

# Our Heritage, Our Stories

## A Heritage Framework for Wakefield District



Commissioned by Wakefield Council, Our Heritage, Our Stories - A Heritage Framework for Wakefield District was produced by Heritage Lincolnshire.

### 1. Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to Our Heritage, Our Stories – A Heritage Framework for Wakefield District. Our district has a great wealth and diversity of heritage, from the impressive range of historic buildings, our nature reserves

and green spaces, to the rich seam of the district's proud mining and textile heritage - we know that heritage is important and relevant to everybody's lives.

This strategic document is the first of its kind for Wakefield district and outlines our high-level themes and aspirations to work across partners and key stakeholders to support our heritage in the future. The Heritage Framework will act as a guide to how we can support current and future heritage opportunities and projects as well as helping us to prioritise investment for protecting our heritage.

I wish to invite you to join us on our journey of transformation and growth, as we seek to deploy our past to support the district's aspirations to create a more prosperous, inclusive and vibrant economy and enriched cultural landscape with heritage at its heart.

I hope you enjoy reading the report and feel inspired to help us to conserve, protect and celebrate our amazing local heritage.



**Cllr Michelle Collins**

**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**

## **2. Introduction to the Heritage Framework**

In September 2022, we started a six-month project with our appointed consultants, Heritage Lincolnshire, to undertake extensive engagement with a

diverse range of communities, local heritage and community groups, councillors and council officers, civic and historical societies as well as with multiple heritage sites and organisations.

This resulted in over 95 discussions, delivered through a series of one-to-one interviews, and group conversations, and public workshops, both online and in the local community, and from this engagement a series of overarching themes and a set of clear aspirations have been identified which we think reflects the heritage sector as well as the community's priorities for how best to protect, conserve and celebrate our outstanding heritage.

This work has now been brought together as Our Heritage, Our Stories – A Heritage Framework for Wakefield district, a strategic document outlining the shared vision, high-level themes and objectives to support our heritage between 2023 and 2033.

These themes and objectives are to be used to guide current and future heritage opportunities and projects as well as helping us to prioritise the investment of time and money in our heritage. Our Heritage, Our Stories – A Heritage Framework for Wakefield district shows how governance of the framework will provide capacity within Wakefield Council to deliver the vision as well as supporting local community and heritage groups.

### **3. A vision for the future of Heritage in Wakefield district**

Through the engagement process, we asked people what their vision might be for heritage in the long-term? This encouraged people to think beyond immediate projects, challenges and priorities and to consider how heritage might look across the district.

To summarise the issues and ideas raised, we have written the below vision statement. This ambitious vision for the future of heritage sits at the heart of Our Heritage, Our Stories – A Heritage Framework for Wakefield District.

**“Over the coming years we will see the unique heritage of Wakefield district being better protected, conserved and celebrated. Our heritage will be community-led and welcoming. Our stories will be accessible to all residents, communities and visitors. Our heritage will be at the heart of the sustainable development of the district, creating growth and higher living standards for everyone.”**

#### **4. Welcome to Wakefield district– a place rich with history**

Wakefield district is rich in natural and built heritage, with a wealth of tangible and intangible assets – including but not limited to buildings, structures, archaeological remains, written and artistic archives and local trades and traditions. Heritage is embedded within all our local communities and attracts many tourists who visit to enjoy our diverse cultural and rich heritage.

Wakefield is a cathedral city, and the wider district is made up of a collection of towns and communities from Castleford, Hemsworth, Horbury, Normanton, Pontefract, Ossett, South Elmsall to Ackworth, Featherstone, Fitzwilliam, Kirkhamgate, Knottingley, Outwood, Stanley, South Kirkby, Woolley and Wrenthorpe. The district has a distinct character ranging from famous castles, the remnants of our medieval past, a wealth of Georgian and Victorian architecture and many characterful village settlements such as Heath, to the architecturally imposing Civic Quarter in the city centre.

This character was created by the people and the diverse industries in which they worked: from coal production, glassmaking, engineering and textiles to

rhubarb and liquorice production. The coal seams beneath our feet connect our communities; our network of canals, railways, and roads have taken goods, people and ideas, to all corners of the world; and in return people have come to Wakefield to shape its future.

