

Neighbourhood Heritage: Grants for Communities 2026-2028

Application Guidance

Please use this to complete your application form

1. Key information at a glance

- Historic England expects to fund around 21 projects.
- You can apply for up to £15,000. You do not need to apply for the full amount, and smaller applications are welcome.
- Application deadline: 23:59 on 27 November 2026.
- Funding decisions are expected by the end of January 2027.
- Submit the completed application form and budget spreadsheet to neighbourhood.heritage.grants@historicengland.org.uk

2. Timetable, contact and support

Date	What happens
27 November 2026, 23:59	Deadline for applications.
End of January 2027	Applicants expected to be told the outcome. Successful proposals may require clarification or revision.
Project delivery period	Projects can begin once a grant agreement has been signed and should aim to complete by 11 August 2028.

Send applications and questions to neighbourhood.heritage.grants@historicengland.org.uk. Around 21 awards are expected, so the fund may be competitive. Historic England may not be able to provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Optional online question-and-answer sessions are planned for 21 September 2026 and 9 November 2026. Both sessions cover the same information, so applicants need attend only one. Book the 21 September session at [the first booking link](#) or the 9 November session at [the second booking link](#).

Further help is available through the Historic England links earlier in this document covering barriers to heritage participation, social impact, case studies, safeguarding and inclusion.

3. Before you start

Neighbourhood Heritage Grants support community-led projects that use heritage to help people understand, influence and shape the future of their local place. We are not funding heritage activity for its own sake. Throughout your application, explain how heritage will help local people have a stronger voice in what happens in their neighbourhood.

- Read this guidance and the full application form before you begin.
- You can type into the form or use the form headings in a separate Word document.
- Use clear, everyday language. You do not need to be an experienced grant writer.
- Answer every question. Write “not applicable” where a question does not apply.
- Keep within the word limits.
- Complete the separate budget spreadsheet and do not change its formulas.

4. Plain-English meanings

- **Community-led:** local people have real influence over priorities, activities and decisions.
- **Co-production:** organisations and community members design and deliver work together, sharing knowledge and power.
- **Underrepresented:** people whose voices or experiences are less often included in heritage or local decisions.
- **Place-shaping:** influencing how a neighbourhood is understood, used, planned or changed.
- **Output:** something the project delivers or produces, such as workshops, a map or a report.
- **Outcome:** a change resulting from the project, such as greater confidence or influence.
- **Legacy:** benefits, skills, relationships, evidence or activities that continue after funding ends.
- **Evaluation:** collecting and using evidence to understand what happened, what changed and what was learned.

- **IMD:** the Index of Multiple Deprivation, used to identify relative levels of disadvantage in small areas in England.

5. How to apply

1. Check that your organisation and the community you will work with are eligible.
2. Complete every relevant section of the application form.
3. Complete the separate budget spreadsheet.
4. Submit both documents by the deadline and keep a copy.

6. Who can apply

- Organisations based in England can apply, including constituted community groups, charities, community interest companies and local authorities.
- Your organisation must be able to provide evidence of its governance arrangements.
- Individuals and sole traders **cannot** apply.
- You do not have to be a heritage organisation. If you do not have heritage experience, explain how you will obtain suitable advice or work with a heritage partner.
- The communities you plan to work with must be in an IMD 1–3 area in England. This means they must be in one of the following deciles:
Decile 1 = among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England or
Decile 2 = among the 10–20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England or
Decile 3 = among the 20–30% most deprived neighbourhoods in England

Use the Government's online checker [Local Deprivation Explorer 2025](#) to confirm this before applying. Go to the Local Deprivation Explorer, enter a postcode for the community you will work with, and check the IMD decile shown. If the result shows you are in one of the first 3 blue boxes you qualify.

E.g. this would **not** qualify because the pink dot is in the seventh box across (IMD Decile 7)



But this one would qualify because it is in the first box (IMD Decile 1)



7. What the grant is for

Heritage can include buildings, streets, parks, landscapes, traditions, memories, stories, local identities and ways of life. Your project should use heritage as a starting point for community discussion, learning and action about a neighbourhood's future.

Eligible heritage can include buildings, places or sites that are important locally. They do not need to be listed by Historic England. These grants are not designed primarily to reinterpret museum collections; they are intended to help communities uncover and use stories connected with local buildings, places and sites.

