
Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal

World Heritage Site
Management Plan
2023–2029



unesco

Studley Royal Park including
the Ruins of Fountains Abbey
Inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1986

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Foreword by Tom Frater

It is a privilege to welcome this new edition of the World Heritage Management Plan for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.

The significant effort and collaboration behind this revised plan is something I can take no credit for. Its completion coincides with my arrival in Historic England from central Government's regional policy and "levelling up" teams. But from my previous work across Northern England, I was already deeply aware of the immense social and economic value of Studley Royal and Fountains. The World Heritage designation rightly recognises the site's global significance, but within that we should recognise the immediate role it plays for its more local and regular visitors and volunteers – a place of green lungs, social warmth and intellectual spark – all of which are vital in making northern England a place worth living in.

As a resident of the North East, my own connection to 'Fountains' is more personal – I have spent many, very different days here: some whiling away family time in the edenic parkland, others more thoughtfully engaging with the many hooks with which it tugs you back to different layers of our past. My main reflection is just how much of the site I still have to explore and better understand, even now.

The outstanding universal value of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, and how best this can be sustained for future generations, is the focus of this Management Plan. This clear goal is manifestly highly complex in practice, and I am both impressed and grateful for the huge efforts of consultation, consideration and refinement that have translated that vision into a deliverable plan.

This is the fourth edition of the Management Plan and it covers new ground. The first edition in 2001 provided the necessary scene-setting and spelled-out the detail of what World Heritage inscription meant for the site and its custodians. Since that time, each edition has had to place the site and its management in a changing world and against changing priorities. This has resulted in increased emphasis on being outward looking, embracing community and prioritising sustainability. But each edition has always been clear about the core values of the site: understanding why the place is so special and safeguarding this.

This new edition was composed after the personal and economic hardships of the covid pandemic, and at a time when the implications of the climate crisis had become clear: this is the decade when we have to make big changes if we are to meet our 1.5 degree Celsius global temperature

target limit. Individually these two burdens would be more than enough for any organisation or site, but together they could be overwhelming.

The Management Plan has taken a bold step to use these pressures as a prompt to go back to first principles and show how the site can meet these challenges.

The pandemic and its recovery phase taught us how much people value and need open spaces for their mental health and wellbeing – be that time alone or time together. The Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal team were quick to rise to that challenge and provided a range of opportunities for access. But the Management Plan makes it clear that there is more to do – to remove physical and intellectual barriers, to make a site which better reflects the changing communities it serves, and to provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.

The revised Plan also looks at what it meant to be a UNESCO site today and how the site could reflect the aim and vision of the UN to bring about peace and understanding. As a consequence, the Management Plan authors have gone to great lengths to weave the UN Sustainable Management Goals into the management objectives for the site, in order to see how it can deliver on climate action, improve biodiversity, reduce

inequality, sustain health and wellbeing, and be a force for learning and skills. This feels a welcome recognition of the global standing and responsibility conferred on the site by its UNESCO status, and an ambitious determination to be a true leader on these vital goals.

These are big demands, but this is a big site, in a wide landscape, with a dedicated, passionate team of supporters and partners. If ever there is a place that can shoulder these ambitions, it is Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.

**Tom Frater,
Regional Director –
North East and Yorkshire,
Historic England**



Foreword by Liz Small

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal continues to enchant visitors and local people alike. This UNESCO World Heritage site blends two historical periods, the impressive, well preserved ruins of one of the largest Cistercian monasteries in England with an 18th century eccentric landscape full of surprising water gardens, statues and follies set in a dramatic wooded valley and deer park.

Its popularity has been sustained throughout the Covid pandemic and economic downturn. It continues, rightfully, to be an internationally important visitor destination. 600,000 people per year on average flock to the site and there are always events, exhibitions and the beauty of the landscape changing throughout the seasons to admire.

This new edition of the World Heritage Management Plan for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is the result of many conversations with the local community, visitors and a wide range of organisations about how to conserve, improve and enjoy its unique qualities. In particular, the role of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal in supporting mental and physical health and for training in natural and historical skills was highlighted alongside the need to reach out to young people and promote that this is a special place of interest to everyone. Care has been taken to make as many community links with the nearby historic City of Ripon as possible including the nearby Hell Wath Nature Reserve.

This new plan reflects the exciting ambition to open even more of the historic Georgian formal landscape to the public and to tackle environmental challenges. The River Skell partnership is working to stop the river flooding and silting up the Studley Royal ponds through changes in land management.

Living locally, my family and I have been frequent visitors to Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal and there is something new to see and experience every time. It is a lovely place to walk and enjoy nature. Surprising highlights for me have been its use as a film set, for sculptural art and light installations and the exhibitions in Fountains Hall on little known local events. The history of the place is endlessly fascinating.

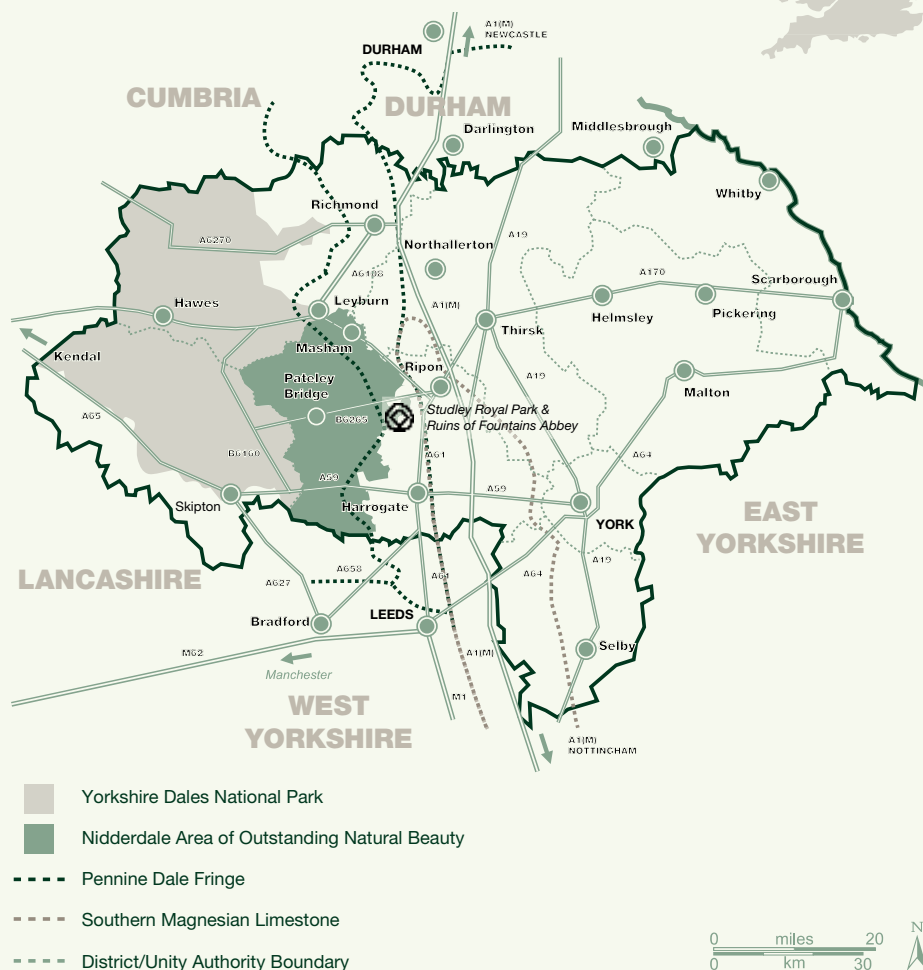
It has been a privilege to be part of the Management Plan Steering group and to support the work of the National Trust team who care for this unique place.

**Liz Small,
Growth and Heritage Services Manager,
North Yorkshire Council**



Location in North Yorkshire and Landscape Setting

COUNTY OF NORTH YORKSHIRE



Introduction

About the World Heritage Site

Inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

In 1986 this site was one of the first properties in the UK to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site (WHS). The name of the site on the World Heritage List is 'Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey' rather than the name the site is usually known by, 'Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal'. Throughout this plan we will refer to the site as 'Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal'.

The Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS covers 822 acres (333 hectares), lies a few miles west of the city of Ripon in North Yorkshire and sits within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site's key features include the 18th century Studley Royal Water Garden and deer parks, the Fountains Abbey ruins, the Jacobean Fountains Hall and the High Victorian neo-gothic St Mary's Church.

World Heritage is the designation for places that are of outstanding universal value (OUV) and that have been inscribed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. The cultural or natural significance of these sites is so exceptional that it transcends national boundaries and is of common importance for global humanity. There is a duty to protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations that cultural and natural heritage.

The National Trust has owned the estate since 1983 and the site's boundary largely follows the area in National Trust ownership rather than the extent of the historic estate. A buffer zone was agreed with UNESCO in 2012 which covers the immediate setting of the WHS and the key vista from the main deer park avenue east to Ripon Cathedral and beyond to Blois Hall Farm. Detailed maps of the WHS boundary (Map 1) and the buffer zone (Map 2) are included in this plan.

Why Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is a World Heritage Site

To become a WHS a site must demonstrate it has OUV. This involves fulfilling at least one of the ten UNESCO criteria. On inscription, Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal fulfilled criteria (i) and (iv):

(i) A masterpiece of human creative genius ‘Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey owes its originality and striking beauty to the fact that a humanised landscape was created around the largest medieval ruins in the United Kingdom. The use of these features, combined with the planning of the water garden itself, is a true masterpiece of human creative genius’

(iv) an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history ‘Combining the remains of the richest abbey in England, the Jacobean Fountains Hall, and Burges’s miniature neo-Gothic masterpiece of St Mary’s, with the water garden and deer park into one harmonious whole, Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey illustrates the power of medieval monasticism, and the taste and wealth of the European upper classes in the 18th century’

WHSs can be inscribed as cultural, natural or mixed. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is inscribed as a cultural site. Protecting and conserving the OUV of this cultural site is a priority.

For more detail, see Chapter 1 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, attributes and other values.

The site today

The National Trust has owned the site since 1983 and parts of the site are in the guardianship of the English Heritage Trust. The National Trust has around 90 regular staff, 25 seasonal staff and over 300 volunteers that work in a range of roles on site.

The World Heritage Site Steering Group, whose members include representatives from the National Trust, Historic England, the English Heritage Trust, North Yorkshire Council and the International Council on Monuments and Sites UK (ICOMOS-UK), works to set management priorities and monitor delivery of the plan.

Today the WHS welcomes over 600,000 visitors every year from the local area and further afield. It is one of the most visited places owned by the National Trust and the second most popular tourist attraction in North Yorkshire.

Further information about the site is included in:

Appendix 1 – Facts and figures about the World Heritage Site

Appendix 2 – A short history of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal

Map 1 – World Heritage Site

North Yorkshire Council – the new unitary authority

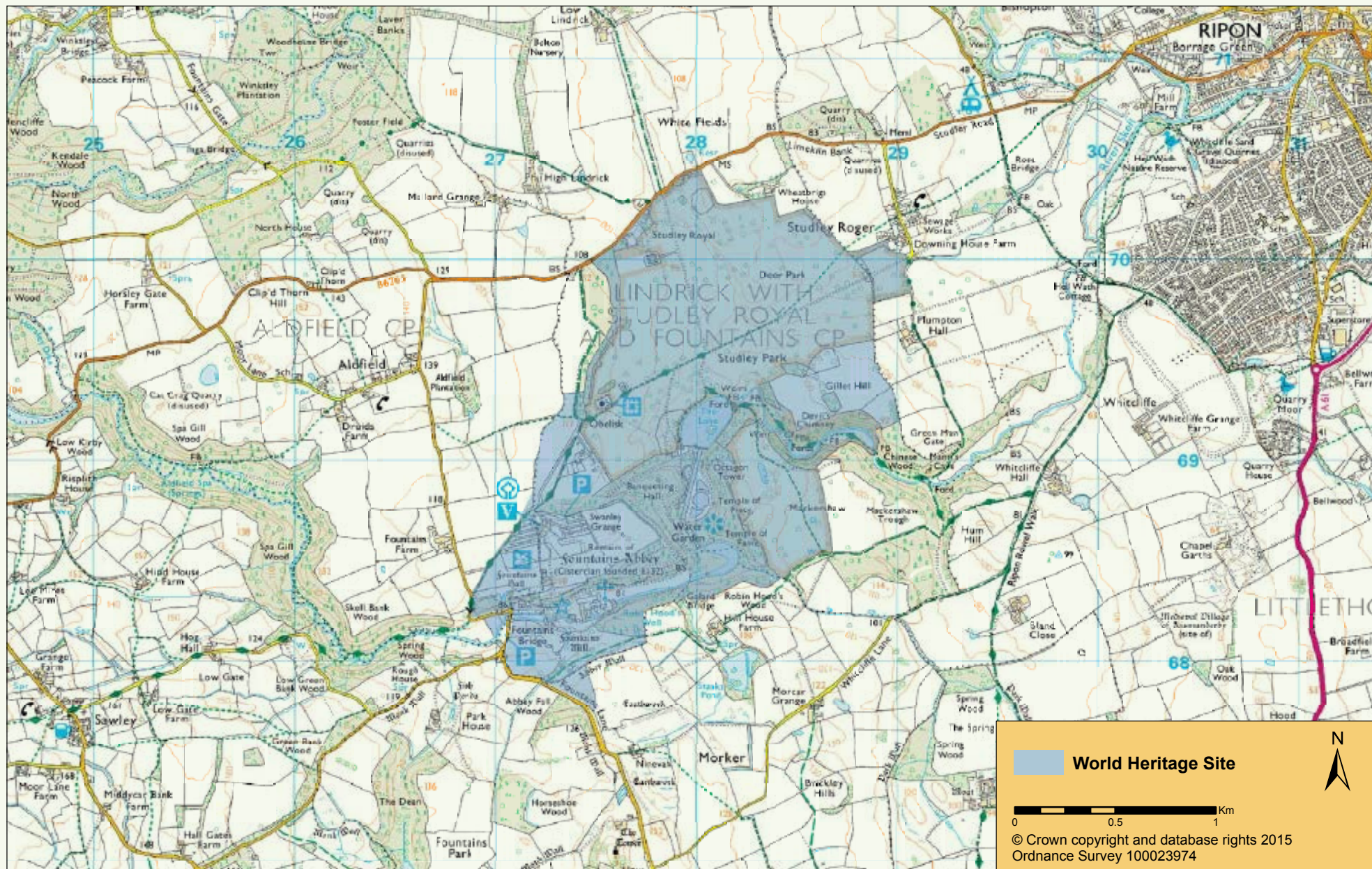
In April 2023 the new unitary authority of North Yorkshire Council was formed.