### **Wakefield District's Heritage in Numbers**

- 7 Museums
- 111,000+ Objects held by Wakefield Museums and Castles
- 700+ Listed Buildings
- 25 Scheduled Monuments
- 2 Environmental Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- 3 Castles
- 29 Conservation Areas
- 200+ Years of history in Local Studies Collections
- 800+ Years of history in the Archives
- 16 Local Nature Reserves
- 75m High Cathedral Spire (the Tallest in Yorkshire)
- 4 Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England

### **From prehistoric times to the present day**

There is evidence for prehistoric life throughout the district and this early history is all around us. At Ferrybridge, one of the country's most impressive Chariot burials was found during works to upgrade the A1 in 2003. This burial, dating from 200BC, is of national and international importance. Similarly, a spectacular Neolithic henge near Pontefract and Ferrybridge was partially excavated in 2007, connecting us to people who lived around 5,000 years ago. There is also

evidence of the reach of the Roman Empire which is particularly strong in Castleford as the site of a Roman settlement, named Lagentium, whose remains, which includes a Bath House, lie beneath the town.

We are home to nationally important heritage assets from the historic landscapes and buildings at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and National Trust—Nostell; Wakefield Cathedral with the tallest spire in Yorkshire; Scheduled Monuments at Pontefract Castle, Lowe Hill, and Sandal - the site of the historically significant Battle of Wakefield; fine Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, lakes and countryside and the National Coal Mining Museum for England (NCMME) celebrating our coalmining heritage. There are 29 Conservation Areas across the district, including ones in Westgate, around the Civic Quarter in Wakefield and on the nearby historic waterfront, home of The Hepworth Wakefield and Tileyard North. As well as Conservation Areas, there are some impressive built structures, not least of which is the railway viaduct to the south-east of the city centre that was built with over 800 million bricks and known locally as 'the 99 arches' (although it in fact has many more arches). Meanwhile, nature reserves have transformed former industrial sites such as at Fairburn Ings, Anglers Country Park and at Walton Colliery Nature Park.

### **Heritage is more than buildings and landscapes – it's also about human activity**

However, our heritage is more than buildings, monuments and landscapes – we have outstanding collections of objects and archives. We have museums in Castleford, Pontefract and Wakefield including the Mental Health Museum at Fieldhead Hospital, and a living history experience exploring over 180 years of industrial coalmining at the NCMME. There are extensive archives held at the West Yorkshire History Centre and elsewhere, including the UNESCO-recognised

Manor Court Rolls documenting over 700 years of continuous records of Wakefield's ordinary people. The Centre is also home to the John Goodchild collection, an expansive record of many elements of the district's heritage from the 12th Century through to the present, as well as wider histories of the West Riding as a whole. The Wakefield Libraries' Local Studies collections support important online digital collections, the Twixt Aire and Calder and We Will Remember Them. We also have fine historical art collections, including the Gott Collection, held at The Hepworth Wakefield.

Not all of our stories from the past are written down and kept in archives. This intangible heritage is often passed down through generations and communities through word of mouth. These stories and traditions have great value in enabling people to understand their identity and place within the story of the district.

### **Wakefield has long been a centre for business, industry and innovation**

Wakefield district has capitalised on its geographical and geological advantages – from our location on a key north-south route that enabled the towns to become a central marketplace for textiles, corn and livestock for the north of England, to the coal beneath our feet which enabled the establishment of a mining industry that can trace its origins back to the Middle Ages. The waterfront became an inland port with links to both the east and west coast via the canal and river system, creating a whole range of waterfront activity from warehousing to boat building and repair.

Our district has seen major innovations and inventions from the marine chronometer of Foulby-born, John Harrison, the first use of Portland cement for a building in c.1830, to Green's Economiser (patented by Edward Green in 1845); each has had a profound impact in the way people live all over the world. Our

district saw what can be claimed to be the first 'public railroad' opening for the transportation of goods at Lake Lock, Stanley, in 1798, and the production of innovative engineering machines at Joseph Rhodes and Sons in the 19th century. The first wall-mounted public post box was introduced on Wood Street in 1809.

Other important parts of the district's industrial and trade heritage included the production of ships' lifeboats in Wakefield and of barges and tankers in Knottingley's shipyards; textile traditions from Ossett's 'Shoddy' industry through to Castleford's Burberry, the international fashion brand, and Wakefield's long association with the textile trade – from cloth making and dyeing to cloth finishing.

