

# Foresight Day 2023

The Clore Space, The Garden Museum

13.00 – 16.00, Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

## Introduction

Foresight Days bring together member organisations from across the Historic Environment Forum (HEF) to discuss and collaborate on relevant issues for the future of the sector. For 2023, the focus of Foresight Day looked at two main **themes**:

- Manifesto Asks for Heritage
- Heritage and Participation.

The **objectives** of the 2023 Foresight Day were:

- To provide HEF Members with the opportunity to discuss sector priorities as we move into a pre-General Election period, and to sift and shortlist some key, common-ground issues that could later be shaped into potential manifesto 'asks'.
- To provide HEF members with a space to consider and discuss the future of participation and inclusion in the sector, including hearing views from an expert guest speaker – Dr Sara Perry, Museum of London Archaeology.

The event was held at the Clore Space at the Garden Museum, 13.00 – 16.00 on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

## Event Agenda

The Foresight Day agenda was as follows:

12.00 – 12.45: Optional pre-event tour of Lambeth Palace Library, coordinated by HEF member colleagues at the Church of England.

12.45 – 13.00: Arrivals

13.00 – 13.15: Welcome from Historic Environment Forum Chair, Dr Adrian Olivier.

13.15 – 14.30: Manifesto Asks for Heritage

14.30 – 14.45: Coffee Break

14.45 – 15.45: Heritage & Participation – presentation by Dr Sara Perry, Museum of London Archaeology, followed by Q&A opportunity and wider discussion.

15.45 – 16.00: Closing remarks

## Welcome from Historic Environment Forum Chair, Dr Adrian Olivier.

**Dr Adrian Olivier**, Chair of the Historic Environment Forum, welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda of the day. The Chair reflected on changes and progress made through the work of the Forum since the last Foresight Day was held in 2022, including work delivered against the Heritage Sector Resilience Plan.

## Session 1: Manifesto Asks for Heritage.

This session included group discussion on defining the Forum’s key priority 'asks' for the sector - what commitments would members like to see emerge in party manifestos? A longer-list of draft priorities were collected from across the Forum for reference. Colleagues were asked to consider:

- Are there any key priorities missing from the draft list?
- Which of these priorities are short, medium or long term asks? Are there any that stand out as being particularly urgent?
- How specific, clear and focused are these priorities? Are they realistic asks?
- What are each group’s **Top 5 priorities** from the list (including any additional priorities that have been identified through discussion)?



The top priorities that emerged for each group are captured below. This table does not list the full and final asks endorsed by the Historic Environment Forum, but is a summary of what each group found to be important, common-ground issues for the sector in the short-, medium- and long-term future.

<p><b>Group 1:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A National ‘Retrofit’ Strategy, to include: a skills improvement plan, EPC Reform, and a package of training and funding.</li> <li>• VAT Reform options, which could comprise: 0% rate / equalisation with new build; a reduction to 5% in line with energy efficiency exceptions; VAT relief delivered through a grants scheme; a pilot scheme.</li> <li>• A commitment around heritage sector apprenticeships, such as: using additional levy fund to improve retrofit skills and improving SME access to apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Removal of permitted development rights for demolition</li> <li>• Recognising important environment and rural heritage opportunities, such as continued engagement and funding (linked to inflation) for ELMS heritage outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 2:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust systems for environmental management, which include heritage as part of the picture (ELMS, EORs, reporting).</li> <li>• EPC &amp; VAT Reform; removal of permitted development on demolition; renewing, incentivising and investing in reuse schemes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and investment for Cultural Heritage Capital &amp; data, so that the value of heritage is better understood.</li> <li>• Continued targeted place-based investment, recognising that heritage is at the heart of place. This would also include a macro-review of cultural funding across agencies.</li> <li>• A review of resource funding for the heritage sector and improved structural funding (as well as evidence gathered related to this so that impact is better understood). This would cover skills, training, and governance support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 3:</b></p>	<p>Group 3 took a layered approach to the activity:</p> <p><u>Top Level Visions:</u> Value, Holistic Environment, Net Zero &amp; Climate Change</p> <p>Asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A commitment to place investment - addressing spatial inequalities and using heritage / heritage assets as a spring-board for investment. <i>- delivered through continued funding / appropriately resourced ALBs, LPAs and Lottery funding.</i></li> <li>• A National ‘Retrofit’ Strategy, linked to innovation. <i>- Delivered though VAT / TAX reform, removal of pd for demolition, and improvements to skills and capacity (<u>doing</u> the work, not <u>advising</u>).</i></li> <li>• A strong commitment to funding for the historic environment through environmental schemes, e.g ELMS.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group 4:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is at the heart of place – a commitment to additional funding for heritage services, with access to expertise.</li> <li>• VAT Reform / complexity – we need a simpler and more responsive approach for the sector.</li> <li>• Better informed clients who can navigate the planning and retrofit system/landscape – e.g via a ‘one-stop-shop’ [for information?].</li> <li>• Build flexibility into the skills ‘system’ that suits the heritage sector. It is a diverse sector with different scales of skills need. This could be done through broadening the use of</li> </ul>

	apprenticeship levy to apply to non-apprenticeship approaches.
--	----------------------------------------------------------------