This combined Harrogate Borough Council, six other district councils and the North Yorkshire County Council to form the North Yorkshire Council.

This is now the third largest council by population in England and the largest by area.

The Wrestlers in front of the Moon Pond





What is a World Heritage Site?

WHSs are prime examples of the world's greatest cultural and natural sites. They provide an irreplaceable source of inspiration to everyone, irrespective of where they are located.

The **UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention)** created the WHS status and sets out what sites need to demonstrate to UNESCO to be inscribed as a WHS. The Convention was a landmark international treaty, article four of which set a duty on State Parties to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage on its territory.

All WHSs need to have OUV which means that they can demonstrate a cultural or natural significance that 'is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and of importance for present and future generations of all humanity'.

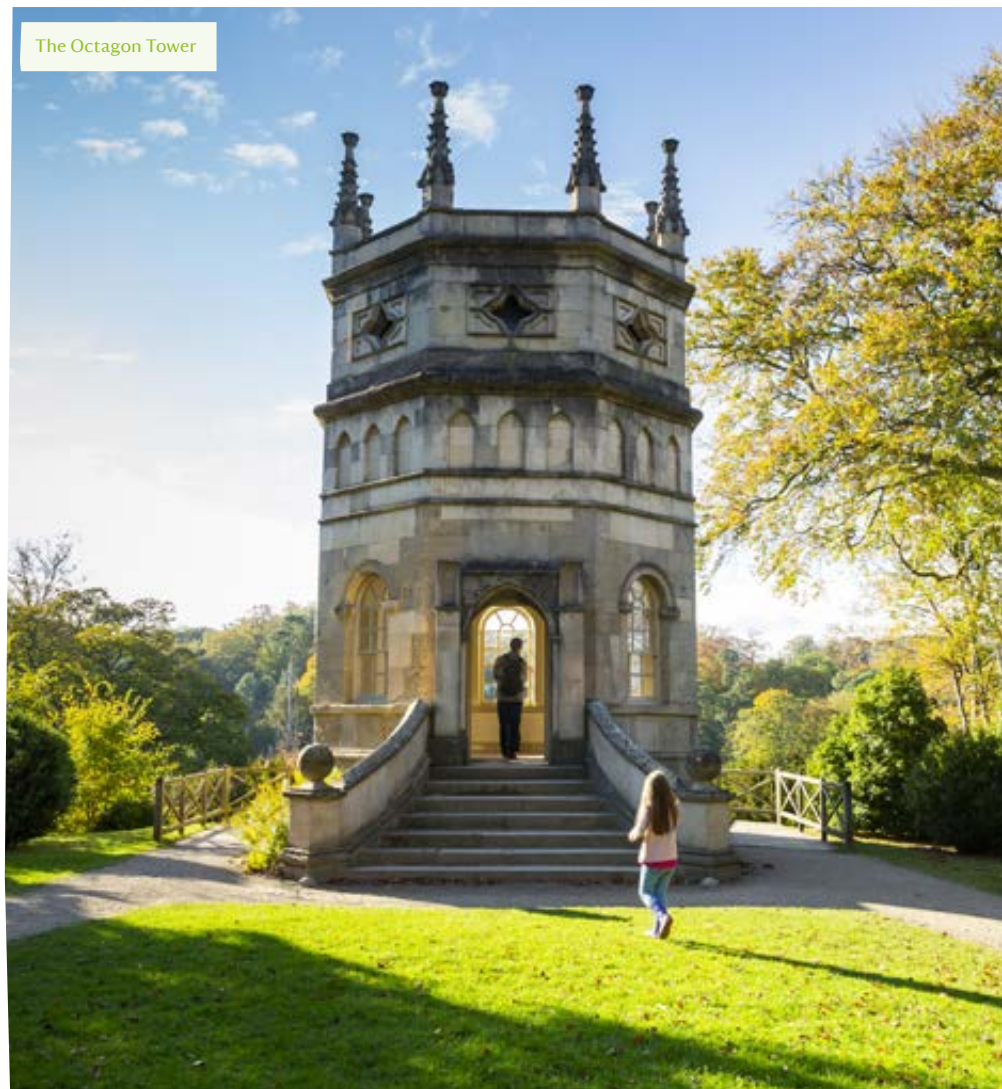
There are three pillars to establishing whether a site has outstanding universal value:

- the site meeting one of the **ten criteria for OUV**
- cultural sites establishing both **integrity** (when a site is considered complete and intact enough to demonstrate what makes it so special) and **authenticity** (when the site's cultural values are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes) and natural sites just establishing integrity
- the site having an adequate **protection and management system** in place

It is important to ensure that WHSs contribute towards UNESCO's founding mission to promote peace and security. The WHS can also play a part in delivering the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

This plan contributes to UNESCO goals through its sharing of good practice on conservation management, through its engagement with local communities and other wider communities of interest, its learning programme and its efforts to promote sustainable management.

The Octagon Tower



About the World Heritage Site Management Plan

Why do we need a management plan?

UNESCO requires all WHSs to have an appropriate management plan to set out how the site and its OUV will be protected for present and future generations.

This is a plan for all those with an interest in, and responsibility for, managing the WHS.

The UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention state that ‘each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which must specify how the OUV of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means’.

Purpose of this management plan

The main purpose of the plan is to sustain the OUV of the WHS to ensure it can be passed on for future generations to enjoy.

The preparation, delivery and ongoing monitoring of the World Heritage Site Management Plan gives us the opportunity to:

- set long, medium and short-term priorities for the site
- analyse the site’s performance in achieving previous priorities

- consider whether the site’s priorities remain relevant and appropriate
- consider how this site can contribute towards global UNESCO and World Heritage priorities

Previous plans

This is the fourth management plan that we have prepared for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS. Previous management plans were published in 2001, 2009 and 2015.

This plan will run for six years from 2023 to 2029 and it builds on the themes, objectives and actions from previous plans. It also updates the objectives and action plan to respond to current challenges and opportunities. Finally our plan will have a focus on delivering the UN 2030 Agenda.

What’s in this plan?

The plan:

- sets out what is special about Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS
- includes a full description of the OUV and attributes of the site
- identifies key challenges and opportunities for the WHS
- sets out a long-term vision, objectives and action plan for the WHS to ensure the maintenance of its OUV for present and future generations

The successful delivery of the plan relies on all partners and our community, from local to international, working together to achieve the management objectives and actions.

Vision for the World Heritage Site

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site is a special place, loved for generations. It is a place of calm reflection, of delight and exploration, for those who come to discover it now and for the future. Taking the 18th century pleasure gardens as its core and inspiration, the WHS possesses many layers of an extraordinary history that have shaped the abbey, the parkland, the rural setting and extended further afield to other landscapes.

The designed landscape was inscribed as a WHS in 1986 and since that time the National Trust has undertaken an ambitious programme of conservation work to restore the gardens to their former splendour, ensuring the OUV of the WHS is sustainable for future generations to enjoy. We have also installed signage and interpretation and enhanced our website to celebrate and promote our WHS status to a wide audience. **We have set out how our vision links to the rest of this plan in the 'Plan on a Page' on page 15.**

Our vision is to build on this work and to ensure the WHS will be:

- an exemplary World Heritage Site which aims to make a significant contribution to the purposes and goals of the UN and UNESCO
- a place where sustainable management sits at the heart of all we do
- conserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy, the genius of the place will be captured and celebrated through delivery of all our conservation work
- a place which is accessible to all, brought to life for everyone to understand and enjoy
- a place cherished by the local community and wider communities of interest and an iconic symbol of Yorkshire



World Heritage context

‘World Heritage Sites represent the diversity of our planet and the people who have lived on it. They show the development of human history over thousands of years and celebrate the best of who we are – through art, architecture, religion, industry and much more. They are ours to share, to cherish and to respect. Their disappearance would be an irreparable loss to humanity.’

– Quote from the UK National Commission for UNESCO website

WHSs are prime examples of the world’s greatest cultural and natural sites. They provide an irreplaceable source of inspiration to everyone, irrespective of where they are located. It is therefore vitally important to protect and conserve them for future generations. Their position on the World Heritage List ensures that they will remain part of our global heritage for generations to come.

The UK Government is a signatory to the World Heritage Convention and has pledged to conserve and protect its WHSs inscribed on the World Heritage List.

As owners and managers of the WHS, working with a wide range of partners, we have a duty through our management plan and conservation work to look after the WHS and protect its OUV for future generations to enjoy.

Key World Heritage dates

October 1945

United Nations established

November 1945

UNESCO established in London

1959

Aswan High Dam in Egypt was built despite the risk of flooding and destruction of the Abu Simbel temples, a treasure of ancient Egyptian civilization. This led to UNESCO launching a successful international safeguarding campaign which involved support from around 50 countries to relocate the temples. Its success led to other safeguarding campaigns and the recognition of the need for shared responsibility in conserving outstanding cultural sites

November 1972

The World Heritage Convention was approved which established WHSs and the World Heritage List. The Convention was unique as it was the first international treaty to commit to preserve natural and cultural sites of OUV in each signatory’s territory

1978

The first version of the Operational Guidelines was created. These set out the selection criteria for WHSs and monitoring and reporting guidance. The Galapagos Islands also become the first site to be added to the List

1984

The UK ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention

1986

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal was inscribed as a WHS

2002

The four key strategic objectives for World Heritage conservation were defined as Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building and Communication (the 4 Cs)

2007

The fifth ‘C’ of ‘Communities’ was added to highlight the important role of local communities in the preservation of World Heritage

2014

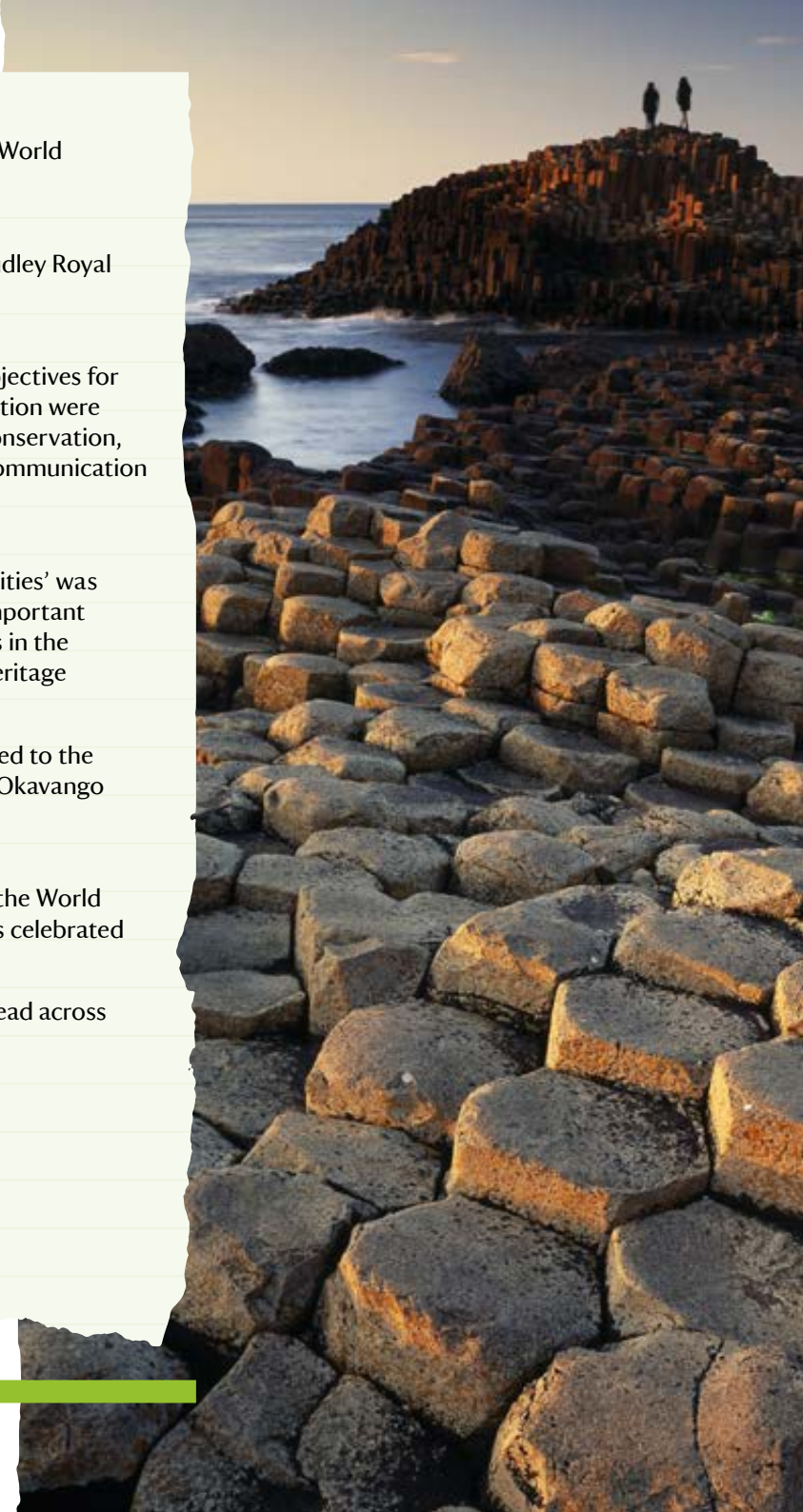
The 1000th site was added to the World Heritage List: the Okavango Delta in Botswana

2022

The 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention was celebrated

Dec 2022

There are 1154 WHSs spread across 167 countries





The Giant's Causeway

The founding mission of UNESCO and sustainable development

UNESCO's founding mission

'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'.