Today, the district is developing new traditions as a place for digital industries and logistical businesses that continue to take advantage of Wakefield's geographical location and connectivity.

### **A sporting tradition**

In Horbury, Sykes Sports produced the footballs used for the 1966 World Cup finals and state-of-the-art tennis rackets for Steffi Graf, before the company became Slazenger, the famous sporting brand.

We love our rugby league with three famous clubs rich in tradition – Castleford Tigers, Featherstone Rovers and Wakefield Trinity – all are rooted within their communities and express the passion and pride of place and sense of belonging. Another famous sporting venue is Pontefract racecourse where horse racing was recorded as early as 1648.

## Wakefield people on a world stage

There are also prominent historic figures who have made an impact on the wider world. From the famous naturalist Charles Waterton, who founded the world's first nature reserve at Walton Hall, lyricist Noel Gay, Royal Physician John Radcliffe, physician to William and Mary, playwright and novelist David Storey, novelist George Gissing, playwright David Mercer, locomotive manufacturer Thomas Peckett (Hornby make models of his industrial locos), motor-cycling champion Denis Parkinson, Royal Hydrographer Joseph Moxon (Hydrographer to King Charles II), carpenter and clockmaker John Harrison, watercolourist Louisa Fennell, artist Albert Wainwright, politician Baroness Alice Bacon, innovative educators Murial Pyrah and Alec Clegg, suffragist Florence Beaumont, and contralto Phyllis Lett are just a few names of the many famous and important people from the area.

The area is also the birthplace of sculptors Barbara Hepworth in Wakefield and Henry Moore in Castleford. Today with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and The Hepworth Wakefield, alongside a growing public art programme, the district is recognised as being the home of creativity. This creative and artistic tradition continues with the district now being the home to many artists and creative businesses including the Theatre Royal Wakefield, The Art House, Tileyard North and Production Park based in South Kirby.

We have passionate and knowledgeable community and heritage groups from Civic Societies in Castleford, Horbury, Ossett, Pontefract, and Wakefield, historical societies and heritage groups such as the Friends of Waterton's Wall, the Castleford Heritage Trust, which runs the historic Queens Mill, to the Forgotten Women of Wakefield project and the many local experts who have spent a lifetime building up a deep knowledge and appreciation of our local towns and industries.

## **The changing face of Wakefield district**

Wakefield's population is continually evolving. Romans, Angles and then Normans are known to have settled in the district. We have seen economic migration from Eastern Europe and, most recently, we have welcomed refugees from Afghanistan. In addition, we have many long-established ethnic minority communities across the district with 7.2% of Wakefield residents defining their ethnicity as other than White British and our most common non-English languages are Polish, Urdu, and Latvian. We have a proud tradition of welcoming refugees and those seeking asylum, people who have made a strong contribution to the area's development throughout our history.

Through the Wakefield district City of Sanctuary, pioneering work is ongoing to ensure that this continues, connecting new communities with heritage and the arts. We want to champion the diverse voices across our district, and ensure our approach represents all communities and identities. Representation of our diverse communities is essential, and we will seek to shine a light on inclusive and representative stories.

## **A Heritage Framework for all**

It is these varied strands of rich heritage and proud local communities, all with their own stories, that make our district different and distinctive. The diverse stories of our communities are at the heart of our buildings, landmarks, places, and historical collections. We need to continue to explore and interpret our history to inspire people and communities to know who they are, where they come from, and to ensure that our heritage is passed on to future generations: this Heritage Framework is a first step in helping that to happen.

## **5. Why is heritage important?**

Heritage is important as it provides economic, social and environmental value. The following section highlights how heritage is making a significant impact nationally and regionally and we believe that it is generating a similar effect within the district.

Whilst we recognise that the social, economic and environmental value of heritage is hard to measure, research by Historic England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and others has shown that the heritage sector does have a significant economic value to the region and the UK.

### **Social value**

The social benefit of heritage can be measured in many ways. Heritage enriches people's lives through visiting historic places and enabling them to share and develop their sense of identity and community. Across the country, 75.8 million visits were recorded to 725 historic visitor attractions in 2018/19 (Historic England, 2019).