8. What a strong project looks like

- Be shaped with local people from the start, with community members sharing decisions and taking meaningful roles in delivery.
- Use heritage connected to the neighbourhood to help people understand their place and influence its future.
- Identify which people are underrepresented locally and take practical steps to remove barriers to their participation and leadership.
 - Build confidence, skills, relationships and routes for communities to influence local decisions.
 - Leave lasting benefits, such as stronger partnerships, community leadership, knowledge, evidence or continuing activity.

A project that has been fully designed without local community involvement is unlikely to be successful.

9. Examples of possible activity (See the fuller examples in the Appendix at the end of this guidance.)

Projects might use community mapping, local research, creative activity, oral histories, workshops or heritage audits to explore what matters locally and inform planning, regeneration or other neighbourhood priorities. These are examples only; activities should reflect the community and be developed with local people.

Projects do not need to produce a permanent physical output. We are more interested in the difference the project makes and how heritage helps communities address local needs and influence change.

10. Thinking about inclusion

- Which people are underrepresented in your local context.
- How you know they are underrepresented.
- How they have shaped the proposal.
- What barriers they may face.
- What practical support will enable them to participate, lead and influence decisions.

11. If you are new to heritage

You are welcome to apply if you have strong community experience but less heritage experience. Explain how you will access appropriate knowledge, for example through a local museum, library, archive, local history society, historian or other heritage specialist. Describe what the partner or adviser will contribute.

12. We will not fund:

- Projects that are capital works.
- Activities where communities have little or no role in decisions.
- Heritage research with no meaningful community involvement.
- Activities with limited public or community benefit.
- Projects without a clear connection between heritage and place.
- Projects whose main purpose is commercial gain.

13. How to complete the application form

Question 1 Project overview and contact details

Give the project name, amount requested, eligible area, organisation and main contact details. Include registration numbers only where they apply. Confirm the required policies and write “not applicable” where appropriate.

- If you have previously received Historic England funding, give the grant scheme and project name.
- Provide a UK Educational Institute ID only where relevant.
- Make sure the main contact can answer questions about the application.
- You must have a Health and Safety Policy Statement and an up-to-date safeguarding policy with robust safeguarding processes.
- You must be able to confirm that appropriate DBS checks have been undertaken where the activities and participants require them. Write “not applicable” if they are not needed.

Question 2 Organisational Experience (max 200 words)

What we are asking: Can your organisation and partners deliver the project well?

- Briefly describe relevant experience of community engagement, co-production, inclusion, place-based work and heritage.
- Name the key skills in your team and partnerships.
- Use one or two specific examples rather than a general description.
- If you are new to heritage, explain who will provide heritage expertise and what they will do.
- You may add one short supporting link. Check that it works and can be opened without requesting permission.

Question 3 Project Overview (max 50 words)

Give a short, plain-English summary stating the place, the heritage, the community, the main activity and how the project will help people influence their local area. Avoid background detail.

This summary may be used in publicity. Tell us about:

- The place your project focuses on.
- The heritage it will explore.
- The main activity you will deliver.
- The community involved.
- How it will help people shape or influence their local place.

Question 4 Project Design and Delivery (max 500 words)

What we are asking: What will happen, why this approach is right and how heritage will support local influence?

This section should tell us the full design of your project, how it has been designed with community members, and how it will be delivered in a way that uses heritage as a tool for community-led placemaking and local influence.

- What place or neighbourhood your project focuses on.
- How exploring heritage will help people to think about the future of their local place.
- How heritage will contribute to placemaking, regeneration or local decision-making.
- How activities will be delivered in a clear order.
- Describe how people will be recruited, supported and enabled to take part.

Question 5 Community Leadership and Inclusion (max 500 words)

What we are asking: Who has power in the project and how will participation be inclusive?

This section should tell us how communities will meaningfully shape the project and whether underrepresented people are able to participate, lead and influence decisions.

- Which underrepresented communities will participate
- How people have helped shape the proposal so far
- How decisions will be made throughout the project
- How community leadership will be supported
- How barriers to participation will be removed
- How a range of experiences and perspectives will influence the project
- Do not simply say the project is open to everyone; explain how people will be enabled to participate.

Question 6 Community Impact and Legacy (max 500 words)

What we are asking: What difference will the project make, and what will remain afterwards?

This section should tell us about the difference your project will make to people, communities and local places, both during and after the funded period.

