# Heritage Places scheme expands across the UK with strategic investments in Belfast, Orkney, and Wales



Six diverse areas across the United Kingdom have been announced as the latest beneficiaries of the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s ambitious £200 million Heritage Places initiative, a decade-long strategic investment aimed at embedding heritage deeply within local regeneration and development plans. This new round of funding adds Barking & Dagenham in East London, the Belfast Historic Waterfront, Dudley in the Black Country, the Orkney Islands off Scotland’s northern coast, Tameside in Greater Manchester, and Ynys Môn – Isle of Anglesey in Wales to the programme’s growing list of 20 designated Heritage Places.

The Heritage Places initiative is designed to revitalise towns, cities, and rural landscapes by making heritage a core feature of local pride, community engagement, and economic renewal. By supporting each area with tailored funding—ranging from smaller grants to multimillion-pound investments— the scheme aims to boost the capacity and resilience of heritage assets while encouraging inclusive, community-centred activities. The recent expansion complements foundations laid by the first nine Heritage Places unveiled in late 2023, including locations such as Glasgow, Leicester, and Stoke-on-Trent, which have started to receive development grants for strategic heritage projects.

Among the newly designated, the Belfast Historic Waterfront is notable for its rich maritime legacy, having served as a working port for over 300 years and once hosting the world’s largest shipyard, Harland & Wolff, famed for constructing the Titanic. The Maritime Belfast Trust, led by CEO Kerrie Sweeney, has expressed optimism that Heritage Place recognition presents a “generational opportunity” to realise the River Lagan’s vast potential as both a cultural and economic asset. Sweeney emphasised that the initiative will help “unlock potential and create momentum” for regeneration through community connection and sustainable development.

Similarly, Dudley’s inclusion reflects ongoing efforts to build on established heritage investments such as the renowned Black Country Living Museum. West Midlands Mayor Richard Parker hailed the funding as essential for fostering pride and collective identity while driving future regeneration that benefits local communities economically and socially.

In more rural and remote settings, the Orkney Islands will see support extend existing projects like the Scapa Flow Museum and efforts to highlight native wildlife conservation, while Anglesey plans to broaden its heritage offerings as part of a wider strategy to bolster the island’s socio-economic future. Councillor Kristopher Leask of Orkney Islands Council pointed to a responsibility not only to “protect Orkney’s past but also plan for our economic future” with heritage playing a central role.

Barking and Dagenham’s leader, Dominic Twomey, highlighted the borough’s “rich and diverse history” spanning from ancient Anglo-Saxon and Viking settlements to 20th-century industrial milestones such as the Ford Motor Company Factory. The council sees the funding as a major boost to celebrate this layered heritage while inspiring local residents to connect with their history amid ongoing regeneration projects like Barking Riverside and Thames Freeport.

The Heritage Places initiative is part of the broader Heritage 2033 strategy, reflecting a sustained commitment by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to embed heritage within economic and social regeneration agendas across the UK. Since its launch, the scheme has supported projects fostering community pride, economic growth, and cultural inclusion. For example, earlier funding rounds enabled Leicester City Council to develop an Inclusive Heritage programme to engage the city’s diverse populations more effectively.

Overall, the Heritage Places scheme represents a significant advancement in recognising heritage as a living, dynamic resource rather than merely preserved historic sites. It supports not-for-profit organisations—local authorities, museums, and community groups—to access grants from £10,000 up to £10 million, aimed at sustainable, locally tailored heritage-led regeneration. Recent investments have also recognised the importance of sensitive redevelopment, such as the £12 million awarded to the National Slate Museum in Wales to preserve the historic slate industry landscape’s story.