Nationally, 73% of all members of the public engaged with heritage by visiting a heritage site at least once during 2019/20 (DCMS, 2020). Four out of five (80%) of people stated that local heritage makes their area a better place to live (NLHF, 2015). Three quarters (75%) of heritage volunteers reported a significant increase in wellbeing after a year (Envoy Partnership, 2017). Heritage and historic open spaces have been demonstrated to improve our mental health and wellbeing (Historic England, 2019).

Across Wakefield our heritage sites and attractions, such as the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield Museum, National Trust—Nostell, Pontefract and Sandal Castles all

play an important role in providing rich and varied programmes of events and activities for families, schools and visitors which have a significant impact on wellbeing.

## **Economic value**

Though we do not have any independent research into the value of heritage on the district's economy, we do know anecdotally, that the value of heritage to Wakefield district is significant. Across Yorkshire and the Humber over 19.1 million people visit heritage sites each year generating over £800 million to the region's economy (Historic England, 2019), with Wakefield making up a substantial proportion of this figure.

Our leading heritage venues – The National Coal Mining Museum for England, National Trust—Nostell, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, our historic castles at Pontefract and Sandal as well as the many other attractions, sites and historic places across the district attract well over a million visits each year, with many coming to the district as visitors and tourists. Together this has a significant impact on local employment opportunities through to visitor spend and hotel visits.

At a national level, research tells us that the heritage construction industry contributes £6,761 million to the economy (Historic England, 2019) and seeing an uplift in value seen in historic places, such as conservation areas (Heritage Works, 2017). Local, distinctive and characterful historic places experience a higher rate of Gross Value Added (GVA) growth and can result in an uplift in property values. It has been found that on average, £1 of public sector expenditure on heritage-led regeneration generates £1.60 additional economic activity over a ten-year period (AMION and Locum Consulting, 2010). Investment in heritage can generate substantial public and private benefit across the local

economy, empowering inclusive economic growth and raising living standards for everybody.

Across Wakefield district we have seen many notable heritage-led regeneration projects from the rebirth of Rutland Mills as Tileyard North on Wakefield's historic waterfront; the extensive conservation works at Pontefract Castle, to the Westgate Heritage Action Zone that has rejuvenated this important area in the city centre. Along with many other heritage projects to protect and conserve our built heritage across the district, these initiatives are contributing to supporting increased opportunities.

## **Environmental value**

Heritage can also play an important role in our fight to tackle the climate emergency. Some 30% of buildings in England were built before 1919 (Historic England 2019). Historic buildings contain a substantial amount of embodied carbon already. Sensitive refurbishment of such buildings to meet modern requirements can help unlock the potential for sustainable economic growth that will benefit the district.

The UK has made legally binding commitments to become carbon neutral by 2050 and a commitment to the sustainable retrofitting of historic buildings has the potential to generate a substantial number of jobs within Wakefield's future low carbon economy.

Wakefield Council is committed to reducing its carbon impact. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, with a commitment for the Council to become net zero by 2030 and the district by 2038, underpinned by a Climate Change Action Plan. These targets are 20 and 12 years ahead of the Climate

Change Act 2008 legislation, meaning the development, collection and use of new environmental data is key to meeting our ambitions.

## **6. Our Heritage Principles, Themes and Objectives**

Through our engagement with a diverse range of groups, stakeholders and others, we agreed the following guiding principles, themes and objectives to help enhance and protect our heritage for the future.

### **Our Principles**

To develop and capitalise on our heritage we have identified two guiding principles to drive our collective work. Through these guiding principles we will work together to ensure the district's heritage assets benefit everyone and connects with wider agendas, from the regeneration of the towns, city and communities to providing opportunities for quality skills, employment and volunteering for our communities.

#### **1. Increasing access to and engagement with our heritage**

We will increase access to our heritage for both residents and wider visitors, through better coordination of our heritage assets, support for communities and by encouraging innovative new approaches to showcasing our stories to reach wider audiences

#### **2. Protecting our heritage and conserving it for future generations**

We will work to preserve our heritage assets, coordinating resources and prioritising where investment is most needed to better protect our heritage for the future.