– Quote from the UNESCO Constitution

UNESCO was established in 1945 after the Second World War.

The founding mission of UNESCO was to advance, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of **international peace** and **the common welfare of mankind**.

UNESCO created World Heritage status and the World Heritage List in the 1972 World Heritage Convention. UNESCO sees the protection of WHSs as both a way to protect the world's heritage and a way to achieve the UNESCO founding mission of achieving peace and security.

What is Sustainable development?

Sustainable development is commonly defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This definition was proposed by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 and later also adopted by the United Nations (UN).

What are the Sustainable Development Goals and what is their relevance to World Heritage Sites?

The **2030 Agenda** (published on 25 September 2015) set out the UN's action plan to stimulate sustainable development action over a 15-year period. It sets out 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

In 2015 UNESCO also adopted a 'Policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention'. This policy aims to harness the potential of World Heritage properties and heritage in general, to contribute to sustainable development.

It is recognised in the 2030 Agenda, and then more explicitly in the following UNESCO policy document, that the relationship between WHSs and sustainable development is a 'win-win' scenario: WHSs can contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals and practices can help WHSs better achieve their aims too.





How are the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site?

If we work towards fulfilling appropriate Sustainable Development Goals, our site can both contribute towards global efforts to protect and improve the world and the lives of its peoples while also protecting this site's OUV.

When we considered the opportunities for the WHS to contribute towards the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we identified:

- the following two key Sustainable Development Goals where there is most opportunity for the site to contribute towards achieving sustainable development in a way that would improve and strengthen our ongoing work to protect the OUV of the WHS



- the following six Sustainable Development Goals where there is also good opportunity for the site to contribute towards sustainable development



We have explained how we have integrated each of the Sustainable Development Goals set out above in each of the four themes in Chapter 4. There is also a summary of how the Sustainable Development Goals relate to the themes in the 'Plan on a Page' on page 15.

Key duties from the World Heritage Convention 1972: to protect, conserve, present and transmit



Chapter 1: Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, attributes and other values

1.1 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Every World Heritage Site (WHS) has a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) which sets out the significance of the site, its integrity, and authenticity and measures for its management and protection. The SOUV will guide the management of the site for the foreseeable future. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal's SOUV was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2012 and can only be altered with their approval. In addition to the outstanding universal value (OUV) set out below there are a whole range of national, regional and local values set out in Section 1.4 which will inform how the site is managed.

Studley Royal Park including the Ruins of Fountains Abbey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Brief Synthesis

Situated in North Yorkshire, the 18th century designed landscape of Studley Royal Park and pleasure grounds, including the ruins of Fountains Abbey, is one harmonious whole of buildings, gardens and landscapes. This landscape of exceptional merit and beauty represents over 800 years of human ambition, design and achievement.

Studley Royal Park is one of the few great 18th century gardens to survive substantially in its original form and is one of the most spectacular water gardens in England. The landscape garden is an outstanding example of the development of the 'English' garden style throughout the 18th century, which influenced the rest of Europe. With the integration of the River Skell into the water gardens and the use of 'borrowed' vistas from the surrounding countryside, the design and layout of the gardens is determined by the form of the natural landscape, rather than being imposed upon it. The garden contains canals, ponds, cascades, lawns and hedges, with elegant garden buildings, gateways and statues. The Aislabies' vision survives substantially in its original form, most famously in the spectacular view of the ruins of Fountains Abbey itself.

Fountains Abbey ruins is not only a key eye catcher in the garden scheme but is of outstanding importance in its own right, being one of the few Cistercian houses to survive from the 12th century and providing an unrivalled picture of a great religious house in all its parts.

The remainder of the estate is no less significant. At the west end of the estate is the transitional Elizabethan/Jacobean Fountains Hall, partially built from reclaimed abbey stone. With its distinctive Elizabethan façade enhanced by a formal garden with shaped hedges, it is an outstanding example of its period.

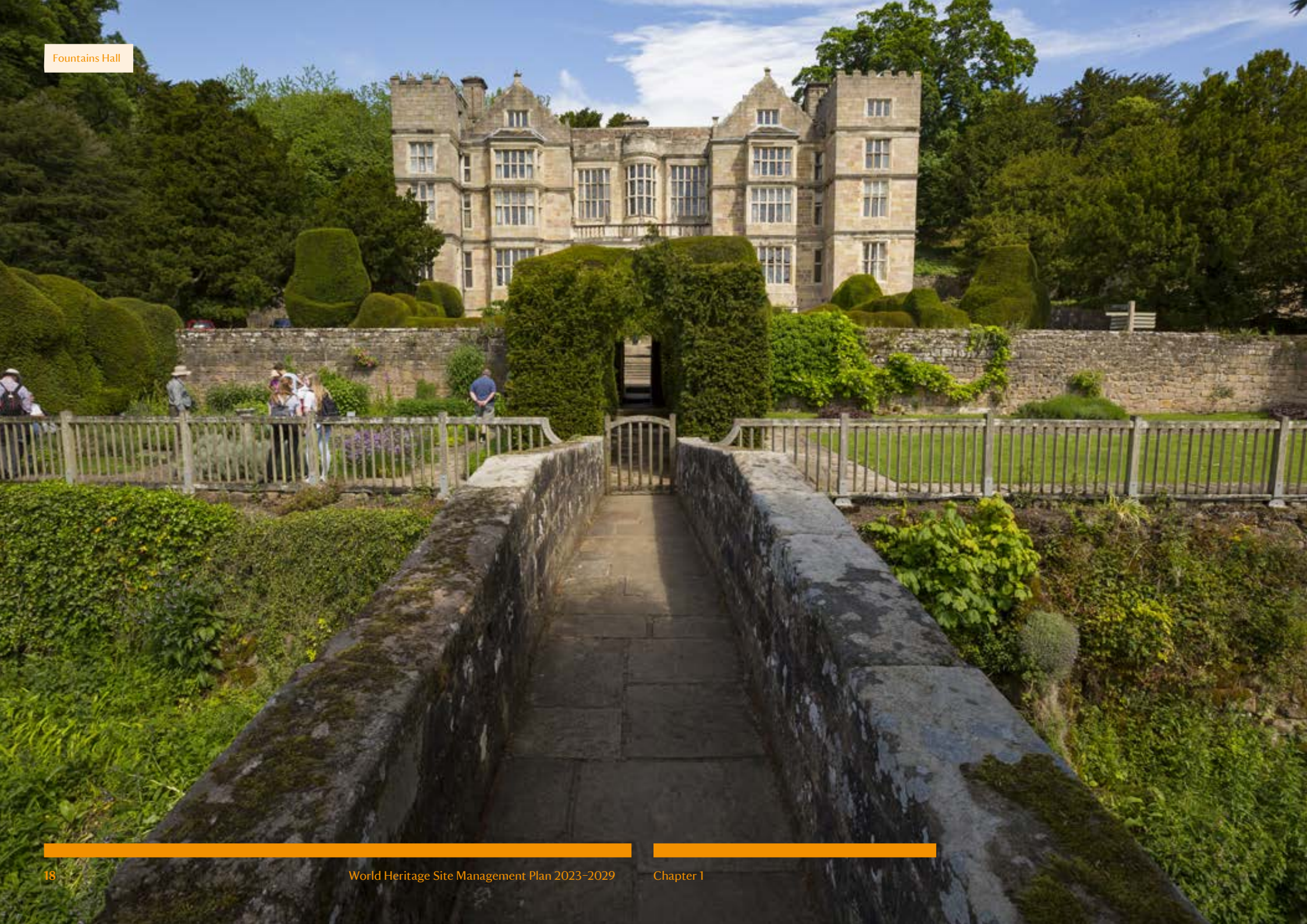
Located in the extensive deer park is St Mary's Church, a masterpiece of High Victorian Gothic architecture, designed by William Burges in 1871 and considered to be one of his finest works.

Key locations

- 1 Seven Bridges Valley
- 2 Surprise View and Anne Boleyn's Seat
- 3 Temple of Fame
- 4 Octagon Tower and Serpentine Tunnel
- 5 Temple of Piety and Moon Pond
- 6 Fishing Tabernacles and Cascade
- 7 Canal Gates
- 8 Banqueting House
- 9 Porter's Lodge
- 10 Mill Café
- 11 Fountains Mill
- 12 Fountains Hall
- 13 Tea Garden and Orchard
- 14 West Gate Admissions Point (Level Access)
- 15 Swanley Grange
- 16 Main car parks
- 17 Visitor Centre Entrance
- 18 Electric vehicle charging points
- 19 St Mary's Church
- 20 Choristers House (holiday cottage)
- 21 Site of lost Studley Hall



This map does not show the full extent of the World Heritage Site



Criteria

Criterion (i): Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey owes its originality and striking beauty to the fact that a humanised landscape was created around the largest medieval ruins in the United Kingdom. The use of these features, combined with the planning of the water garden itself, is a true masterpiece of human creative genius.

Criterion (iv): Combining the remains of the richest abbey in England, the Jacobean Fountains Hall, and Burges's miniature neo-Gothic masterpiece of St Mary's, with the water garden and deer park into one harmonious whole, Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey illustrates the power of medieval monasticism, and the taste and wealth of the European upper classes in the 18th century.

Integrity

The Studley Royal Park was at its most extensive under the ownership of William Aislabie in the latter part of the 18th century. It is one of the few great 18th century gardens to survive substantially in its original form. The landscape design has been little altered by subsequent owners, who mainly respected and only modestly enhanced the original designs by their additions. However, many landscape features disappeared and the maintained part of the gardens contracted due to lack of maintenance. A number of decaying buildings and landscape features from the late 18th century were also removed and parts of the estate were sold to different owners. Despite the changes to the estate, the attributes which express the outstanding universal value remain intact and are still evident today. The integrity and authenticity of the ruins of Fountains Abbey is high as is that of St Mary's Church and Fountains Hall.

The World Heritage Site boundary largely follows the area in National Trust ownership rather than the extent of the historic estate. Therefore some important elements of the designed landscape lie outside the World Heritage Site boundary and may be vulnerable to change. The buffer zone protects the integrity of the wider historic estate.

Authenticity

The property as a whole has high authenticity in terms of form, design, materials, function, location and setting of features of the great 18th century designed landscape. However, in common with many other cultural sites, particularly those that develop in an organic way such as parks and gardens, both the fabric and design of the landscape at Studley Royal have been continually altered, first throughout the period of inception (up to c. 1781) and thereafter by a mixed process of maturity, modification, aging and decline. Natural growth, impact of climatic events and development can have both positive and negative impacts on the landscape, as can later design interventions and alterations to its physical fabric.

There have been numerous conservation interventions since inscription which were necessary to ensure the outstanding universal value of the property is maintained. Conservation works in the garden, to the many garden buildings and to the abbey and other buildings have adhered to good conservation practice and have been thoroughly researched and documented. Fountains Hall, Porter's Lodge and the Cistercian Water Mill have been sensitively reused to enhance visitor enjoyment of the site. The water garden has been affected by climatic events, such as flooding, and pragmatic modifications, such as the use of modern engineering technology, has enabled conservation of the water garden design.

A full copy of the SOUV including the protection and management requirements for the WHS is available on the UNESCO website.

1.2 Attributes

Attributes are the qualities that express the OUV of the WHS and which contribute to and enhance understanding of the OUV. The key purpose for identifying attributes is so they can be protected, managed and monitored. They are also needed for assessing the impact of planning applications on the OUV of the WHS and when planning projects or other interventions.

