

Manifesto for Heritage

National Assembly for Wales election 2016



The Wales Heritage Group urges all political parties to:

1 Value our unique heritage assets and the expertise of those who look after them

- (a) Support specialist conservation staff in planning authorities – without staff expertise there will be no protection of, or focus on Wales's heritage*
- (b) Consider the historic environment in local government reorganisation – it is not an afterthought, – it is fundamental.*
- (c) Support Cadw and RCAHMW– Their (separate) budgets should be protected.*

2 Implement the Historic Environment (Wales) Act to make sure that the past works for the future

- (a) Properly resource the Historic Environment (Wales) Act – it just won't work without resources.*
- (b) Promote the historic environment of Wales – we still don't know enough about ourselves and how to tell our story to others.*

3 Ensure continued support and resourcing for preservation and enhancement of heritage asset

- (a) Provide stronger core funding for the heritage sector – a sound investment for a sustainable heritage environment*
- (b) Provide support for buildings at risk – we want fewer historic buildings to be at risk.*
- (c) Lobby the UK Government on historic environment issues – let's work together.*

4 Involve everyone - landowners, heritage bodies, residents and visitors – in maximising the benefits of our heritage

- (a) Raise pride at home about Wales's heritage – it underpins who we are.*
- (b) Attract more funding into heritage - help heritage organisations help themselves.*
- (c) Put heritage at the heart of sustainable development – conservation of heritage is the original sustainable activity.*
- (d) Celebrate investment in heritage – bringing economic and regeneration benefits and value to social inclusion and tourism*

Heritage is vital for social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing of people and communities in Wales. It is key in promoting sustainable development supporting wider regeneration, catalysing investment and enhancing skills for jobs.



The voice of the independent heritage movement in Wales

The Wales Heritage Group is an alliance of statutory consultees and voluntary national organisations active in the conservation of the historic environment in Wales.

walesheritagegroup@gmail.com

1 Value our unique heritage assets and the expertise of those who look after them

A Support specialist conservation staff in planning authorities.

The number of building conservation staff in local authority and national park authority planning departments across Wales has declined, and posts have been downgraded. This has resulted in:

- an increased risk of poor-quality decisions and damage to the integrity and interest of the historic buildings of Wales
- increased response time to listed building applications and planning applications.
- lack of resources to provide high quality pre-application advice
- a limited capacity for local authorities to develop heritage projects that drive regeneration
- little time to find solutions to buildings at risk
- statutory duties being neglected e.g. conservation area designation and review
- lower priority being given to taking enforcement action against unauthorised alterations.

To maintain and to increase standards and to implement the Historic Environment (Wales) Act this decline of specialist staff must be reversed.

B Consider the historic environment in local government reorganisation

Because of its importance to the identity and culture of Wales and its economic importance, the historic environment and how it is managed and protected should be one of the fundamental considerations in any future local government reorganisation in Wales.

C Support Cadw

We support Cadw and the RCAHMW. Cadw is a small department undertaking a very important and valuable role as champion of Wales historic environment. The RCAHMW takes the lead role in ensuring the heritage of Wales is recorded and information archived and accessible. Cadw and RCAHWM should be protected from disproportionate cuts in funding.

2 Implement the Historic Environment (Wales) Act to make sure that the past works for the future

A Properly resource the Historic Environment (Wales) Act

We want the resources to be available to allow all the elements of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, when enacted, to be properly implemented, including the publication and dissemination of the associated advisory material and support the maintenance of Historic Environment Records.

B Promote the historic environment of Wales

In 2013 58% of British staying visitors to Wales and 77% of overseas visitors to Wales did so to 'visit places/historical sites/specific attractions/sightseeing'. This figure had increased by 20% from 38% in 2011. If more than half of the people coming to Wales are now doing so because of its historic environment, the Welsh Government has an obligation to ensure that its maintenance is seen as a core requirement to sustain the tourism sector. Policies should be developed so that the resulting benefits are spread as widely as possible.



