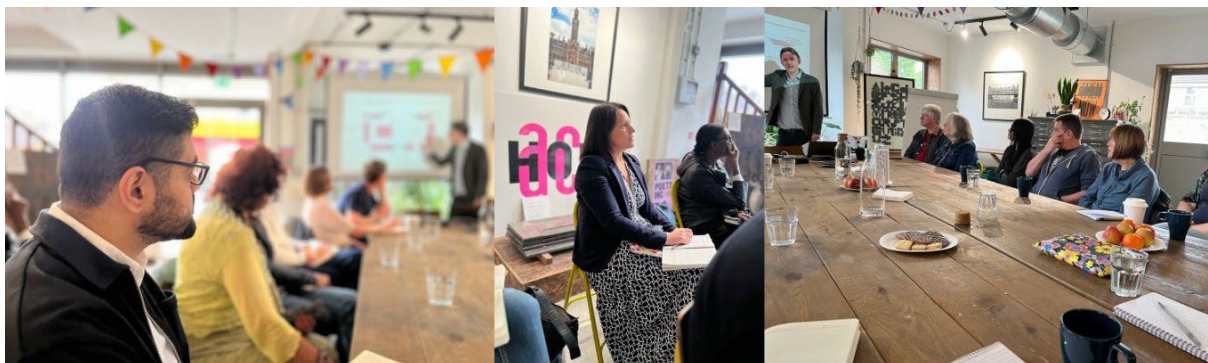
Echoes: Stone Circles, Community and Heritage opened at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre in February 2025. This photography exhibition is a collaboration between English Heritage's Shout Out Loud programme and the arts charity Photoworks. Through photography, three emerging artists explore the stories and connections that communities find in prehistoric stone circles, and **how these ancient places resonate with young people** today.



Saltaire World Heritage Site

Work has been taking place for a new visitor centre in Saltaire on the previously lost Sunday School building site. This new building considers the history of the Site while being sensitive to the new views that have recently become accustomed to and sensitive to the climate emergency, we find ourselves in.

The Saltaire World Heritage Education Association has undertaken an in-depth study of all possible options for relocating the Collection into publicly accessible space. When the new Community Arts, Heritage and Future Technology Building for Shipley College received planning permission in 2024, they began to work on how best to use the museum spaces within this new building and currently have concept designs for the exterior and interior of the building that will help share the collection daily. They are looking forward to its completion and their completed accreditation as the 'Saltaire Museum, Visitor Centre and Garden'.



Shipley College has also continued their obligations to the upkeep of their other buildings located in the WHS. They have recently cleaned the lion, restored wooden floors and installed accessible toilets into Victoria Hall.

The Peace Museum was also relocated from Bradford into Salts Mill, the heart of the WHS. This is a beautiful marriage between the Museum and the UNESCO designation as a tool for peace.

Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site

Management of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site has been taken back into Dorset Council, working with Devon County Council, following the closure of the Jurassic Coast Trust. This transition has unfortunately meant several projects have ended and the dedicated website for the WHS has been taken offline. It also included a reduction of staff capacity to one officer, now hosted by Dorset Council, who continues to provide strategic advice regarding the Site, especially in relation to conservation matters. The Councils remain committed to the WHS and have undertaken stakeholder consultation to help prioritise where remaining funds can be allocated, but this too is a relatively small resource for the time being. It is anticipated that a new work programme will develop during 2025 and that this will lead into the creation of a new management plan for the Site, with that process starting in 2026.

A significant positive piece of news for the Jurassic Coast is that a three-year project led by the Flood and Coast South West team at Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and funded by the Environment Agency and Local Levy, started this summer. The project, which is run in partnership with local authorities and statutory bodies, will examine how Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) projects deal with the OUV of the Jurassic Coast and will aim to create bespoke guidance of how UNESCO's impact assessment guidance can be implemented effectively. This will provide more assurance that the OUV of the Site will be protected and also that FCERM projects can be delivered well and on budget. The project also includes the aim to create and test a series of mitigation options, along with identifying funding streams to deliver them, which is currently not possible within established FCERM processes. This project represents a leading and important development for the long term conservation and sustainable management of the Jurassic Coast.

World Heritage UK July 2025
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