Attributes for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site

In 2017 Historic England, the National Trust and Harrogate Borough Council held a workshop to compile a set of attributes of the OUV for the WHS. These attributes were approved by the World Heritage Site Steering Group in 2021.

The following attributes were identified as the qualities that express the OUV of the WHS:

- A landscape garden of exceptional beauty and harmony
- The ruins of Fountains Abbey
- Accretion of designed landscape which enhances the natural landscape
- Immaculately designed views and vistas using the landscape both within and beyond the boundaries of the garden
- Range of buildings illustrating patronage, status and influence

The following is a description of each attribute. The list of attributes is not intended to be a full description and history of the designed landscape at Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey. There are a whole range of sources for this information including Mark Newman's book *'The Wonder of the North – Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal'* (The Boydell Press, 2015) and the description in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

1. A landscape garden of exceptional beauty and harmony

Studley Royal Park is first and foremost an incredibly beautiful designed landscape. Designed by John Aislaby, and his son William in the 18th century, the beauty of the gardens lies in the incredible expanse of the lawns with modelled turf embankments and ramps, the reflective qualities of the water with still ponds, canals and tumbling cascades, the inspiring abbey ruins forming the culmination of the Surprise View and the classically inspired garden buildings. Its breath-taking vistas, formal water features, statuary and temples are immaculately overlaid on the natural topography of the Skell Valley and the landscape beyond with consummate skill and mastery.

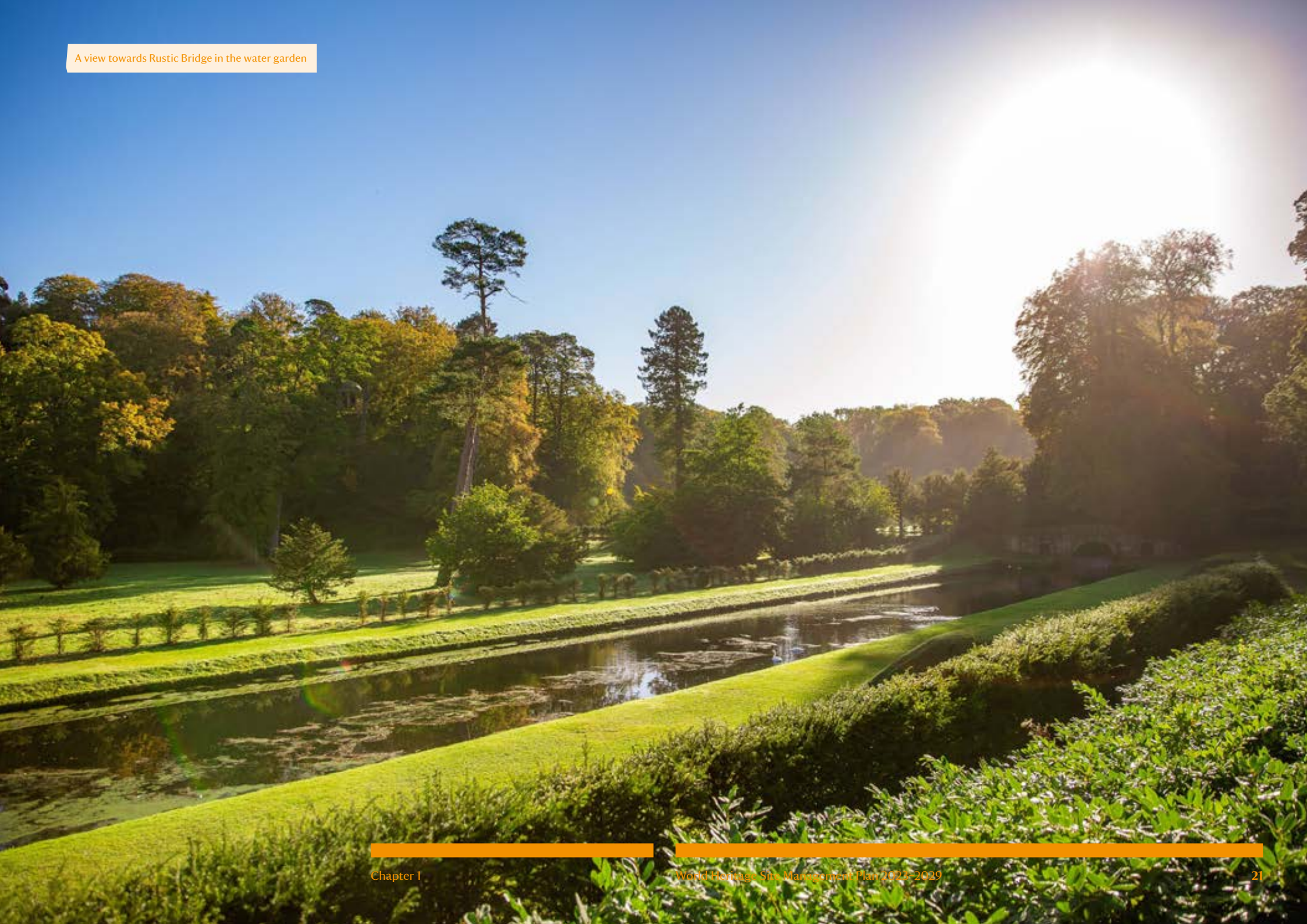
The gardens were designed by John Aislaby and his son William in the 18th century, coming to embrace every emergent landscape gardening style between 1670 and 1780. They were designed as a deliberately contrived journey through a range of varied landscapes. A complex network of paths and drives exploited views to landmarks both within and beyond the boundaries of the estate. John masterminded an innovative new form of the English landscape garden: his vast act of artistic creation was seamlessly continued and vastly extended (including far beyond the bounds of the present WHS) after John's death by his son William. William's personal style married the best of his father's more formal set pieces with emerging tastes for naturalistic landscaping and the picturesque. Rather than remodelling

his father's gardens he extended the landscape in both directions along the Skell and inspired by another new fashion in garden design created one of the earliest and largest Chinese gardens in England. He also acquired the ruins of Fountains Abbey, successfully drawing them into the Studley Royal gardens.

Designed landscapes were a means of expressing sophistication, wealth and power. Studley Royal was one of the most significant in the country in the 18th century and its fame spread nationally, attracting visitors from the upper and then middle classes. This appeal and readiness to welcome visitors continued throughout the 19th century and on to the present. This long history of visiting is one of the estate's unique characteristics.

Studley Royal gardens are therefore, quite simply, one of the largest, most magnificent and beautiful designed landscapes ever created. Their influence spread far beyond the limits of the garden as it is seen today. Weaving together so many different types of landscape form, so many different decorative themes, approaches and styles, so many different journeys and experiences and all the while celebrating the landscape and its setting, they are a true masterpiece of human creative genius.

The WHS boundary only includes part of a greater designed landscape which extends beyond current WHS boundaries and includes components such as How Hill prospect tower, Spa Gill landscaped carriage drive and Chinese Wood, a large and early Chinese Garden.



2. The ruins of Fountains Abbey

The ruins of Fountains Abbey are the most complete and substantial remains of a Cistercian abbey in the country and are amongst the most significant monastic remains in Europe. The monastic precinct was remarkably extensive covering about 29 hectares and enclosed by a massive precinct wall which was built in the first half of the 13th century. Much of the wall still stands today, some of it to its original height. The remains also include the oldest surviving Cistercian water mill, a splendid 12th century western range and a magnificent tower erected by Abbot Marmaduke Huby in the 16th century.

The abbey was founded in 1132 and was home to a community of Cistercian monks who over the centuries created one of the richest and most successful religious houses in the country. The abbey was at the height of its power throughout the 13th century with land holdings across the North of England, building much of its wealth in the wool trade, it was by far the richest Cistercian house at the time of its closure. When it was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539 it was left to sit empty (preserved from more than initial depredation both by its distance from a market for stone and the convictions of its early owners) until it was purchased by neighbouring landowner William Aislaby in 1767 and incorporated into his spectacular Studley Royal designed landscape.

William swept away the stone walls, landscaped the quarries to the east of the abbey and canalised the river. He consolidated, repaired and rebuilt sections of the abbey ruins, landscaped the interior and the periphery of the ruins and constructed new viewing platforms, even ornamenting the abbey with statuary and planting to present it as a distinct component or experience within his landscape garden. Much of this effect, though, was swept aside by Victorian excavation and presentation of the site as an archaeological monument.

The surviving ruins demonstrate an exceptional scale of architectural achievement and are one of the finest examples of Cistercian architecture. The inspired incorporation of the ruins into the Studley Royal gardens remains quintessential to the character of the site today.

Fountains Abbey in the winter frost



3. Accretion of designed landscape which enhances the natural landscape

One of the most striking characteristics of the 18th century designed landscape at Studley Royal is the way in which the natural geology and topography of the site have been explored and exploited for their expressive possibilities. 18th century landscapers were advised to understand and respond to the *genius loci*, the spirit of the place, when putting together plans for their gardens. This can be seen to great effect at Studley Royal where the contrasts of the estate's physical characteristics provide the foundation for Studley's unique beauty.

The geographical setting of the Studley Royal Park on the fringe of the Pennine Dales, overlooking the Vale of York, as well as the dramatic topography of the estate itself, facilitated the creation of a complex web of paths along the valley bottom and cut into the valley sides, affording varied experiences, highlighted by views, vistas and vantage points. The exposed rock faces were in places exploited to lend character and drama to the designed landscape. This is seen most clearly in the exposed limestone pillars along Seven Bridges and the rough cliff face below the Octagon Tower. The River Skell was manipulated as a central feature of the designed landscape and was heavily engineered to create the canals, cascades and ponds of the water garden.

Studley Royal is therefore one of the earliest, most multi-phase and most exceptional examples of a designed landscape responding fully and successfully to the 'genius of the place' as created by its underlying natural landforms.

A view of the Roman Monument and one of the seven bridges



4. Immaculately designed views and vistas using the landscape both within and beyond the boundaries of the garden

In 18th century designed landscapes, the design of views, prospects, panoramas and vantage points was of central importance. The Studley Royal designed landscape is incredibly successful in the way it takes advantage of the visual opportunities of the landscape both within and beyond the boundaries of the garden. Views and vistas were designed to allow the exploration of the relationships between individual features of the landscape and embrace features of the wider setting to produce a spectrum of visual and aesthetic effects.

The earliest eye-catcher built by John Aislabie was at How Hill. This tower was designed to be viewed from within the gardens and paired with the alignment of the main canal, echoing the relationship between the park's main avenue and Ripon Cathedral. It is also a prospect tower, from which to oversee the Studley estate and historic features in the vast landscape beyond. The tower was inspired by the works of John's close acquaintance Sir John Vanbrugh. There was significant interchange of views between the garden's other follies as well as to and from natural features. Planting was often designed to frame deliberately chosen views across or into the landscape. One of the most successful and iconic of these views is the Surprise View of the abbey ruins from Anne Boleyn's Seat on the High Ride. In contrast to these identifiable static set piece views, other parts of the design exploited kinetic visual experiences of contrast and change in the course of a circuit of the grounds.

The Aislabies also 'borrowed' vistas from the surrounding countryside. The most spectacular is the vista down the main deer park avenue to Ripon Cathedral and beyond to Blois Hall Farm. This farm was owned by the Aislabies and is the last known building of the designed landscape which when built in 1779 took the length of the vista to eight miles. The view is framed from within the park by an avenue of limes. The use of distant buildings gave perspective to an avenue and was widely used in English landscape gardens in the 18th century. Panoramic views are also available across Ripon and to the North York Moors beyond from Gillet Hill, an area of parkland on the eastern edge of the estate. These views extend across agricultural countryside and this agrarian setting was also a key component of the overall garden design.



5. Range of buildings illustrating patronage, status and influence

The Studley Royal gardens include a suite of buildings of outstanding significance which together illuminate successive episodes of the taste and ambitions of landowners over many different centuries. These buildings have each been immaculately located or conserved within the designed landscape at Studley Royal and are of the highest architectural quality.

After the abbey, one of the earliest of these buildings is Fountains Hall, built between 1597 and 1604 and located in the north-west corner of the monastic precinct. The Hall is an idiosyncratic reflection of the late 16th and early 17th century architectural tastes with a distinctive Elizabethan façade. Tucked away in the valley bottom, it was for almost 200 years the main house for the Fountains estate before its purchase by William Aislabie in 1767 and incorporation into the wider Studley Royal estate.

During the 18th century, under the ownership of the Aislabies, a whole range of ornamental buildings were designed as part of the development of the Studley Royal designed landscape to the east of the abbey. Gothic and Palladian styles of architecture are juxtaposed throughout the gardens and the influence of the Orient could be seen at the Chinese Temple (only the plinth now remains). Both John and William had links socially, through kinship and direct employment with some of the leading thinkers and architects of the day including Lord Burlington, William Benson, Colen Campbell and Castle Howard's architects Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor. The architectural thinking of the day heavily influenced the development of the garden buildings although what was created remains unique to Studley Royal.

The latest addition to the landscape was St Mary's Church, a 19th century masterpiece of High Victorian Gothic architecture by William Burges and commissioned by the First Marquis of Ripon as one of a pair of churches (the second is in the nearby village of Skelton). St Mary's is considered to be one of Burges' finest works and was carefully sited at the head of the Lime Avenue to be a prominent feature in the landscape.