## **Our Key Themes and Objectives**

Supporting the guiding principles, we have agreed to five themes which are aligned with the priorities of key national agencies in the heritage sector such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund with its ambitions for saving heritage; protecting the environment; increasing inclusion, access and participation; and organisational sustainability. The following are our five key themes and fourteen objectives:

### **1. Heritage-led Growth and Regeneration**

- Prioritising projects that make the most impact, supporting growth, regeneration and meeting district-wide conservation challenges
- Working with the private sector and the community to create the capacity needed for heritage-led regeneration
- Supporting regeneration that enhances the distinctive, local character of our places and communities
- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with key funders for regeneration
- Using Heritage to help tackle the Climate emergency, protect our environment and support sustainability

### **2. Heritage Tourism and Connectivity**

- Ensuring that we link key heritage sites and places as part of the wider visitor and tourism offer
- Celebrating the distinctiveness of our communities to support heritage tourism

### **3. Inclusive and Diverse Heritage**

- To enable our communities to access and celebrate their diverse heritage and traditions, with a particular focus on communities that have traditionally been under-represented
- Improving public access to the district's rich heritage, especially our hidden archives, through innovative digital approaches

#### **4. Capacity Building in Heritage**

- Increase the capacity of heritage voluntary sector to grow and develop in the long-term
- A focus on Local Listing and reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals
- Support the development of appropriate governance arrangements to support heritage
- Supporting the development of heritage led projects, led by community groups

#### **5. Heritage Skills**

- Forging closer links between the heritage sector, Further Education institutions and employers
- Supporting people to access heritage learning and volunteering opportunities throughout their life

#### **1. Heritage-led Growth and Regeneration**

We believe it is important to use heritage and place-based regeneration at the heart of delivering a positive transformation, to improve our built and natural environment whilst creating great places for people to live, work and enjoy. We recognise the works needed to repair heritage assets can sometimes make

projects unviable, but the gap in funding regeneration projects could be met by public or charitable funding or through other funding mechanisms.

**We will do this through the following objectives:**

**Prioritising projects that make the most impact, supporting growth, regeneration and meeting district-wide conservation challenges**

There are high impact regeneration projects using heritage assets, which are a priority for supporting growth for the benefit of communities across the district. These include the future of the Hermitage and Dispensary in Pontefract, the development of the Civic Quarter in Wakefield and the ongoing work to revitalise the Queen's Mill in Castleford. Other priorities highlighted include the development of a Local List and identifying opportunities through significant public funding for regeneration, for example, central government funding through the Town Deal and Levelling Up Fund investment. We do recognise that each community has both diverse heritage and different needs regarding regeneration and economic growth and therefore our aspiration is to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of funding for heritage-led regeneration across the district.

**Working with the private sector and the community to create the capacity needed for heritage-led regeneration**

We aim to secure more investment for heritage from the private sector and for developing the capacity of the private and community sectors to deliver heritage-led regeneration initiatives (through public-led commissioning, development partnerships and supporting viability). We will recognise the need to support the ambitions of community and voluntary organisations and groups

to develop locally led solutions for heritage at risk, including support for the development of vibrant voluntary organisations working on the conservation of the district's historic environment.

### **Supporting regeneration that enhances the distinctive, local character of our places and communities**

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Wakefield District Local Plan (expected to be at an advanced stage of preparation in autumn 2023 with an Inspector's Report responding to the Main Modifications Consultation), projects that specifically contribute to the distinctive local character of individual communities will be supported. This will enable people in the district to be involved in placemaking, the development of our public spaces and creating places that meet the needs of everyone.

### **Developing and maintaining strong relationships with key funders for regeneration**

We will continue to grow our strong relationships with key heritage leaders such as Historic England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It is important that we try to make the most of funding opportunities to support our heritage aspirations for the benefit of local people and communities. It is increasingly a financial challenge for public or private sector led developments which include heritage buildings or assets to deal with the increased costs of conservation with the result that there is often a significant additional funding requirement. This

funding gap, or conservation deficit, often needs to be met by public investment and therefore positive relationships with funders will be essential.

### **Using heritage to help tackle the Climate Emergency**

It is important that environmental and carbon impacts are considered in developing heritage projects and there is an opportunity to collate evidence of the positive role that historic buildings can play in tackling climate change. We will provide support for community owned heritage buildings in terms of advice and help to become more energy efficient and to look at green energy alternatives. We will recognise the importance of the historic landscape, green spaces and parks to support wildlife and diversity whilst providing opportunities for communities to access these spaces to support wellbeing and active leisure. We also recognise that our coalmining heritage is now creating new and innovative solutions such as minewater heat and reclamation of former mining sites into green spaces, through our commitment to harnessing our mining legacy for future benefit.