3 Ensure continued support and resourcing for preservation and enhancement of heritage assets

A Provide stronger core funding for the heritage sector

The third sector makes a diverse, valuable and important contribution to the historic environment of Wales. According to the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action there are over 4,000 organisations in Wales that have an interest in the heritage of Wales. The Welsh Government should make better use of the sector, and provide improved and more effective support. Funding procedures for third sector heritage organisations that receive Welsh Government grants, should be reviewed, and grants should be offered on longer cycles, typically 3 years, and not annually as present.

B Provide support for buildings at risk

In 2013 of the 30,000 listed buildings in Wales, 2,673 were on Cadw's buildings at risk register. The Welsh Government should identify and implement specific policies to reduce the number of buildings that are at risk or are becoming at risk e.g. support the beneficial and sustainable re-use of buildings, support building preservation trusts, support planning authorities as they seek to resolve the future of buildings in their area.

C Lobby the UK Government on historic environment issues

We would like to see the Welsh Government lobby the UK Government on:

- reducing VAT to 5% on repairs, maintenance and improvement of dwellings in private ownership as permitted under EU rules. Present VAT arrangements encourage new building rather than the repair, maintenance and alteration of older buildings. This is in effect a tax on conservation and maintenance.
- the continuation of the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme beyond 2016 so that compensation for the VAT incurred on eligible costs continues to benefit this important class of building.
- the continuation beyond 2016 of the DCMS Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund for urgent repairs to listed public places of worship across the UK. Only 26% of 1,900 applications have so far been successful which proves a substantial need.

4 Involve everyone - landowners, heritage bodies, residents and visitors – in maximising the benefits of our heritage

A Raise pride at home about Wales's heritage

Wales has a rich and irreplaceable heritage. We would like to see an internal marketing and education campaign about the value of Wales' historic environment to enlighten and inspire Welsh residents.

Heritage has huge cultural significance, which lead to a feeling of well-being and is important in creating pride of place, and in telling ourselves who we are.

B Attract more funding into heritage

Many heritage organisations urgently need a more sustainable way of securing core costs. Many sources of grant funding are project based, and are mostly unable to provide funding for core costs. As a result, organisations can be forced, unsustainably, to chase grants for specific projects. This risks taking the focus of an organisation away from its core objectives. The lack of core funding also prevents the enlistment of a huge voluntary resource willing to support the historic environment.

There is a dearth of private philanthropic sources of funding in Wales. The Welsh Government should explore all possible means within its powers to seek to increase these and all other forms of fundraising. More investment, aimed at increasing the ability of groups to seek out funding, both from private and public sources, is required (such as provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Catalyst Funding).

C Put heritage at the heart of sustainable development

Research shows that looking after heritage can contribute significantly to the challenge of climate change resulting from excessive carbon emissions. National policy needs to recognise the substantial carbon benefits of retaining and adapting older buildings, when done in an appropriate manner.

D Celebrate investment in heritage

There is increasing evidence to show that investment in heritage is recouped over the medium to long term to the public purse both through the taxes paid as a result of increased employment and the reduction of social benefits paid. More work should be done to gather the relevant information to show this economic benefit, and to better link heritage to regeneration (and other) policy initiatives, e.g. by creating links between heritage and regeneration grant schemes.



The historic environment is important

Heritage is vital for social, economic and environmental wellbeing of people and communities in Wales. It is key in promoting sustainable development supporting wider regeneration, catalysing investment and enhancing skills for jobs.

The Welsh Historic Environment comprises:

- Approximately 30,000 listed buildings (of which 9% are on Cadw's listed buildings at risk register).
- Over 500 conservation areas.
- Over 4,000 scheduled ancient monuments.
- Approximately 400 registered gardens and historic landscapes.
- 3 World Heritage Sites.

'These are what define in visible terms the character and identity of Wales.'

The 2010 ECOTEC report Valuing the Historic Environment found that the historic environment sector is a highly significant contributor to the Welsh economy:

- It is estimated that the historic environment sector supports over 30,000 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in Wales.
- It contributes approximately £840 million to Wales' national gross value added (GVA), which is equivalent to 1.9% of Wales' total GVA.
- It contributes some £1.8 billion in respect of output.
- A considerable share of economic impact relates to tourism expenditure attributable to the historic environment.