Over a period of 800 years a diverse range of buildings were constructed across the estate. The designed landscape at Studley Royal successfully combines all of these buildings into one harmonious whole.

1.3 Other values associated with the World Heritage Site

In addition to the OUV, there are a range of other values which guide how the site is managed. The World Heritage Convention 1972 places value on both cultural and natural heritage and recognises the need to preserve the balance between the two. Although inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural site, the natural environment is an integral part of the site. There are also important archaeological and historic sites which are not part of the OUV of the WHS but must be cared for. Finally, the site has enormous value as a tourist destination. The social, cultural and economic values of the site are set out below.

1.3.1 Archaeological values

The surface beauty of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal rests literally and intellectually on an outstanding archaeological resource. This reflects periods of the past no longer very visible in the landscape, commencing with prehistoric remains dating back to the Neolithic period and including a significant, if elusive, Romano-British occupation. Place name evidence reflects a sophisticated use of the landscape in the early medieval period before the establishment of the abbey. After its foundation, half of the present property was owned by the monks, the rest an independent, vanished, medieval village – Studlei Magna – whose remains extend over some 330 acres. This is archaeology of at least regional, and often national, value.

The abbey has long been the subject of antiquarian and archaeological research, creating a false sense that its archaeology has been fully investigated. In reality, the majority of the monastic precinct, and even extensive deposits in and around the cloistral complex, remain intact and largely unexplored. This is a vast resource, integral to the international values of the site, which might be investigated to add more to our understanding of the life and development of the abbey. The same can be said of Studlei Magna, where an even smaller proportion has been explored.

The archaeological potential of designed landscapes is less overt than that of medieval abbeys or villages, but just as important. On sites such as Studley Royal, it is probably even more important, as it has the potential to tell the detailed story of the designed landscape, which is the reason for the property's designation as a WHS, and therefore is of international value. All gardens evolve over time, often creating a far more significant archaeological record than a documentary one. This has been proven to be the case time and time again at Studley over the past 25 years. The site's archaeology has been quite well mapped, but the potential for further discoveries or more detailed investigation remains considerable.

In addition to these highlights in the estate's history, there are a range of other elements that have left significant archaeological record, not least the domestic life of the lost Studley Hall in the deer park, and the occupation and development of the Fountains estate between 1540 and 1767.

Archaeological resources are all a) unique, b) highly sensitive and vulnerable to ill-informed management, and c) an irreplaceable resource. It is crucial to understand this resource as well as possible to avoid inadvertent damage; optimise what is learnt from unavoidable interventions; and find means of investigation that leave the resource untouched.

Abbey ruins



1.3.2 Natural environment values

Biodiversity

The WHS contains a rich and varied ecology. Eight species of bat can be found at the site with at least three species breeding and many roosts within the historic buildings and structures. Over 300 red, sika and fallow deer call the extensive deer park home. The freshwater habitats of the river and ponds are UK BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) Priority Habitats and support a number of species including the native white-clawed crayfish and great crested newt. The site also supports a wide variety of birds including the spotted flycatcher, hawfinch, lesser spotted woodpecker, red kite and peregrine falcon.



A sweet chestnut in Studley Royal Deer Park

The veteran trees of the deer park and their deadwood invertebrates are of international importance due to the rarity of old parkland in Europe. Many trees are more than three hundred years old and a few date from before 1600. The native oak, field maple and yew trees, as well as the introduced lime, beech and sweet chestnut trees support a wide variety of saproxylic invertebrates that are dependent on dead or decaying wood, as well as other organisms.

The ancient woodland on the valley sides is rich in bluebell and dog's mercury as well as bird's nest orchid, small teasel and toothwort. The abbey ruins also support over fifty species of wall flora.

The underlying Millstone Grit of the site is overlain by Magnesian Limestone and this sustains species-rich Magnesian Limestone grassland, especially around the Banqueting House, which is now part of a lowland calcareous grassland UK BAP Priority Habitat.

Geodiversity

Within the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal estate there are two principal bedrock types. The majority of the site is underlain by Magnesian Limestone (Permian). The southern and western part of the site, including the abbey precinct and Fountains Hall, is underlain by Millstone Grit (Carboniferous). The whole site is overlain by a cover of Pleistocene gravel and clay with associated late Pleistocene landforms. The best exposures of Millstone Grit occur on the north side of the Skell Valley, forming Echo Cliff which is where much of the building stone for the abbey was quarried. Exposures of Magnesian Limestone can be seen either side of the formal water garden and within the Seven Bridges Valley. In the late Pleistocene, a river swollen with glacial melt water cut the steep sided valley of Fountains Abbey and the Seven Bridges gorge along which today's River Skell flows. The natural shelter provided by the deep post glacial river valley, the presence of water and the surrounding geology and geomorphology have all influenced the development of the site, the design of the landscape and the construction of the historic buildings and structures.

1.3.3 Learning values

Many visitors come to the site to increase their knowledge of the historic landscape, wildlife and people who have lived here. We provide visitors with a variety of different ways to discover the estate, its stories and history. These include guided and self-led tours, an audio tour of the abbey and lively exhibitions. We have a close relationship with Harrogate College and a range of schools. We also work with local colleges and universities to host student placements, support dissertations and research and provide tours and lectures about the WHS. Over the last 10 years we have provided apprenticeships for rangers, gardeners, stone masons, business services and food and beverage team members. We want to develop the role of the WHS as a learning base for people to develop skills in the conservation and care of historic places. The National Trust has developed specialist craft centres at a range of properties. At Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal we are home to the Masonry Centre for Excellence which employs a team of masons and apprentices.



1.3.4 Social, economic and cultural values

Community

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is a place where families and friends gather and socialise. There are many things to do on the estate and surrounding area, from enjoying a walk or taking part in the weekly Park Run, visiting with children to enjoy the playground and varied programme of family activities or watching the wildlife and learning about the history of the abbey ruins and gardens. The deer park and Seven Bridges Valley are criss-crossed by a network of footpaths and are popular with people living in the surrounding villages and Ripon. Often several generations of a family will come for a walk to see the deer and enjoy the views.

Our community also includes the big team of volunteers who live in Ripon, Harrogate and the surrounding area. These volunteers play an active role in caring for the WHS. The help they give ranges from gardening and carrying out practical conservation tasks in the deer park to delivering our guided tours for visitors. The community also includes our neighbouring farmers and landowners who look after the land surrounding the WHS. Through their stewardship of the land, they protect the setting of the WHS, its heritage and wildlife. Our wider community includes all the visitors to the WHS, who come from every corner of the globe. We want to make everyone feel welcome at this special place.

Recreation and tourism

The site has had a long history of welcoming visitors from when the abbey was operational to the present day. Even before the Studley Royal landscaped garden was finished, it was described as the 'Wonder of the North' in the Travel Journal of John Tracy Atkins, 1732. It is one of the most visited National Trust properties and a key attraction in Yorkshire, drawing visitors from many parts of the UK and overseas. Each year over 600,000 visitors come to the estate.

Arts and associations

The WHS has a long history of being inspiration for and the subject of art. In the 18th century, the Aislabie family invited several artists to capture the estate including Balthasar Nebot and Anthony Walker. Balthasar Nebot produced 21 views of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal. Anthony Walker's engravings of the estate are among the most reprinted and depict 18th century visitors taking in the scenery as they stroll through the water garden.

Other artists including Joseph Mallord William Turner, Thomas Girtin and the more recent artists John Piper, Lucy Pittaway and David Hockney have created paintings and engravings that capture the estate. The earliest known photographs of the abbey ruins and gardens were taken in the mid-19th century and the railway also gave rise to some highly stylised depictions of both Ripon and Fountains Abbey in the form of LNER railway posters.

In the 21st century the ruins, gardens and parklands continue to inspire artists. Our contemporary art programme Folly! started in 2015 and aims to bring to life the playful spirit of the water garden, encourage new audiences and provoke conversation among our visitors.

In 2021 artist Steve Messam created, with the support of the Arts Council England, 'These Passing Things', an inflatable red bridge and the explosive 'Spiked' emerging from the Temple of Piety. Alongside the contemporary art installations, we commissioned the 'Still Time to Wonder' photography exhibition created by Joe Cornish over the pandemic period. The estate has also been chosen as a location for television dramas and films including the Netflix blockbuster 'The Witcher', Channel 5's 'All Creatures Great and Small' and the latest Secret Garden movie.



Religious and spiritual

The estate retains an active and significant spiritual and celebratory significance for many people. Ecumenical services including the annual carol service by candlelight in December, the Eucharist service split between Ripon Cathedral and the abbey ruins on Boxing Day, the Easter Good Friday service, and the Mass for the feast of St Bernard and/or St Benedict. During the summer months, the parish minister and current and former members of the clergy volunteer their time so they can respond to spiritual matters should it be appropriate. St Mary's Church remains consecrated and is used occasionally for parish weddings, christenings and funerals. The site also has a close relationship with Ripon Cathedral.

Peace and tranquillity

The site is highly valued for its tranquillity and peaceful beauty and for providing a quiet place for calm reflection. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is the only property owned by the National Trust where one of the main reasons people visit is to 'enjoy peace, tranquillity and contemplation'.

Thoughts from visitors to Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal posted on 2021/ 22 on Tripadvisor

'The whole estate covering the abbey and the water garden are very large with so many quiet and peaceful walks and wonderful views'

'Beautiful place, peaceful and relaxing and yet great for the full family. So much to see steeped in history.'

'The whole place is HUGE!!!! From the abbey to the water gardens... it's just tranquil, peaceful and beautiful. A MUST SEE!!!!'

'What a beautiful place. Tranquil relaxing and interesting.'

The large size of the site and the different areas to explore mean that even on a busy day there is always a quiet place to be found.

The tranquillity of Fountains Abbey





Economic

The site has always been a working estate and its success as a visitor attraction means it is an important economic driver locally and regionally. It is the second most visited attraction in Yorkshire and one of only two WHSs in the region. The Victorian model village of Saltaire, near Bradford, is the other.

The estate is committed to increasing the provision of both locally sourced and sustainable products. In our cafes and restaurants, we serve food produced by local suppliers such as Black Sheep Brewery, Wensleydale Creameries and Northern Bloc Ice Cream. It is our ambition to only sell products with sustainable and ethical supply chains and at the same time to support the local and regional economy. We sell products in our shop from a wide range of local producers which include whisky from the Spirit of Yorkshire Distillery, gin made by Sing Gin, a North Yorkshire team of gin makers, and cards from Little Snowdrop Designs based in a North Yorkshire village. We use several other local contractors and suppliers on the estate for landscaping and building conservation and maintenance. In addition to our own spending, many of our visitors also spend locally.

The estate is also an important employer with many of its staff coming from the local area. The National Trust has agricultural agreements with local farmers relating to agricultural pockets of land on the fringes of the estate, which reinforce the economic and social significance of the estate and the important relationship between the estate and the local community.



Chapter 2: Managing the World Heritage Site

This chapter sets out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the management of the World Heritage Site and the process for the update of this plan.

2.1 Management structure

The National Trust is responsible for the conservation and maintenance of the site except for the monastic buildings which are in the guardianship of the State and looked after by the English Heritage Trust. The National Trust owns the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal estate and manages the garden, parkland, Fountains Hall and visitor infrastructure.

The State owns St Mary's Church and it is cared for by English Heritage Trust on its behalf, although the day to day management is delivered by the National Trust under a local management agreement.

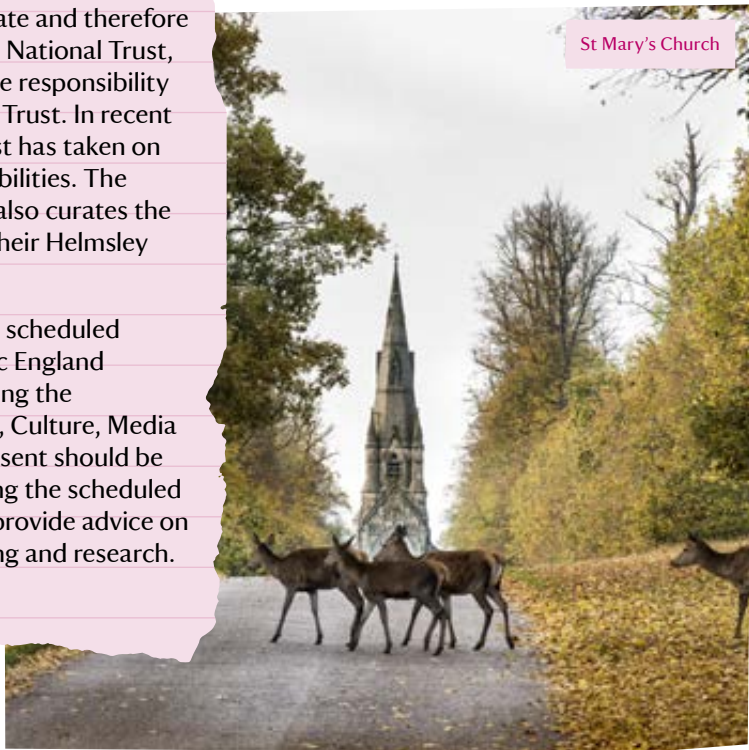
Both organisations play a role in the conservation and management of the abbey ruins, Fountains Abbey Mill and monastic fish ponds. The abbey ruins and mill are in a Guardianship Agreement with the State and therefore although owned by the National Trust, their conservation is the responsibility of the English Heritage Trust. In recent times the National Trust has taken on some of these responsibilities. The English Heritage Trust also curates the monastic artefacts at their Helmsley Archaeology Store.