## Session 2: Heritage & Participation

This session was opened by Dr Sara Perry of the Museum of London Archaeology. Dr Perry gave a 20-minute presentation, entitled '*Redistributing wealth and power in archaeology and heritage*'. The talk introduced a series of participatory and citizen-led initiatives by MOLA and other partners, which aimed to deliver against the following commitments relating to equitable participation:

- **Redistribution:** redistribute power and wealth
- **Reclamation:** enable others to reclaim control over what which has been taken from them
- **Support:** create supportive spaces where people can feel comfortable being themselves during activities, and where they come together to do the hard work of change in networks of collaboration.



Dr Perry spoke about experiences in ensuring equitable and inclusive participation across the following case study projects and initiatives:

- [Liberty of Southward Community Producers](#)
- [Archaeology Audience Network](#)
- [MOLA's Impact Acceleration Account](#)
- Audience Mapping work across all MOLA projects

Challenges in terms of applying and meeting participation commitments in practice include: struggles for buy-in; trust; creative and imaginative thinking; continuous accountability; working as allies with stakeholders; sharing authority; and changing governance structures. The full slides of Dr Perry's talk are available on request.

Attendees engaged in a full discussion around the topic, with Dr Perry inviting colleagues to share their own experiences. Key points from the discussion included:

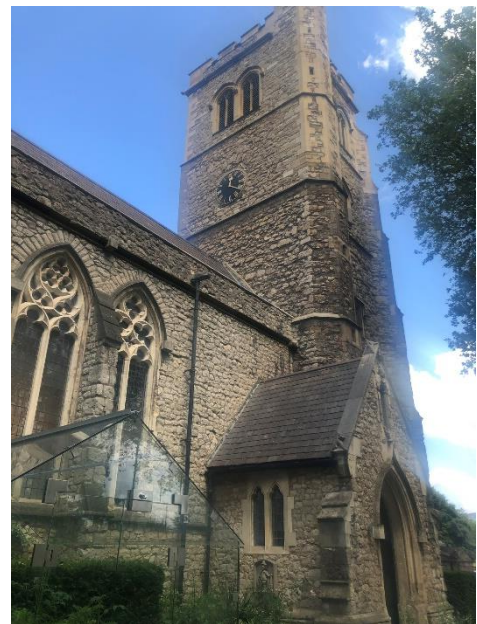
- What kind of structural, organisational and workforce-level change is needed to facilitate equitable participation models? There's a need to build skills / confidence, persuade decision makers, and carryout organisation-wide development.
- The scope of ambition and vision e.g scaling approaches up - or down - the sector to enable inclusive and equitable practice across the breadth of organisations.
- Payment for contributions vs volunteering: carefully thinking about what is being asked of communities involved in co-design, what the community outcomes are, and taking the right approach. There is also the need to recognise additional complexities around delivering equitable systems of reimbursement / payment.

- What are our systemic barriers? E.g. archaeology / heritage conditions in planning is too often seen as a problem, rather than an opportunity? We need to be on-the-ground, convincing potential partners of what can be done through heritage. The adoption of ‘threat language’ to describe issues affecting the sector (e.g. “at risk”)? We need to embrace a positive language.
- Audience Mapping - there is a long way to go before the sector is able to achieve nuanced data.
- Applying and committing to equitable and inclusive approaches is fundamental to demonstrating the impact and social value of heritage.

## Next steps and Closing Remarks

The list of priorities from Session 1 will be compiled by the HEF team and used to inform further discussion and decision at an upcoming HEF meeting. It is hoped that the output will be a shortlist of final priorities that HEF feels able to endorse, and which individual members can draw on as part of their advocacy work over the coming months.

The Chair thanked all attendees for their contributions to the event, especially colleagues who have stepped in on behalf of other HEF representatives from their organisation. Thanks were extended to focus group session leaders, THA staff for providing some additional admin support ahead of the event, and to Dr Sara Perry for her time and expertise.



The Chair thanked Church of England colleagues for coordinating the tour of Lambeth Palace Library prior to the event and the staff of the Garden Museum for servicing the event.

On behalf of the Forum, the Chair gave special thanks and warm wishes to Suzanne Huggett-Jones of the HEF Team, who will be beginning an exciting new role at Kings College London in July.