

Historic England



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Contents:

- Historic England and Heritage: What it is and our strategic approach
- How heritage and wellbeing work: what we know and what works

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Historic England



Our Purpose

To improve people's lives by championing and protecting the historic environment

Our Vision

A heritage that is valued, celebrated and shared by everyone. A historic environment that people connect with and learn from and that we are proud to pass on to future generations



What is heritage?



Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Often considered as tangible 'assets'.



Heritage

All inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility. It may include heritage practices (intangible heritage) and the process of discovery and rethinking of values.

Our Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy

Figure 2: Historic England's Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy theory of change

 Historic England

Wellbeing and Heritage Strategy (2022 – 25)

Annual progress report (2022 - 23)
27 June 2023



By connecting with heritage we will prioritise the following:

- **Loneliness**
- **Mental health**
- **Younger People**
- **Older People**

Figure 1: Relating our response to the three levels of need

THRIVING	
Person feeling capable	Our role: supporting
SURVIVING	
Person managing	Our role: developing capacity
STRUGGLING	
Person experiencing disadvantage	Our role: addressing inequity

mental health

We will support better mental health through connection with the historic environment

Mental illness costs the UK economy £105 billion and 72 million lost work days each year	70-75% of people with diagnosable mental health illness receive no treatment at all
Mental health issues are a leading cause of disability and other problems including coronary heart disease and suicide	Mental health issues disproportionately affect marginalised groups

THRIVING	Promote positive mental health inside and outside the organisation
SURVIVING	Develop models for historic environment activities and sense of place to address common mental health issues
STRUGGLING	Work with others to address severe and complex mental health issues with the historic environment

heritage and wellbeing working together



Wellbeing outcomes

Purpose

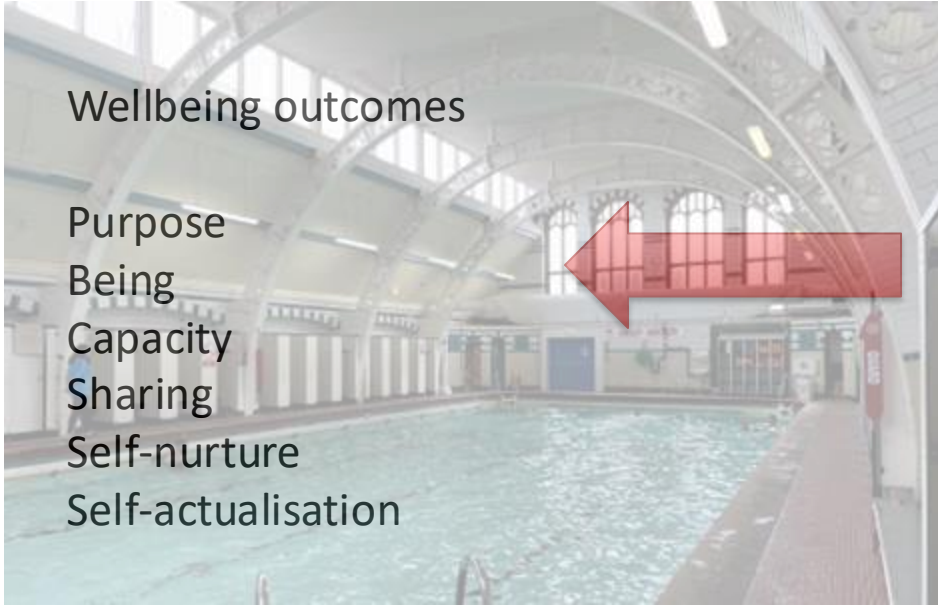
Being

Capacity

Sharing

Self-nurture

Self-actualisation



Elements related to heritage and the at risk nature of the assets



Wellbeing in volunteers

Wellbeing outcomes (6 HARAW themes)

Purpose

- Volunteers can indulge their personal interests in history, archaeology, heritage and/ or place.
- Volunteers can feel altruistic and satisfy their need to do so.
- Volunteers have something to dedicate themselves to / be a focus for their attention.

Being

- Volunteers can be the person they feel they are, and express and show that identity.
- Volunteers can strengthen their sense of belonging by working in groups with others.
- Volunteers can make a meaningful contribution that they can feel good about.

Capacity

- Volunteers gain personal satisfaction and bolster employability by learning new skills.
- Volunteers increase their interest in / connection with the world around them by increasing their knowledge.
- New perspectives / opportunities gained from new or diversified experience.

Sharing

- Volunteers connect their interests with others.
- Volunteers increase their place attachment by connecting with heritage / place / community.
- Volunteers gain satisfaction from increasing social cohesion by connecting with a wider and more diverse range of people.

Self-nurture

- Volunteers improve their physical health by being more physically active.
- Volunteers improve their sense of hedonic wellbeing through experiences they enjoy.
- Volunteers increase their sense of belonging and connectedness with others by extending networks.

Self-actualisation

- Volunteers gain a sense of achievement by changing others' knowledge and attitudes.
- Volunteers take pride in improving the place / area where they are volunteering.
- Self-esteem is enhanced by feeling valued.
- Optimism is increased by exploring future opportunities / aspirations.

Inputs and opportunities provided by HAR interventions

Heritage volunteering offers:

Temporality – volunteers enjoy the mindfulness and privileged access of 'niche' opportunities and experiences connecting with the past.

Discovery – the excitement of discovery and the interest in seeing things in new ways contributes to hedonic wellbeing.

Authenticity – feeling connected to irreplaceable tangible remains from the past strengthens empathy and attachment.

Continuity – activities linking past and present to future offer reassurance about the passage of time and impact positively on perceptions of self-efficacy, connectedness and fulfillment.

At-risk volunteering offers:

Rescuing – helping preserve irreplaceable heritage enables volunteer offers a sense of purpose, feeling needed and valued and success over adversity.

Nostalgia – connecting with a lost past, place or person increases perceptions of connectness, continuity and belonging, nurtures personal interests and builds empathy.

Transformation – wellbeing is associated with reassurance that change over time is possible and satisfaction in helping achieve change.

Legacy – wellbeing related to giving, self-esteem, self-actualisation and feeling valued is associated with creating a meaningful legacy.

Heritage Connectors



[Community Connectors
Toolkit and Heritage
Connectors case study](#)



Heritage Buddies



[Heritage Buddies
toolkit](#)

Project Evaluation

wavehill
Social and economic research

[Evaluation of
Heritage Connectors
and Heritage Buddies
Heritage Buddies
project report](#)



an archaeological programme that helped

1. develop a sense of self and identity
2. increase personal agency
3. build social capital: a sense of community, social skills, co-operation, and trusted relationships
4. encourage engagement in learning and developing new skills



Heritage Link Worker – The Restoration Trust in Great Yarmouth



Delaprè Abbey's Wellbeing Hub

- Health walks
- Yoga classes
- Heritage tours
- Volunteering
- Gardening
- Mental health support
- Grief support
- Menopause café
- Book club
- Wellbeing festivals
- Planned GP surgery hosted there, incl SP link worker
- Delapre Digs for Wellbeing





Key points

- The historic environment's assets are catalysts for wellbeing focussed public engagement (material culture of personal and community stories)
- Specific programmes with a therapeutic goals have been proven to address inequalities - working with specific parts of place-based communities leads to best and often most tangible wellbeing outcomes
- The historic environment creates the opportunities for physical activity and connection with art and nature, but has also unique value in strengthening pride of place, feelings of identity and belonging
- Heritage is a broad concept that can be beneficial for anyone and everyone, not limited to people with interest in history; its wellbeing potential can be used on different levels - from prevention to targeted interventions