The abbey precinct is a scheduled monument and Historic England is responsible for advising the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport whether consent should be given for works affecting the scheduled monument. They also provide advice on listed buildings, planning and research.

Fountains Abbey



St Mary's Church



World Heritage Site Steering Group

The World Heritage Site Steering Group has overall responsibility for the preparation and delivery of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and is responsible for setting the management priorities and monitoring the delivery of the plan.

The World Heritage Site Steering Group includes representatives from the National Trust, Historic England, English Heritage Trust, North Yorkshire Council and the International Council on Monuments and Sites UK (ICOMOS-UK).

WHS Co-ordinator and our staff and volunteers

Sarah France, the WHS Co-ordinator, is based on site and is responsible for coordinating, preparing and monitoring delivery of the World Heritage Site Management Plan. Preparation and delivery of the management plan is supported by staff working at the property and regional and national specialists. A team of over 300 volunteers also play a vital role in delivering the objectives and actions in the plan.

The WHS Stakeholder Group

The WHS Stakeholder Group meets annually to monitor and inform the management issues and actions in the plan. The group includes local landowners, the local authority, representatives from the local community including mayors and parish councillors, businesses, tourism and environmental organisations and interest groups. Partners in this group also lead on delivery of actions in the plan. A list of these stakeholders can be found in Appendix 4.

2.2 Producing the plan

This plan was developed by the WHS Co-ordinator and the World Heritage Site Steering Group.

Consultation events were held throughout the plan process to gather people's opinions on the issues that matter the most to them. A report of the consultation events that took place and key points raised and a description of how those points have been addressed in this plan is available on our website.

This ensured that national and local organisations, visitors and the local community all had the opportunity to make their voices heard and shape this revision of the plan. A questionnaire was also available for completion online and promoted through National Trust social media networks.

A second phase of formal consultation was held from June 2023 to July 2023.



Temple of Piety

	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Review of current Plan																							
WH Steering Group challenges workshop																							
6 year action plan of current plan reviewed																							
WH Steering Group agreed review programme (13 Jan 2022)																							
Appointment of World Heritage Assistant																							
Participation																							
Engagement with property staff & volunteers (14 & 21 Jan 2022)																							
Visitor engagement event with free entry (20 March 2022)																							
Initial WHS Steering group meeting/ input re issues & objectives (4 April 2022)																							
National Trust Conservation Consultancy workshops (16 May & 29 June 2022)																							
Stakeholder event (24 May 2022)																							
National Trust Visitor Experience workshop (7 June 2022)																							
Community event – drop in at Ripon Library (8 June 2022)																							
WHS Steering Group review consultation responses & theme 3 (30 Aug 2022)																							
WHS steering group conservation & challenges meeting (29 Sept 2022)																							
Ripon Civic Society Meeting (17 Oct 2022)																							
Stakeholder event (2 March 2023)																							
Drafting the Plan																							
Draft the chapters of the plan																							
WHS Steering Group meeting to review draft sections of the plan																							
Consultation on the draft Plan																							
WHS Steering Group approve draft plan going to consultation																							
Draft plan published for consultation: 6 weeks																							
WHS Steering Group review consultation responses																							
Amending and finalising the plan																							
Amend the plan following consultation																							
WHS Steering Group to formally sign-off the plan																							
Submit plan to DCMS for endorsement & send to UNESCO																							
Final amendments, proofing and print plan																							



Chapter 3: Challenges and opportunities for the World Heritage Site

Our partners and communities agreed many of the challenges we highlighted in our previous plan are still relevant. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation post-Brexit and the cost of living crisis have created new challenges we need to address. We also wanted to highlight opportunities for action. Each challenge and opportunity links to an objective in the plan.

The Covid-19 pandemic also showed that we cannot envisage all the challenges and opportunities the World Heritage Site (WHS) may face over the next six years so we will keep these issues under review as part of the regular monitoring of the plan.

3.1 Challenges

3.1.1 Tackling the risks of climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face globally. At a local level, extremes of weather including flooding, drought and heatwaves are all impacting the outstanding universal value (OUV) of the WHS. Risks include an increase in occurrence and severity of flash floods and drought. This threatens the landscape design, archaeology, buildings and landscape features such as trees and lawns. We have also seen an increase in rockfalls from the cliffs around the abbey. Pests and diseases are becoming more prevalent. The extremes of temperature also affect visitor patterns. Record-breaking temperatures in 2022 saw a drop in visitor numbers and the need for additional shade and water.

In addition to adapting to the impacts of climate change on the WHS we can also play a role in reducing our own impact on the planet by reducing our carbon emissions and environmental footprint.

[🔗 Link to Objective H](#)

3.1.2 Biodiversity crisis

The 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) in Montreal addressed the ongoing biodiversity crisis that the world is experiencing and saw the adoption of a new set of international goals for biodiversity. A rich and varied ecology is a key natural environment value associated with the WHS. Working with our partners we can play our part in encouraging as rich a biodiversity at the site as is possible and connect to habitats beyond our boundaries.

[🔗 Link to Objective G](#)

3.1.3 The spread of plant and tree diseases and invasive species

The spread of plant and tree diseases, such as Ash Dieback, is having an increasing impact on the historic landscape of the gardens and parklands. In 2022, over 600 infected ash trees were felled. Dutch elm disease has affected our native elm trees and *Phytophthora ramorum*, a tree disease that affects larch trees and rhododendrons, has now been found in sweet chestnut trees in Yorkshire.

[🔗 Link to Objective G and H](#)

3.1.4 Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis on the financial sustainability of the WHS

The National Trust lost £200 million during the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the drop in visitor numbers and holiday cottage bookings due to closure of properties across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There has also been an increase in the cost of living across the UK. In a survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics in March 2022 around 91% of people reported their cost of living had increased over the past month. This had gone up by 28% since November 2021 when people were first asked. We are aware this puts pressures on people's finances. The Trust is also affected by the recent price increases, and the challenging economic environment is having an impact on our ongoing running costs and vital conservation work.

The experience economy, being the sale of memorable experiences rather than material things, has been growing over the last decade. In the UK, competitor visitor attractions who have continued to invest in creative visitor experience offers are emerging from the pandemic with a competitive edge in the tourism market.

To ensure financial sustainability we must continue to attract visitors to the WHS, developing a programme of events, activities and projects as well as delivering value for money, great customer service and encouraging repeat visits.

[↻ Link to Objective C and L](#)

3.1.5 Protection of the WHS, buffer zone and wider setting through the planning system

New development such as housing, large scale or poorly sited renewable energy schemes or agricultural buildings can harm the setting of the WHS or key views to and from the site. The adoption of the Harrogate Local Plan and Ripon City Plan have given much needed protection to the WHS. As part of the creation of a new unitary authority for North Yorkshire a new Local Plan will be prepared and it is important that robust planning policies remain in place to protect and enhance the OUV of the WHS. The application for housing at West Lane in Ripon in 2017 also highlighted the need for a better understanding and protection of the setting of the site.

[↻ Link to Objective E](#)

3.1.6 Adequacy of the boundaries of the WHS

The boundaries of the WHS do not include the entire 18th century garden of Studley Royal, only those areas in National Trust ownership when the site was inscribed as a WHS in 1986. Areas lying outside the WHS boundary do not have the same level of protection as those within and heritage and landscape features in these areas are vulnerable to neglect and risk of loss.

[↻ Link to Objective F](#)

3.1.7 Impact of the privately owned Shoot on conservation and management of the WHS

There is currently a private shoot across the whole WHS and neighbouring land which impacts on the conservation and management of the site. The current situation is one the National Trust inherited following its purchase of the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal estate from North Yorkshire County Council in 1983.

The Shoot owners have a right, in law, to shoot at any time within the respective shooting periods. This is not a unique situation and many landowners within the UK find themselves having to operate like this. The National Trust has reached an agreement with the Shoot owners to close the estate on Fridays in Winter to minimise disruption to visitors while shooting takes place. The agreement imposes other

constraints on how the WHS is managed in terms of limiting visitor access to large areas of the garden, restricting the conservation works carried out in the gardens and causing harm to the designed landscape through shooting infrastructure such as tracks and pheasant pens.

[↻ Link to Objective J](#)

3.1.8 Managing the impacts of flooding and siltation

The River Skell runs through the estate and was vastly modified in the 18th century to create the water garden. The river feeds the formal ponds, canals and cascades. Upstream the river catchment is relatively small and steep, with soils which are prone to compaction. High levels of run-off occur during periods of heavy rainfall causing flooding in the WHS and the city of Ripon further downstream. There are also high levels of soil run-off upstream of the WHS which causes the build-up of silt in the ornamental water features such as the lake.

Through the Skell Valley Project we are working with farmers to deliver Natural Flood Management measures such tree and hedgerow planting, silt holding ponds, moorland restoration and bank side fencing to slow the flow of water and reduce soil run-off upstream.

[↻ Link to Objective I](#)

Flooding in the cellarium in 2007



3.1.9 Balancing visitor numbers with protecting the WHS

The WHS is a busy site attracting around 600,000 visitors a year. On peak days such as Easter, bank holidays and during school holidays, visitor numbers can reach over 3,500 a day. During these peak visiting times we can occasionally exceed the capacity of our car parks resulting in closure of the site for short periods of time. The high numbers of visitors and year-round visiting has led to damage to some areas of the WHS. This is particularly visible around the abbey where the entrances and some paths are heavily eroded.

[Link to Objective B](#)

3.1.10 Accessing the WHS by means other than the car

The WHS is in rural North Yorkshire and not well located within public transport networks. The site is three miles from the city of Ripon, 11 miles from the nearest train station in Harrogate and 22 miles from the nearest airport which is Leeds Bradford. Many local bus routes have been reduced or cut over the years and most visitors travel to the site by private car. Working with partners such as North Yorkshire Council and the Friends of DalesBus we will continue to encourage visitors, staff and volunteers to use more sustainable transport options wherever possible.

[Link to Objective R](#)

3.1.11 Ensuring that the WHS is welcoming and accessible to everyone

Ensuring that the site is welcoming and accessible to all is a key focus for us. While there are measures in place on site to improve the accessibility for less able visitors, there is more that can be done. We will be working towards meeting new National Trust access standards by providing level access to our historic buildings for example.

However, barriers are not just physical. Through our consultation work on the Skell Valley Project we know that some visitors and people living locally consider entry to the site unaffordable. Increases in admission prices over the coming years and the cost of living crisis in the UK may further exacerbate this issue.

[Link to Objective L](#)

A volunteer in front of Fountains Hall



3.2 Opportunities

3.2.1 Building on momentum of delivery of the Skell Valley Project

Delivery of the Skell Valley Project started in March 2021 and has been a great model of partnership working. It provides an opportunity to continue to strengthen our relationships with communities in Ripon and the farmers and landowners upstream of the WHS. Many of the projects in the Skell Valley Project will deliver the objectives set out in the World Heritage Management Plan. These include the work with farmers to reduce flooding in the WHS, the recording of veteran trees along the Skell, the oral history and community archaeological recording which will not only enrich our understanding of the whole Skell Valley but also that of the WHS. Over the next six years we will work with our communities and partners to ensure the Skell Valley Project has a lasting legacy, promoting sustainable management of the WHS and along the whole length of the river.

[Link to Objective P](#)

3.2.2 Growing awareness and desire to tackle climate change

There is a far greater awareness now than there has ever been about the impact human activity is having on the planet. This is a result of breakthrough documentaries like David Attenborough's 'One Planet', high-profile protests by Extinction Rebellion and the hosting by the UK of the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow in 2021. The National Trust has made tackling climate change one of its top priorities.

The Skell Valley Project has generated awareness both locally and nationally about the threats the WHS is facing from climate change and how through working in partnership we can tackle them. The project was featured as a case study in UNESCO's 'Sites for Sustainable Development: Realizing the Potential of UNESCO Designated Sites to Advance Agenda 2030' report and a short video accompanying the report was shown at COP 27 in Egypt and COP 15 in Montreal. We will continue to build on the interest generated by the Skell Valley Project and share our experiences more widely with the World Heritage community, locally, nationally and globally.

[Link to Objective H](#)

3.2.3 To help with the growing health and wellbeing crisis in the country

The World Health Organisation constitution states, 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of mental disorders or disabilities.' Research shows that there are five things that everyone can do as part of their daily life to build resilience, boost wellbeing and lower the risk of developing mental health problems. These simple actions are known as the 'Five ways to wellbeing' and are part of an internationally recognised framework that is supported by the NHS and MIND. The five ways are; Connect, Keep Learning, Be Active, Give and Take Notice. By being a place to visit and volunteer and through the activities delivered through the Skell Valley Project, there are opportunities to play our part in enhancing health and wellbeing.