## **2. Heritage Tourism and Connectivity**

We will ensure that there is a coordinated and collaborative approach to both heritage assets and sites across the district, with an aspiration of creating a coherent heritage-led 'destination' offer that will be easily accessible, enjoyable and relevant for residents and visitors alike.

**We will do this through the following objectives:**

## **Ensuring that we link key heritage sites and places as part of the wider visitor and tourism offer**

We want to support residents and visitors to explore other sites and local areas more widely, using the most popular heritage tourist sites like the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, National Trust—Nostell, the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Pontefract Castle and Wakefield Cathedral to signpost people to explore other less well-known or smaller heritage attractions and places across the district. We recognise that heritage events and festivals are important to boosting tourism and celebrate the distinctiveness of the district's heritage. We will work with attractions and other partners, including the district's tourism brand, Experience Wakefield, to better communicate our local offer through enhanced tourist information and better coordination of events and activities. There will be a focus on supporting sites through supporting better transport and improved cross-site, thematic heritage interpretation and displays.

We want to help strengthen the wider visitor economy (accommodation, transport, food and drink) by creating a series of heritage-led and coherent 'day' and 'overnight' offers for visitors to the district. Doing this will support both the area's visitor economy (public and private) and the development of projects that create a package of heritage sites that can be promoted to national and international visitors.

We want to ensure that our heritage sites and attractions are an integral part of tourism initiatives across West Yorkshire area and the wider Yorkshire region. This includes collaborative work for the development of the new Local Visitor Economy Partnership, through Experience Wakefield, as well as wider work across the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to support the delivery of any projects or initiatives.

## **Celebrating the distinctiveness of our communities to support heritage tourism**

This will involve supporting the creation of distinctive thematic 'brands', with a focus on specific types of heritage, for example, the coal industry, food heritage and sporting heritage, as well as creating a place-based interpretation strategy for heritage sites and places across the district that supports a consistent approach to how heritage is interpreted including the use of digital technology to increase wider access. Building on our experience of developing interpretation signage for Sandal and Pontefract Castles, we will develop interpretation guidelines and examples of best practice and develop a more coherent approach to showcasing the district's heritage.

### **3. Inclusive and Diverse Heritage**

We will ensure that everyone in our local communities can access, enjoy and participate in the district's high-quality and diverse heritage. Our communities, towns and villages across the district are unique and have their own distinctive stories to tell.

We will support our communities to overcome barriers to accessing local heritage and the historic environment. We want our heritage to be inclusive and for people of all communities to see that their heritage is celebrated, as we strive to protect, promote and conserve the district's varied and exciting heritage.

#### **We will do this through the following objectives:**

To enable our communities to access and celebrate their diverse heritage and traditions, with a particular focus on communities that have traditionally been under-represented

We will prioritise funding and support for projects which enable under-represented groups (for example, global majority groups, communities facing socioeconomic disadvantage, secondary school students, young people) to engage with heritage on an equitable basis. We want to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to access, enjoy and participate in our shared local story. We will do this by asking people about their needs, understanding the barriers that stop people getting involved in heritage projects. We want our communities to be able to shape future heritage policy, placemaking and practice and to be able to celebrate and protect what they value.

To support this, we will review the breadth of our heritage to better understand our diverse heritage stories and how they are currently supported, their current accessibility and future needs to grow and prosper. We want to provide better coordination and fundamentally increase access to the district's heritage for everyone, as well as supporting the prioritisation of resources for heritage development.

Whilst the historic built environment is important, we want to ensure that all types of heritage are adequately protected and celebrated. This includes intangible forms of heritage, such as our traditions, food heritage (for example, the history of rhubarb or liquorice), coal mining heritage, memories, the heritage of our underrepresented communities explored through food, culture and language, sporting heritage, and local folklore and stories.

### **Improving public access to the district's rich heritage, especially our hidden archives, through innovative digital approaches**

We have substantial written and archival collections that remain undiscovered and are urgently in need of further interpretation to bring to new audiences. This includes Local Studies archive collections, the John Goodchild archive

collection, Wakefield Archives, local historical groups archives, and the National Art Education Archive at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, as well as other lesser-known collections in public or private ownership. We want the district's heritage to be uncovered in all its glory through re-interpretation, promotion and celebration of these archives to allow all sections of our community to access these treasures, whether this is through improved access to the collections or through enhanced digital access to increase public awareness and enjoyment of heritage.