The ECOTEC report found there is a wider value to the Welsh Historic Environment in terms of economic, social and environmental wellbeing of people and communities:

Economic

- It supports sustainable development and wider regeneration, catalyses investment and enhances skills for jobs

Environmental

- It contributes to the protection of the historic environment, maintains environmental quality and biodiversity, and conserves energy by refurbishing historic buildings.

Social

- It enables access to and understanding of the historic environment, increases community identity and cohesion and enhances civic pride. It increases community capacity and ownership, and encourages wellbeing and enhances quality of life.
- It provides learning opportunities for people of all ages and supports the national curriculum for Wales

The Wales Heritage Group

The members of the Wales Heritage Group are:

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

The oldest conservation society in the English-speaking world, founded in 1877 by William Morris and others. Concerned with pre-1714 buildings, techniques and philosophy of repair, and education. It is a consultee under secular and ecclesiastical planning legislation.

Civic Trust Cymru (Secretariat)

Civic Trust Cymru promotes civic pride as a means to improving the quality of life for all in the places where we live and work, and encourages community action, good design, sustainable development and respect for the built environment amongst people of all ages. Civic Trust Cymru is the umbrella organisation for the network of civic societies across Wales.

The Victorian Society

The Victorian Society is the champion for Victorian and Edwardian buildings (1837-1914) in England and Wales.

The Georgian Group

The Georgian Group is the national charity dedicated to preserving Georgian buildings and gardens. They are consulted annually on over 6,000 planning applications involving demolition or alterations.

The Twentieth Century Society

The Twentieth Century Society was founded as the Thirties Society in 1979, and exists to safeguard the heritage of architecture and design in Britain from 1914 onwards. The Society's prime objectives are conservation and education.



Ancient Monuments Society and Friends of Friendless Churches

The Ancient Monuments Society (AMS) is concerned with the study and conservation of historic buildings of all ages and types. It works in partnership with the Friends of Friendless Churches which owns 47 disused but historically important places of worship in England and Wales.

The National Churches Trust

The National Churches Trust supports and promotes church buildings of historic, architectural and community value. It is the only independent, UK-wide charity supporting churches, chapels and meeting houses of all Christian denominations, providing grants, support, advice and information and seeking to highlight the value of these important buildings.

The Theatres Trust

The Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Body for Theatres, protecting theatres (old and new) for everyone. It operates nationally in England, Scotland and Wales promoting the value of theatre buildings and championing their future. It provides expert advice on the sustainable development of theatres, distributes small capital grants, and helps empower local communities to rejuvenate theatres at risk.

Ymddiriedolaeth Addoldai Cymru Welsh Religious Buildings Trust

Addoldai Cymru/ Welsh Religious Buildings Trust takes into care redundant non-Anglican religious buildings that are exceptional examples of Wales' religious built heritage. The Trust also endeavours to provide advice and assistance to those responsible for caring for the religious built heritage in Wales, as its resources allow.

Association of Preservation Trusts Wales

With a relatively small population of around 3 million, Wales has at least 30 active Trusts who are members of APT. Of these 30, only one Welsh-based Building Preservation Trust (BPT), Ymddiriedolaeth Addoldai Cymru (Welsh Religious

Buildings Trust), actively operates across the whole of Wales. Wales has also benefitted from 5 UK Trusts that have undertaken work or given advice in Wales. All 30 trusts in Wales that are members of UKAPT are registered as charities and companies limited by guarantee.

Council for British Archaeology

The CBA is a voluntary organisation which works to promote the study and safeguarding of Britain's historic environment, to provide a forum for archaeological opinion, and to improve public interest in, and knowledge of, Britain's past. The aims of the CBA are to raise the profile of archaeology throughout society, in all parts of the United Kingdom, and to strengthen public care for and understanding of the historic environment.

Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust (WHGT) is a national organisation campaigning to save historic gardens and parks from neglect, indifference, insensitive planning and planting for future generations. WHGT aims to raise the profile of parks and garden heritage in Wales; promote the restoration and conservation of threatened parks and gardens and research the garden history of Wales.



Contact:

Wales Heritage Group
walesheritagegroup@gmail.com