[Link to Objective P](#)



Parkrun attracts over 200 runners each week

3.2.4 A growing and dynamic network of WHSs across the UK and the National Trust

With the inscription of the English Lake District on the World Heritage List in 2017, the National Trust is now the largest landowner of WHSs in UK and involved in the management of nine of the UK's thirty-three WHSs. The Trust has set up a network of staff involved in the management of WHSs to share learning. As an organisation, we are also a member of World Heritage UK (a network of WHSs) which has gone from strength to strength, raising the profile of world heritage in the UK and providing opportunities for shared learning and networking.

[Link to Objective A and N](#)

3.2.5 Growing awareness and recognition to the UNESCO Peace Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals

The war in Ukraine has highlighted the value and importance of UNESCO's founding vision which is to achieve international peace. In 2019 we began to work with World Heritage UK (a network of WHSs in the UK) and Newcastle University to look at how we can play our part in promoting peace. We plan to build on this initial work and further develop how the WHS can contribute towards the UNESCO Peace Agenda. We are also seeking to explore where we can be most effective in delivering the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out by UNESCO in the 2030 Agenda.

[Link to Objective A](#)

3.2.6 Levelling up agenda

The Government's Levelling Up agenda is about reducing the huge economic and social inequalities between the north and south of England. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is one of six WHSs in the North of England. UNESCO designations in the north also include the creative cities of York and Bradford and the Global Geopark of the North Pennines. This diverse range of sites all contribute to a rich story of the North of England. Working together and building on the

power of the UNESCO brand we can play our part in the levelling up agenda. By developing initiatives to promote tourism we can attract more visitors to the North of England, bringing benefits for the local and regional economy.

[Link to Objective Q](#)

3.2.7 Formation of a new unitary authority for North Yorkshire and a new Mayoral Combined Authority for York and North Yorkshire

In April 2023 the new unitary authority of North Yorkshire Council was formed. This combined the 7 district councils with the North Yorkshire County Council and formed the third largest Council by population in England and the largest area.

This will be followed by the formation of a York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority in 2024. This Combined Authority will administer a devolution deal that will allow more local powers and decision making and additional funding with an investment fund of more than £540 million for York and North Yorkshire. The deal will also see the election of a Mayor in May 2024 who will become a champion for the region and forge close links with government.

The new North Yorkshire Council and new York and Yorkshire Combined Authority will oversee strategic projects including

major transport improvements and boosting skills and education all of which could bring benefits to the WHS and wider economy. The new North Yorkshire Cultural Framework is also important for the WHS, setting out the role culture can play in supporting prosperity and wellbeing. There will be opportunities, working with other partners, for the site to bid to and benefit from the investment fund known as the Shared and Rural England Prosperity Funds.

[Link to Objective P](#)

3.2.8 Changes to farming payment systems

In 2023 Defra set out details of the UK Government's 'flagship' Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes. In England, the scheme replaces the European Common Agricultural Policy and brings forward new payments to incentivise farmers to reduce the use of damaging pesticides, make more efficient use of nutrients to reduce pollution, better management of hedgerows, and support wildlife by providing habitat for birds and pollinators. The development and delivery of effective ELM schemes can bring many benefits for communities, heritage, nature recovery and resilience to climate change in the WHS and the surrounding landscape. We have opportunities to promote ELM schemes not only on our own parklands in the WHS but also within the wider landscape through the Skell Valley Project.

[Link to Objective G](#)

Farmland in the Skell Valley



3.2.9 Digital technology

The rapid pace of digital advancement means that opportunities will continue to develop over the next plan period. We are already benefitting from the increase in digital connectivity and connection to our visitors and communities through social media, our website and virtual learning opportunities. We will be developing opportunities over the coming years of how to best use digital measures in our interpretation at the WHS.

[Link to Objective M](#)



Chapter 4: Themes, objectives and actions

This section of the plan sets out the long-term objectives and actions for the next six years.

The objectives are grouped under four themes which have been carried forward from the last plan.

The long-term objectives have been revised and updated in light of the site's current challenges and opportunities set out in Chapter 3.

The key partners and timescales for delivery of the actions are set out in the six year action plan in Chapter 5.

Theme 1:
Overall
management
approach

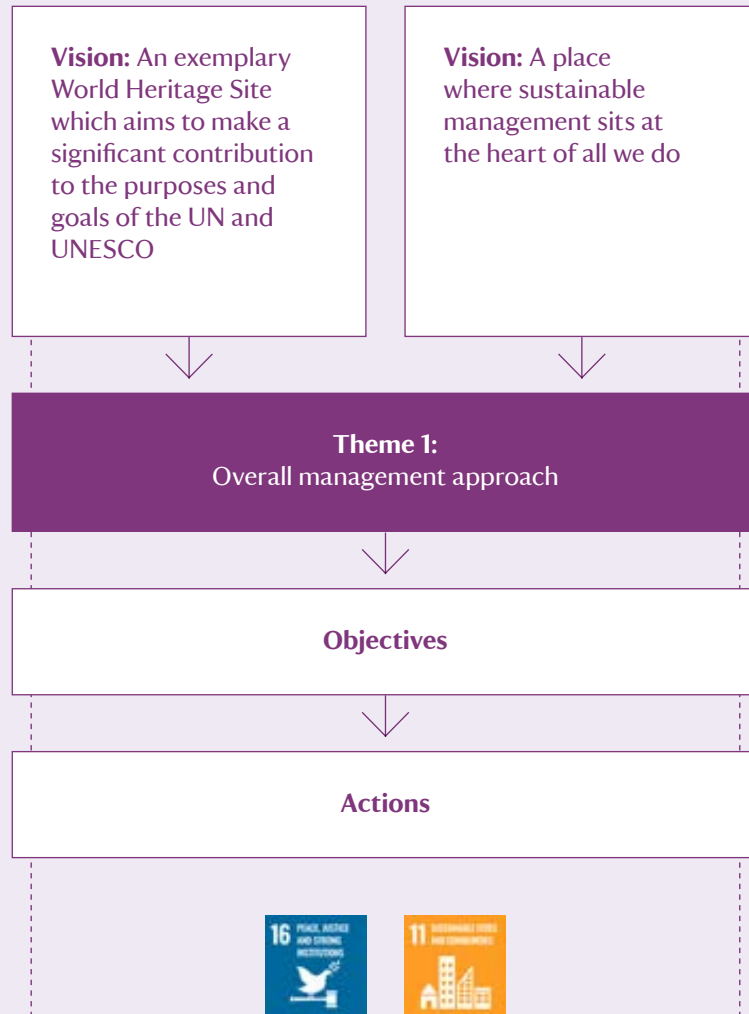
Theme 2:
Conservation
and climate action

Theme 3:
Access, inspiration
and learning

Theme 4:
Local community
links and
partnerships



Theme 1: Overall management approach



How does this theme help to protect the site?

This theme sets out the sustainable management principles that we will use to protect and enhance the outstanding universal value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS). It also sets out the part our WHS can play in delivering UNESCO priorities like the promotion of peace and the wider Sustainable Development Goals.

The WHS attracts around 600,000 visitors a year and plays an important role in the local and regional economy. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the financial sustainability of the WHS. This is critical to supporting our staff and volunteers and delivering the conservation work needed to protect the OUV of the WHS. The planning system is also vital for protecting the WHS, the buffer zone and its wider setting.

Global to Local – Integration of Key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this theme

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, SDG 16 – This goal is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Unifying people and promoting peace goes to the heart of UNESCO's purpose which makes this an even more important SDG for our WHS to contribute towards.

Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 11 – This goal is about making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It includes efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. We can play a role at the WHS to promote work to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Objective A: Ensure sustainable management to maintain the outstanding universal value of the WHS and contribute to wider UN and UNESCO goals

Why is this objective important?

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention celebrated its 50th Anniversary in November 2022. The Convention was established to recognise 'sites of outstanding universal value'. This is a cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for all humanity.

UNESCO was set up in 1945 after World War II to create the conditions for peace by using cultural, education and natural sciences to build intercultural dialogue. As part of the UNESCO family of designations which include WHSs, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks and Creative Cities, we can play a role

not only in protecting the WHS for future generations through our management of the site but also through promoting the wider aims of UNESCO such as peace, education and sustainable development.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Delivering on the World Heritage Convention – overarching management principles

Our vision is to ensure that sustainable management sits at the heart of all we do, and this will be a thread running through all the objectives in the plan. We also want to deliver on our responsibilities set out in the World Heritage Convention to protect, preserve, present and transmit the value of the WHS. The following are the set of management principles that will guide management and decision making in and around the WHS.

✓ Reflecting the OUV and attributes of the WHS in management decisions

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for the WHS was approved by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2012. Following on from approval of the SOUV, Harrogate Borough Council, Historic England and the National Trust worked together to prepare a set of attributes for the WHS. These were approved by the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site Steering Group in 2021. The attributes are listed in full in Chapter 1. The OUV and the attributes will be conserved and enhanced

through the delivery of the conservation and management strategies for the WHS. They are also a key consideration in planning decisions. Future work is planned, with partners, to produce a detailed set of components which will sit under each of the attributes. This will provide a more detailed description of the important parts of the site to inform and drive management and decision making in the WHS and surrounding area.

The inter-connectedness of cultural and natural values

The World Heritage Convention was the first international treaty to bring together nature and culture. The Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS has many additional values such as the importance of the site's natural heritage in addition to the cultural values which were recognised as the reason for the site's inscription as a WHS. The cultural significance of the Studley Royal Water Garden owes much to the idea of working with nature and adorning nature with 'art' that was so fashionable in the 18th century.

In rare situations, there may be potential for conflict between management approaches suited to the site's cultural rather than natural heritage. As a general principle, on those rare occasions where designations make opposing demands, the cultural values will take priority.

However, beyond the protection and management of the OUV, we will look after all values as they are part of our site's uniqueness and cherished by our visitors and local communities.

Disaster management and risk preparedness

WHSs are exposed to the impacts of natural and man-made catastrophic events which may threaten their values and integrity. Loss or deterioration of the WHS would have negative impacts on local and national communities not only because of the site's cultural importance but also because of its socio-economic value.

The National Trust has an Emergency Plan for the site which identifies potential threats to the OUV of the WHS such as flooding and fire. The plan puts measures in place to ensure that we can respond effectively to emergency or disaster situations. The National Trust and the English Heritage Trust (EHT) have produced salvage plans for the buildings and collections in the WHS. The National Trust has also ensured that it retains sound unrestricted reserves to protect the charity and properties in its care against future uncertainty and risks. The importance of this was brought into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conservation policies and principles

Conservation in the WHS will be guided by the conservation principles produced by Historic England and the National Trust. In terms of managing projects and maintenance works on the property, we work within a project management framework which aims to ensure effective and efficient delivery of projects and sharing of learning.

Historic England Conservation Principles

Principle 1 – The historic environment is a shared resource

Principle 2 – Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment

Principle 3 – Understanding the significance of places is vital

Principle 4 – Significant places should be managed to sustain their values

Principle 5 – Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent

Principle 6 – Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

The full document can be found at historicengland.org.uk

Managing through strong partnerships

Most of the WHS is owned by the National Trust but St Mary's Church is looked after by the EHT on behalf of the state. The abbey ruins and mill are in a Guardianship Agreement where responsibility for all the conservation works lies with EHT. We will continue to review our relationship with EHT and how to operate in the best interests of conservation of the abbey and St Mary's Church.

Alongside these shared management responsibilities, the care of the WHS sits with many different partners and stakeholders. The World Heritage Site Steering Group will continue to support and advise on management of the WHS. The current membership of the Steering group includes representatives from the National Trust, Historic England, English Heritage Trust, North Yorkshire Council and the International Council on Monuments and Sites UK (ICOMOS-UK). The new unitary authority of North Yorkshire Council was put in place in April 2023 and this will be a good opportunity to review the role of the steering group and ensure it has the right members to drive delivery of the plan.

Each year we also hold an annual stakeholder meeting where we bring together partners from the local community such as neighbouring landowners and representatives from parish councils and organisations such as Natural England, Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Environment Agency and the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust. This annual meeting is an opportunity for partners to update us on work to deliver the management plan and for collaborative working. It provided the foundation for the Skell Valley Partnership.

Evaluating the impact of the management plan

We plan to develop a more formal and in-depth evaluation process for our World Heritage Site Management Plan during this next plan period. This will:

- assess whether we have successfully delivered the plan's objectives
- develop and monitor a set of plan outcomes
- engage staff, volunteers and local groups in the collection and monitoring of the data
- continue to report back on delivery of the plan to the wider World Heritage stakeholder group and the community through an annual workshop and progress report

Global Challenges – supporting the wider aims of UNESCO and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals

World Heritage and promoting peace

UNESCO seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences and culture. UNESCO's Constitution was adopted in London in 1945. Its Constitution states:

'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed'

After two World Wars in less than thirty years, UNESCO was born of a clear vision: to achieve lasting peace, economic and political agreements among States are not enough. UNESCO must bring people together and strengthen the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind, through mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures. The World Heritage Convention of 1972 was one of the pioneering programmes to achieve this.



Clement Attlee, the then Prime Minister of the UK addressing UNESCO delegates at a meeting reproduced courtesy of Institution of Civil Engineers

In 2019 we began to work with World Heritage UK (WHUK, a network of WHSs in the UK) and Newcastle University to look at how we can play our part in the UNESCO objective to promote peace. This pilot project found that as a network of WHSs many of us were already promoting understanding of and between different peoples and cultures through exhibitions and activities with our local communities and international audiences. However, little was being done to explicitly promote peace.