As Heritage Places progresses over the coming decade, the focus is on long-term partnerships, inclusion, and leveraging heritage’s potential to enrich communities’ lives, identities, and economic prospects, setting a UK-wide precedent for heritage-led regional development.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/), [[2]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/strategic-initiatives/heritage-places), [[3]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/strategic-initiatives/heritage-places), [[3]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/), [[2]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/strategic-initiatives/heritage-places), [[3]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/), [[5]](https://news.leicester.gov.uk/news-articles/2025/february/leicester-awarded-250k-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-for-inclusive-heritage-programme/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/), [[2]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/strategic-initiatives/heritage-places), [[3]](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place), [[6]](https://unesco.org.uk/news/national-slate-museum-awarded-12m-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-to-preserve-heart-of-the-slate-landscape-of-northwest)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/10/belfast-historic-waterfront-and-dudley-join-heritage-places-scheme/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/strategic-initiatives/heritage-places> - The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Places initiative is a £200 million strategic investment aiming to integrate heritage into local development plans over a decade. It focuses on enhancing areas to make them better places to live, work, and visit. The initiative supports up to 20 locations across the UK, with the first nine announced in October 2023, including Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council Area, County Durham, Glasgow, Leicester, Medway, Neath Port Talbot, North-East Lincolnshire, and Stoke-on-Trent. Each area receives tailored support to develop and implement plans that boost the capacity and resilience of local heritage. Applications are open to not-for-profit organisations, including local authorities, museums, and community groups, with grants ranging from £10,000 to £10 million. Projects should aim to increase pride in place, connect communities with heritage, and enhance the benefits heritage can bring to local areas. ([heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/strategic-initiatives/heritage-places?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place> - In October 2023, the National Lottery Heritage Fund announced a £200 million funding commitment to its Heritage Places initiative, aiming to transform 20 towns, cities, and landscapes across the UK by 2033. The first nine locations selected include Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council Area, County Durham, Glasgow, Leicester, Medway, Neath Port Talbot, North-East Lincolnshire, and Stoke-on-Trent. This initiative is part of the Heritage 2033 strategy, focusing on making heritage integral to local development plans to boost local economies and pride in place. The funding is intended to support long-term partnerships and projects that connect communities with their heritage, fostering economic regeneration and community engagement. ([heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps25million-awarded-first-11-heritage-places-projects-across-uk> - In July 2024, the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded £2.5 million to the first 11 projects under its Heritage Places initiative. These grants, ranging from £90,000 to £250,000, aim to develop resources and plans for long-term transformation of heritage in local areas. The funded projects include Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, and Torbay Council, among others. The initiative is part of a £200 million strategic investment to connect communities with heritage and foster local partnerships over a decade. ([heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps25million-awarded-first-11-heritage-places-projects-across-uk?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://news.leicester.gov.uk/news-articles/2025/february/leicester-awarded-250k-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-for-inclusive-heritage-programme/> - In February 2025, Leicester City Council received an initial grant of £250,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Places programme. This funding supports the development of an Inclusive Heritage programme aimed at giving a voice to all of Leicester's diverse communities. The project involves extensive consultation with local stakeholders and communities to establish where engagement with heritage activities is low and to collect evidence that will help shape a long-term plan for more inclusive programming. The funding will also allow the council to appoint a part-time programme manager to coordinate the project over the next two years. ([news.leicester.gov.uk](https://news.leicester.gov.uk/news-articles/2025/february/leicester-awarded-250k-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-for-inclusive-heritage-programme/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://unesco.org.uk/news/national-slate-museum-awarded-12m-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-to-preserve-heart-of-the-slate-landscape-of-northwest> - In July 2025, the National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded £12 million to the National Slate Museum in Llanberis, Wales, for its redevelopment. The museum, located in the heart of The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales UNESCO World Heritage Site, has been home to the National Slate Museum since 1972. The funding aims to protect the future of the museum and the globally significant story of the North Wales slate industry. The Grade 1 listed building in Llanberis will undergo redevelopment to ensure its preservation for future generations. ([unesco.org.uk](https://unesco.org.uk/news/national-slate-museum-awarded-12m-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-to-preserve-heart-of-the-slate-landscape-of-northwest?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-heritage-grants-10k-250k-0> - The National Lottery Heritage Fund offers grants ranging from £10,000 to £250,000 through its National Lottery Heritage Grants programme. This funding supports a wide range of heritage projects across the UK, connecting people and communities to their national, regional, and local heritage. The grants can be used for various activities, including conservation, education, and community engagement. The programme aims to ensure that heritage is valued, cared for, and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. ([heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-heritage-grants-10k-250k-0?utm_source=openai))