



World Heritage UK

Business Plan 2020-2023

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Executive summary

About World Heritage UK

Our Vision is that the United Kingdom will have a coherent approach to World Heritage Sites that is better known and understood, and supported through sustainable funding, so that their Outstanding Universal Values can provide inspiration, learning and enjoyment for society and contribute to the UK's standing in the world.

Our Mission is to raise the profile and secure the future of UK collection of

World Heritage Sites by advocating for support, resources and recognition, facilitating learning and networking, and promoting the Sites and their values.

Our strategic aims are:

1. To undertake effective advocacy at all levels for the joint benefit of the UK's World Heritage Sites and for the World Heritage Convention.
2. To facilitate and encourage learning and networking for and between organisations and individuals engaged with World Heritage for the benefit of the UK's collection of World Heritage Sites, their communities and the UK as a whole.
3. To promote the UK's collection of World Heritage Sites and their values in collaboration with key domestic and international partners.

The challenges we face

For the next 2-3 years at least we expect to be working in a highly volatile and uncertain context, not least because of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit. The key external drivers likely to influence the future development of WHUK are, therefore, likely to be:

- Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, particularly on WH:UK's potential income.
- The Government's priority for "levelling up" the economy across the UK.
- The emerging importance of heritage, culture and arts to: the UK's economic recovery; people's well-being and mental health and the UK's international "soft power" agenda.
- The continued imperative of climate change.
- The importance of diversity and the need to engage wider audiences.
- A political environment that undervalues the importance of World Heritage.
- The need to support the UK's responsibility for World Heritage conservation/management.

We will keep the context in which we operate and our responses to it (i.e. this plan) under regular review, pivoting to a new mode of delivery and/or adjusting priorities as the current context and analysis of likely future scenarios changes.

Our plans

We will adopt an agile approach to future delivery, capitalising on opportunities as they arise and deploying contingency plans as required. Over the next 3-5 years we want to achieve the following:

1. WH:UK will be a widely recognised and valued, independent advocate.
2. We will have played a key role in development of a compelling National Strategy and Vision for the UK's World Heritage that has been adopted by Government.



3. Our communications presence will be significantly enhanced.
4. We will continue to be influential in promoting UK WHS and their values, domestically and Internationally.
5. We will be delivering a wider range of online and in person events.
6. We will be delivering at least one project each year to support WHS in building capacity, developing skills, raising their profile and promoting WHS and their values.
7. We will have sustainably increased core funding
8. We will be more resilient as a result of reduced reliance on a small number of volunteers for core delivery.
9. We will have enhanced our core infrastructure.
10. We will publish an annual “state of the collection” report.

Our strategy to achieve this is a staged modular framework for realising our ambitions as opportunities arise, while recognising the constraints within which we are operating. It offers the prospect of a “snowball” effect for our future growth of WH:UK and impact. The key features of this approach are:

- i. sustaining a **core module of activities** across our three strategic aims, including developing our core offer through
 - a. A blended programme of online and in-person meetings and events.
 - b. A realistic programme of advocacy and promotion activities with clear objectives.
- ii. stimulating, being alert to, and capitalising on opportunities to “bolt on” **additional modules of activity**. Additional modules will be able to be “unbolted from” the core without jeopardising its overall sustainability. Priorities will include
 - a. Delivery of a compelling National Strategy and Vision for the UK's World Heritage.
 - b. A programme to celebrate the 2022 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.
 - c. Enhancements to our events and training programme including international events.
 - d. Further expanding our communications presence and offer (particularly online).
 - e. Developing collaborative projects with WHS and other stakeholders.

We will deliver this strategy in stages as follows:

Stage I – resilience and recovery: focused on cost management, income protection and increased mobilisation of volunteers, while protecting capacity for development of our offer, e.g. through

- emergency, recovery or transition “core” funding to support enhanced capacity and/or infrastructure investment to enable short term accelerated implementation of this plan; and
- project funding to support additional modules either secured directly by WH:UK or in collaboration with partners.