Tell us how your project will:

- Strengthen connections to heritage and place
- Build confidence, skills and knowledge
- Strengthen community relationships
- Support communities to influence local change
- Increase participation in local decision-making
- Ensure benefits continue after funding ends e.g. partnerships, community roles, evidence, resources, activities or engagement with decision-makers.
- Enable communities to use the knowledge, skills or evidence generated through the project in future

Question 7 Learning and Evaluation (max 200 words)

What we are asking: Is your organisation willing and able to take part in the programme-wide evaluation?

An independent consultant will design and lead the evaluation, so you do not need to propose measures at this stage. Confirm that you can provide a main contact, allow around three days across the project, collect proportionate baseline and follow-up information using the tools provided, and support appropriate participation in interviews or workshops.

Question 8 Project team

List the people or organisations with a significant delivery role. For each, give their role, relevant experience and main responsibilities. Make clear who is responsible for project management, community engagement, heritage input, safeguarding, finance and evaluation. You may name a role as “to be appointed” and explain how you will recruit it.

Question 9 Risk register

Include the main risks that could affect delivery, such as difficulty recruiting participants, staff changes, delays, rising costs, permissions, safeguarding or data protection. Rate probability and impact, explain what you will do to reduce the risk, give any time or cost implication and name the person responsible. This is not the activity risk assessment.

Example: Risk: difficulty involving an underrepresented group. Probability: medium. Impact: high. Action: work with trusted community partners and allow three to four months for relationship-building. Owner: community engagement lead.

Question 10 Task list and timescale

Break the project into its main tasks. For each task, name the people involved, show the workdays needed for each person and give a realistic completion date. Include community planning, recruitment, delivery, project management, evaluation, reporting and close-down. Make sure the days match the staffing costs in your budget.

Give the anticipated start date requested in the application form. Projects can begin only after the funding agreement has been signed. The start date, completion dates and final project end date must be consistent throughout your application.

The table is an example only. Adapt the tasks and days to your project and make sure they match your budget.

Question 11 Research ethics

Most projects will not need formal research ethics approval. Select “Yes” only if the project is designed to produce wider research findings and involves potentially sensitive information, vulnerable participants, identifiable personal data, or a risk of harm or distress. Select “Unsure” if you are uncertain. If the project is successful, Historic England will ask for further information where needed.

If you select “Yes”, complete the additional ethics questions in the table and provide participant information or consent documents where appropriate. Read Historic England’s Research Ethics Policy and Procedures before submitting.

Question 12 Budget

- Use the separate spreadsheet and do not change its formulas.
- Include only costs needed to deliver the project.
- Show how staff or freelance days and rates have been calculated.
- Make sure costs match the activities, team and task list.
- Include a task called “participate in evaluation” and allow three days.
- Do not add a general contingency line.

- Complete every relevant cell and check the total requested is the same everywhere. Keep the budget as an Excel file or an open-source spreadsheet equivalent. Do not convert it to another file type, as information may be cut off. Tab two contains an example budget and answers to frequently asked questions. Match funding is not required. You may include partnership funding and in-kind or volunteer contributions where relevant. Do not add a general contingency line. Record potential additional costs in the risk register; any later request to vary the grant will be considered through Historic England's variation process and cannot take the award above £15,000.

Question 13 How did you find out about this grant

Briefly tell us where you heard about the grant, for example through Historic England, a partner organisation, an event, email, website or social media.

Question 14 Consent

Tick "Yes" or "No" to say whether Historic England may contact you about future funding opportunities. This will not affect the assessment of your application.

Question 15 Application checklist

Use the checklist to make sure your application is complete. Tick each item only when you have included the relevant information or document.

Question 16 Declaration

An appropriate authorised person from your organisation or community group must sign and date the declaration and print their name. Check that the information and links in the application are accurate before signing.

14. Before you submit

- Check your organisation and proposed community are eligible.
- Complete every section, stay within the word limits and sign the declaration.
- Make sure the project team, task list and budget are consistent.
- Check any supporting link works and can be opened.
- Check the deadline, delivery dates and submission address.
- Keep a copy of everything you submit.