#### **4. Capacity Building in Heritage**

We will support the district's cultural and heritage sector to expand its capacity by developing long-term networking strategies and projects that have a collective impact in supporting and protecting our heritage.

We want to make sure that our cultural and heritage sector has the capacity to deliver meaningful, lasting change for the benefit of our local communities and that they are empowered to collaborate effectively, becoming greater than the sum of their parts.

#### **We will do this through the following objectives:**

##### **Increase the capacity of heritage voluntary sector to grow and develop in the long-term**

The voluntary sector has a crucial role to play, and we will support Historical and Civic Societies and other community heritage-led groups to increase their capacity to either proactively manage or influence the historic environment. However, we recognise that this will be a challenge as many voluntary organisations struggle to recruit new members who are prepared to take on

leadership and organisational roles. Supporting and building leadership roles within such groups, especially among younger people, will be an important part of ensuring these groups continue to prosper in the future. Additionally, we want to support such groups to broaden their membership base to be more reflective of the changing demographic within the district.

We will work with heritage and voluntary groups, as well as the wider heritage sector, to support stronger governance arrangements to enable communities to find the best way to preserve the heritage they care about. This will include the development of local partnerships to support heritage, including support for the development of Heritage Trusts, social enterprises, CICs and charities. The role would focus on developing a diverse range of organisations to support the development of heritage and culture within local places, working with individual communities to find an appropriate solution.

### **A focus on Local Listing and reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals**

Central to managing change in historic places is ensuring that Conservation Areas are in the best possible condition and are managed through effective and up-to-date area appraisals. This is a vital strategic priority for the district and can be delivered through council resources or through community-led approaches. Similarly, we want to ensure that communities can recognise heritage they care about and provide it with a level of protection through the planning system. We will support a revitalised approach to local listing in the district to enable people to participate in choosing what matters to them in the conservation of the historic environment. It is also important that property owners of heritage assets are better informed and supported to care appropriately for properties.

## **Support the development of appropriate governance arrangements to support heritage**

To establish appropriate governance arrangements to support the implementation of the Heritage Framework and to consider aligning with the Creative Wakefield Board which brings together the creative and cultural sectors together to support the inclusive growth of the creative and cultural economy. We will consider how best to strengthen the importance of heritage and how it can support the monitoring arrangements for the Heritage Framework. We will encourage the networking of heritage partners, groups and societies to improve the diversity of heritage businesses, sites and organisations.

## **Supporting the development of heritage led projects, led by community groups**

We have many inspiring community-led groups working to conserve and protect our heritage across the district. There are a range of projects, led by passionate, enthusiastic community groups already in action and are seen as best practice in the sector nationally (for example, the work of Castleford Heritage Trust and Wakefield Cathedral's collaborative work with the City of Sanctuary). As well as this, there are exciting new community led projects, such as the Wakefield Trinity Heritage Project, Stanley Residents' Group and the Friends of Waterton Wall, that are making a real impact on celebrating our heritage as well as helping to protect and conserve it. There are also important community led heritage projects supported through the Council's cultural grants programme. We will provide guidance to local groups to access funding and support protecting and conserving heritage that matters to local communities, as well as helping to showcase their work to wider audiences.

## **5. Heritage Skills**

We wish to ensure that the heritage sector has the skills it needs to flourish and ensure that all residents have opportunities to train, work and volunteer within the heritage sector. This needs to be integrated with work being done within the cultural sector following a review of skills in 2021 and needs to apply to people throughout their life and careers from school to early careers support and lifelong learning.

We will focus on ensuring that heritage employers are able to access the skills they need to grow. We want to work with employers, schools, Further Education and Higher Education to deliver higher skilled, higher paid employment in the sector, accessible to everybody in the district.

### **We will do this through the following objectives:**

#### **Forging closer links between the heritage sector, Further Education institutions and employers**

We will seek to work to foster better, more coordinated relationships between private and public sector employers in the heritage sector and Further/Higher Education Institutions. The aim will be to ensure that employers in the heritage sector can actively inform learning institutions of the skills required to meet the sector's needs. This includes greater provision of employer-led training, that will bridge the current deficit in a range of skills (including heritage construction trades, site management and hospitality). We will work to research current heritage and cultural learning provision to better understand the 'gaps' that exist in education and training, as well as sites specific requirements for skilled professionals and volunteers.