Key features of this stage will be:

- Prioritising work to explore the potential for **transitional/recovery core funding** to build on the success of our Resilience Project with additional core staff capacity.
- **Incremental enhancements to our core offer**, delivered within available resources, to enhance the value we deliver to members and to develop key collaborations, including:
 - An improved WH:UK website with a members' only area.
 - Clear and realistic advocacy and communications plans delivered collaboratively
 - A more proactive approach to communications including an enhanced social media presence.
 - Development of a WH:UK “prospectus” setting out what WH:UK seeks to achieve.
 - Convening a regular core stakeholders meeting to enhance coordination.



- Publishing a short annual "state of the collection" report.
- Modest growth in the work of our Special Interest Groups
- **A positive approach to stimulating and responding to opportunities** to enhance our work, while retaining a firm focus on our vision and mission.
- **Flexible and agile resourcing** to enable both core and additional modules to be delivered.

Stage II – sustainable growth: having secured the medium to long-term viability of WH:UK in Stage I we will accelerate our growth sustainably as more opportunities for funding come available.

Delivering our plan

We expect to be able to sustain (at least in the short term) at least a 0.6 FTE General Manager supported by a Finance Manager and significantly enhanced volunteer capacity (in particular for digital communications and events support). The General manager will

- a. Develop growth proposals (both incremental and modular) and raise funds for these.
- b. Coordinate the core programme of activities.
- c. Manage and coordinate volunteers.
- d. Oversee and maintain our communications and digital platforms.
- e. Support administration of WH:UK.

Additional staff and/or associates will be retained to deliver additional modules of activity.

We will invest in development of our infrastructure, systems and processes including a new website, CRM, membership development, staff and volunteer training and volunteer management/support.

To sustain this, if we are not able to secure substantial additional core funding, we will invest a small proportion of our reserves in the first 1-2 years of this plan to ensure development capacity is available and maintain activities of most value to our members. Core funding will continue to come mainly from membership fees and events income, underpinned by a robust membership development plan. We expect to supplement this with event sponsorship, grant funding and collaborative funding for projects. Some further core grant funding may be available in the very short and long term, but this is not assumed in our financial planning.



Vision, mission and aims

The World Heritage UK (WH:UK) is the only organisation exclusively focused on World Heritage in the UK, and the only one led by the World Heritage Sites (WHS) themselves. Founded in 2015 as a development of the Local Authority World Heritage Forum, we have achieved a great deal since then, thanks in large part to the considerable efforts of volunteers. This approach reflects a community-driven approach that has proven effective at many WHS and which is favoured by UNESCO.

Our Vision is that the United Kingdom will have a coherent approach to World Heritage Sites that is better known and understood, and supported through sustainable funding, so that their Outstanding Universal Values can provide inspiration, learning and enjoyment for society and contribute to the UK's standing in the world.

Our primary focus for at least the early stages of the period covered by this plan is to support WHS to emerge from the Covid-19 crisis and manage the impacts of Brexit to make an ever greater contribution to the UK economy, the well-being of its population and the UK's standing in the world.

Our Mission is to raise the profile and secure the future of UK collection of World Heritage Sites by advocating for support, resources and recognition, facilitating learning and networking, and promoting the Sites and their values.

Since WH:UK was established we have worked to deliver three strategic aims centred on advocacy, networking and promotion. We have developed those aims in response to the changing circumstances in which WH:UK operates as follows:

Strategic Aim 1: to undertake effective **advocacy** at all levels for the joint benefit of the UK's World Heritage Sites and for the World Heritage Convention.

Strategic Aim 2: to facilitate and encourage **learning and networking** for and between organisations and individuals engaged with World Heritage for the benefit of the UK's collection of World Heritage Sites, their communities and the UK as a whole.

Strategic Aim 3: to **promote** the UK's collection of World Heritage Sites and their values in collaboration with key domestic and international partners.

This plan sets a direction of travel for the development of WH:UK over the next 2-3 years, recognising the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world in which we and WHS are operating. Agility must be the key underpinning of our approach in response to these challenges. While our vision, mission and aims are unlikely to change, how we pursue them will inevitably need to respond as the context in which we operate changes; we must be prepared to take tough decisions where the circumstances require and be willing and be able to respond positively when opportunities arise to enhance our offer further in pursuit of our mission. Therefore, this plan adopts a scenario planning approach centred on the next 18-24 months with a tentative forward look beyond that. It will be regularly reviewed in the light of changing circumstances and updated as required.