15. If your application is successful

You will enter into a Historic England funding agreement and remain responsible for managing and delivering the project. A Project Assurance Officer will monitor standards, progress and expenditure and provide guidance, but will not manage the project for you. You must keep accurate financial and project records, report on progress and risks, take part in proportionate evaluation and shared learning, and complete an end-of-project report and case study. Do not announce the award before Historic England's public announcement. You will need to acknowledge Historic England and UK Government funding and may be invited to work with Historic England's social media team; this is optional. Contractors must comply with IR35 requirements. New payees will be asked to provide bank-issued evidence of account details. Copyright remains with the creator, but the funding agreement will give Historic England a continuing, royalty-free licence to use or sublicense project outputs. Model-release forms will be required for people included in video, audio or photography. Full branding, publicity, copyright and reporting requirements will be provided to successful applicants.

Appendix 1: Examples of Neighbourhood Heritage projects

Every neighbourhood has heritage. It may be found in buildings, streets, parks, landscapes, traditions, memories, stories and community activities. The examples below are intended as inspiration only. You do not need to follow these models, and we welcome ideas that reflect local circumstances and are developed with local people.

Example 1: Understanding what matters through New Town heritage

Working with the arts organisation Metal, residents in Essendyke explored the heritage of their neighbourhood to understand what makes the area special and how local people would like it to change. Essendyke was developed as part of Peterborough's New Town expansion. Its layout, green spaces and pedestrian routes reflect planning ideas intended to create safe, connected and family-friendly communities. The project used this heritage to start conversations about life in the area today and hopes for its future.

Activities included

- Workshops using large-scale maps, drawing and model-making.
- Walking conversations and street-based engagement.
- Archive photographs showing the area when it was first developed.
- Stories and memories from residents of different generations.
- Creative activities to identify places important to local people.
- Discussion about how the neighbourhood has changed and what could improve.

How heritage supported place-shaping

Residents connected the area's history and original design with present-day concerns about green spaces, play, wildlife, safety, infrastructure and community connections. They identified what they valued, discussed the effects of past changes and developed priorities that could inform planning, regeneration and investment decisions. This was not simply a project to record the past: heritage helped residents express what they wanted for the neighbourhood's future.

Example 2: Heritage-led high street renewal

Residents and traders explore the history of a struggling high street and the role it has played in local life. By looking at how the town centre has changed, they develop a shared vision for its future.

Possible activities

- Collect memories of local shops, services and public spaces.
- Map valued buildings and areas that feel neglected.
- Interview traders, young people and long-term residents.
- Explore archive photographs, maps and directories.
- Hold workshops about possible new uses for vacant buildings and spaces.

Possible outcomes

- Community-led priorities for high street renewal.
- Heritage-informed ideas for vacant buildings.
- Stronger relationships between residents, businesses and the local authority.
- Greater community involvement in town-centre planning.

Why this fits: Heritage is used to understand change, identify what people value and help the community influence regeneration—not simply to produce a history of the high street.

Example 3: A coastal community facing change

A coastal community explores the heritage of its seafront, fishing industry and local traditions while considering future challenges. Heritage gives local people a way to explain what makes the place distinctive and why this should be reflected in future decisions.

Possible activities

- Gather stories, photographs and memories linked to changing places.
- Map important community assets.
- Hold intergenerational conversations about work, tourism and local identity.
- Explore environmental change and its effects on heritage.
- Develop community recommendations for future development and climate adaptation.

Possible outcomes

- Community recommendations for local plans.
- Greater understanding of local identity and valued assets.
- Stronger participation in place-based decisions.
- Greater confidence in engaging with local organisations and decision-makers.

Why this fits: The project connects stories of the past with live choices about tourism, environmental change and future development.

Example 4: A diverse urban neighbourhood

Residents explore how successive waves of migration have shaped local identity, public spaces and everyday life. Understanding these experiences helps future decisions better reflect the people who live in the neighbourhood today.

Possible activities

- Storytelling and oral-history activities.
- Community mapping of important places.
- Creative workshops.
- Intergenerational conversations.
- Shared discussions about neighbourhood change and future priorities.

Possible outcomes

- Stronger understanding and relationships between communities.
- Better representation of voices that have been less often heard.
- Increased participation in local decision-making.
- Community recommendations for future place-based work.

Why this fits: The project does more than collect stories. It uses heritage to build relationships, widen representation and influence future neighbourhood initiatives.

What all strong examples have in common

- Local people help shape the project from the beginning.
- The heritage is important to the community and connected to a particular place.
- Activities help people understand both the past and present.
- The project creates ways for communities to discuss and influence the future.
- People whose voices are less often heard are supported to participate and lead.
- The project leaves stronger skills, relationships, evidence or routes to influence.