## **Supporting people to access heritage learning and volunteering opportunities throughout their life**

We want everybody to be able to access the training and skills that they need to fulfil their ambitions and enable them to access higher paid, higher skilled employment. This means prioritising projects that enable people to access heritage and cultural learning opportunities by overcoming barriers associated with time, cost and accessibility. We will support projects that expand the availability of heritage and cultural skills locally, with a particular focus on bringing this expansion to communities which have limited learning and skills provision in their area.

We recognise that this starts at school with developing our future heritage crafts people, professionals and creatives. It is important to appreciate the power and value of life-long learning for the heritage and cultural sectors. Fundamental to providing support is identifying training and volunteering opportunities and signposting to relevant resources, courses and volunteering roles.

We acknowledge that there are barriers to participation in heritage and this will be carefully assessed to ensure that opportunities are equitable and representative of the district and its communities.

## **7. We wish to thank....**

This Heritage Framework has grown following extensive engagement and it would not have been possible without the generous participation and contributions of all, whether this was residents, community groups, heritage professionals, Ward Councillors, and other interested parties in the district through interviews, workshops and responses to the online questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and effort in making this relevant to the needs and goals of local communities. We are grateful for the time and enthusiasm shown by everyone in participating in the engagement and we hope that the Heritage Framework reflects those contributions.

Castleford Heritage Trust

Creative Wakefield Board

Elected Members of Wakefield Council

Friends of Waterton Wall

Horbury Civic Society

Historic England

Leeds GATE

National Coal Mining Museum for England

Polish Community CIC

Pontefract & District Archaeological Society

Pontefract Civic Society

Pontefract Heritage Partnership

The Art House

The Gissing Centre

The Hepworth Wakefield

Theatre Royal Wakefield

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Trust and National Trust—Nostell

Wakefield Cathedral

Wakefield Civic Society

Wakefield Council departments – Arts Culture and Leisure, Environmental Services (Streetscene), Planning, Regeneration

Wakefield Deaf Society

Wakefield District City of Sanctuary

Wakefield District Sight Aid

Wakefield Historical Society

Wakefield Libraries

Wakefield Museums and Castles

Wakefield Pride

Wakefield Trinity Rugby Club

West Yorkshire Archaeology and Archives Service

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

and 111 individuals across the district who either attended our community sessions, undertook individual interviews or completed the online questionnaire.

## **Heritage Lincolnshire**

Thank you to our consultants, Heritage Lincolnshire for the extensive research and community engagement which they carried out in the development of this Framework.

Heritage Lincolnshire is a registered charity, founded in 1988. Their charitable aims are lifelong education, building conservation and archaeological fieldwork, and research. They also have a national reputation for the conservation and re-use of historic buildings, and for delivering innovative activities that engage and enthuse local people.

The charity undertakes a range of activities in the promotion and conservation of Lincolnshire County's heritage. Alongside running a commercial archaeology unit (Archaeological Project Services) and heritage consultancy, its work includes running projects to rescue and bring back into use at-risk historic buildings.

For more information, visit [www.heritagelincs.org](http://www.heritagelincs.org) or contact [htladmin@heritagelincs.org](mailto:htladmin@heritagelincs.org)

## **Our Heritage, Our Stories**

As we progress with realising the ambitions set out in the Heritage Framework, we are grateful to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for their support of Our Heritage, Our Stories, a 2-year project which aims to transform how the Council, our partners, and the community work together to increase involvement in heritage, by telling the stories of people and places. The launch of the project forms part of Our Year - Wakefield District 2024, a 366-day celebratory programme of physical, cultural and heritage activity.

Exciting plans include showcasing the amazing work of local heritage groups; development of a new Heritage Portal website; support to develop Heritage Open Days activity and celebrate our incredible built heritage across the district, and creation of new digital commission opportunities for local creatives and younger residents.

To find out more about our plans, visit [www.wakefield.gov.uk/culture-andheritage/heritage](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/culture-andheritage/heritage)

Contact us at [heritage@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:heritage@wakefield.gov.uk)

Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. Our Heritage, Our Stories is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players.