Working with our partners and the community we wanted to develop a project that reflected the long and rich history of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal and the landscape within which it sits. The abbey and gardens lie only two miles west of Ripon, a city with a long history as a place of sanctuary. In 939AD King Athelstan created a ring of sanctuary around Ripon by placing crosses on the roads approaching the city with Ripon Cathedral at its centre.

In 2016, Ripon City of Sanctuary was established as part of a network of City of Sanctuary Groups that promote a culture of welcome for asylum seekers and refugees.

Working with a range of community partners and groups we will explore themes around:

- the history of sanctuary in Ripon and Fountains Abbey and more contemporary sanctuary issues such as refugees and asylum seekers looking for sanctuary, often from war and conflict
- sanctuary for mental health and wellbeing
- places of sanctuary for nature

As part of the consultation on the plan people suggested lots of themes for exploring ideas around peace and what we can learn from the long history of the abbey and gardens. Working with partners we will develop these themes further. We will also strengthen our links to peace initiatives in Ripon and the surrounding area.

Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals

Although the primary purpose of the World Heritage Convention is the identification, protection and transmission of WHSs to future generations there has been a growing recognition that WHSs have a huge potential to contribute to sustainable development. This has led to a renewed focus on the challenges that humanity faces across the world, these are interconnected and interrelated environmental, economic and social challenges.

Global challenges

Education – by 2030, without any additional measures 300 million students will continue to lack the basic numeracy and literacy skills necessary for success in life.

Extreme poverty – if current trends continue, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty.

Environment – 100 million hectares of health and productive land was degraded every year from 2015 – 2019 which is equivalent to two times the size of Greenland.

– **Quotes from the Special Edition 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Report by the United Nations**

Local challenges

Health – The gap in life expectancy between the most deprived and least deprived wards in North Yorkshire is 11 years for men and 13 years for women.

– **Quote from the Office for National Statistics**

Environment – In the UK 38 million birds have disappeared in the past 50 years.

– **Quote from the RSPB, WWF and National Trust Save our Wild Isles Campaign**

These challenges are part of 17 Sustainable Development Goals developed by the United Nations. Some of these SDGs align closely with National Trust priorities such as tackling climate change and making everyone welcome at the places we look after. As part of being a UNESCO site we will continue to work with our partners and communities to explore ways we can help tackle these complex sustainable development challenges and support UNESCO and the wider World Heritage aims. For each theme of this management plan we have identified two key SDGs that we can help deliver over the next six years.

The Skell Valley Project which was developed by the National Trust, Nidderdale AONB and a whole range of other partners featured as a case study in the UNESCO Sites for Sustainable Development Report 2022. This report was jointly produced by the UK and Canadian Commissions for UNESCO to highlight leading examples in the UK and internationally of sustainable development projects and approaches. We will continue to work collaboratively with UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC for UNESCO) and other UNESCO designations such as Biosphere Reserves, Creative Cities, Global Geoparks and WHSs across Yorkshire and the UK to promote our sites and values and share learning and experiences on issues ranging from financial sustainability to innovative approaches to tackling the impacts of climate change.

The UNESCO Sites for Sustainable Development Report is being developed further in the UK through the Local to Global Project. The project is being led by UKNC for UNESCO and is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It develops the idea of exploring how we develop complex partnerships and will be looking at stakeholder mapping, audience development as well as fundraising and digital support to help UNESCO sites such as Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal build their capacity.

Actions to deliver this objective:	
A1	Hold a workshop to produce a list of components constituting the attributes of the OUV of the WHS
A2	Review membership of the World Heritage Site Steering Group
A3	Continue to hold an annual stakeholder event and produce annual progress reports for partners
A4	Develop an Evaluation Framework for monitoring the delivery of actions and key outcomes of the World Heritage Site Management Plan
A5	Working in partnership with UKNC for UNESCO, WHUK, Newcastle University and local partners and communities, trial approaches to deliver the Promoting Peace project
A6	Input to peace initiatives in Ripon and the surrounding area
A7	Identify current practices and further mechanisms to deliver and support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
A8	Work collaboratively with other UNESCO designated sites and WHUK to share knowledge and experience in sustainable management
A9	Ensure that we continue to develop innovative approaches to delivery of the SDGs and share our learning widely

Objective B: Retain the distinctiveness, sense of historical continuity and peaceful beauty of the site

Why is this objective important?

The peaceful beauty and tranquillity of the abbey ruins and gardens comes up again and again in feedback from our visitors. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal scores more highly on ‘emotional connection’ than any other property owned by the National Trust. This sense of connection brings health and wellbeing benefits for our visitors and communities and has never felt more important.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Octavia Hill was a co-founder of the National Trust and became convinced of the need for open spaces for people living in cities and towns. Her words are still as relevant now as they were in 1895 when the National Trust was founded.

‘We all want quiet. We all want beauty... We all need space’

Recent consultation and feedback from visitors have shown the importance that people place on these values. The WHS is the only property in the care of the National Trust where the main reason people visit is to ‘enjoy peace, tranquillity and contemplation’. We will protect this value of the WHS by:

Making sure everyone can find a quiet place

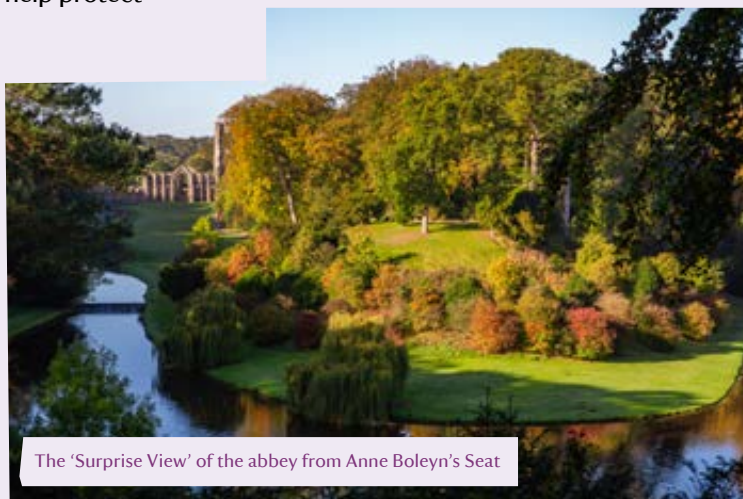
Although the WHS is getting busier and the number of visitors has now returned to the levels we saw in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic, we are still getting positive feedback from visitors about the sense of peace and quiet. The parklands, abbey ruins and gardens are extensive, and the design of the gardens means there is always a place to escape the crowds. Our gardening and ranger team will continue to enhance the tucked away parts of the garden, many just a short stroll from the main visitor paths. These include the 18th century yew bosquets where we will be planting more fragrant shrubs such as lilac and philadelphus and the creation of a Quiet Garden at Fountains Hall. We will also encourage people to explore the lesser-known parts of the WHS, such as the Seven Bridges Valley, Mackershaw Deer Park and the High Ride, through our visitor map and trail walking routes.

Since our first management plan in 2001 we have operated a zoning approach to visitor management and infrastructure such as car parking across the WHS. Many of the family-focused activities such as the playground, ball games, picnic area and bird hide are sited at the Visitor Centre, away from the more sensitive, historic areas of the estate. During this plan period we will continue with this zoning approach. We will also review measures for managing visitor pressure during peak periods such as summer holidays and Bank Holidays when visitor numbers can reach around 3,500 a day.

We will also minimise the impact of our working activities on the peaceful beauty of the WHS by carrying out noisy gardening operations when we can to avoid peak visitor times. Vehicle movements throughout the WHS will be kept to a minimum. Our volunteer team will continue to operate the visitor transport service to help to reduce the movement of cars between different site entrance points. Estate and contractor vehicles will restrict movements where possible to avoid visitor opening hours.

A green and peaceful setting to the WHS

Tranquillity and peaceful beauty can be damaged by intrusive sights and sounds, both within the WHS but also in the surrounding landscape. Roads and traffic, poorly designed and intrusive lighting and power lines can all affect that sense of getting away from it all. The implementation of the Nidderdale AONB Dark Skies policy in the countryside to the west of the WHS and preparation of a Settings Study will help protect this valued quality.



The 'Surprise View' of the abbey from Anne Boleyn's Seat

Actions to deliver this objective:

- B1** Complete the Quiet Garden and continue to develop spaces within the gardens where visitors can find calm and contemplation
- B2** Review measures for managing visitor pressure during peak periods such as summer holidays and Bank Holidays
- B3** Implement policies to protect the green and peaceful setting to the WHS and capture this aspect of setting in the Settings Study

Objective C: Ensure there are adequate and sustainable financial resources to manage the WHS and support the staff and volunteers that work there

Why is this objective important?

Staff and financial resources are vital for conservation and management of the WHS. We need to ensure that staff and volunteers have the skills and resources they need to deliver the management plan. Our income is also vital to fund our conservation work and the people who care for the gardens and buildings.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Financial sustainability

Importance of visitor income –

The sustainability of the site depends largely on its role as a visitor attraction and the income generated by the estate. This includes admissions income, membership subscriptions, income from rental properties, investments and commercial income from the shop, restaurants and holiday cottages. The Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary nation-wide National Trust restructure that followed was a stark reminder of how dependent we are on our visitor income. This dropped by 60%

when comparing total 2019 annual estate income of £5,323,920 to the 2020 figures of £2,108,573.

Looking to the future – While we have a strong record of visitor numbers to the parts of the estate within the pay barriers (which in 2022 were around 430,000), forecasts have indicated that over the next six years it is not expected that the site's visitor numbers will involve any considerable growth. Were the site to simply plateau in terms of overall income levels then that could cause future difficulties during this next plan period especially when considered against a backdrop of rising prices. The National Trust has resilience planning in place to ensure we can respond to future pandemics and external events such as the cost of living crisis.

Income Diversification – To achieve financial sustainability over the next plan period and beyond we recognise that diversification beyond visitor income is necessary for the site's protection.

Filming – One of the areas which has seen the most growth and which we would like to develop is our filming income. The gardens and abbey ruins were the location for the Netflix blockbuster *The Witcher* and the deer park has been used as a filming location for Channel 5's *All Creatures Great and Small*. Working with Screen Yorkshire we will continue to develop opportunities for filming.

Fundraising – Fundraising through various means such as grants, donations and legacies is a key source of income that we plan to develop over the coming years by delivering a new fundraising plan.

Key priorities to maintain and diversify WHS income:
• Maintaining the quality of and accessibility of our 14 holiday cottages and increasing them by 3
• Upgrading the current retail and food and beverage outlets to optimise income potential
• Continuing to develop the let estate in the WHS
• Continuing to develop filming opportunities at the WHS
• Delivering a new fundraising plan

Marketing

Communications and marketing play a vital role at the WHS enabling us to make our work more relevant to more people, get them involved and build advocacy both now and into the future.

Marketing and communications also have a key role to play in the National Trust’s ‘Everyone Welcome’ ambition. The imagery we select to use in our promotions should reflect the diversity of the nation that we serve and should ensure that we are considered welcoming by a global

audience – after all, WHSs do belong to the peoples of the world.

By maintaining a high profile, our marketing efforts also ensure the financial sustainability of the site by ensuring we continue to attract visitors to the WHS.

- During this plan period our marketing efforts will focus on:
- ensuring all of our marketing communications are accessible and reflect the diversity of the home nations
 - maintaining a high profile both regionally and nationally to maintain visitor numbers and use digital channels to extend reach
 - playing our part in delivering the Tourism Development in the Skell Valley Project
 - working with the other WHS North Co-ordinators to share marketing communications knowledge
 - ensuring we promote the values of World Heritage through our marketing communications
 - delivering a Marketing Action Plan

People Strategy

We have 90 permanent staff members, 25 seasonal staff members and over 300 volunteers working across a range of departments including rangers, office staff, conservation experts and retail and restaurant staff. The WHS staff team is also supported by several National Trust consultants with specialisms such as ecology, archaeology, project management and marketing.

Responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – Over the last eighteen months our teams have experienced unprecedented change and our staff and volunteers have pulled together in challenging circumstances. During this period we have seen the importance of supporting the capability, confidence and wellbeing of our people to ensure we remain a sustainable organisation.

Our people ambition remains; to be an inclusive, welcoming and sustainable organisation; developing, enabling and inspiring people to deliver our cause. Our strategy reflects how we are bringing staff and volunteering teams together to support delivery and how we continue to prioritise work which equips our teams with the skills and knowledge they need and engages, connects and inspires people to get involved. We are committed to the wellbeing of our teams and we champion the creation of a culture and environment where everyone feels that their health and wellbeing is supported. Our annual staff and volunteer surveys are an important tool for finding out what is going well for staff and volunteers and what could be done better.

The external environment remains challenging for staff and volunteers and helping them thrive remains one of our biggest priorities. To support this a new online information hub has been developed which includes signposting to relevant expertise, peer support networks, support for managers and guidance for current affairs issues. On site to supplement this we have arranged mental health awareness

sessions, our first mental health first aiders, listening groups and wellbeing activities such as nature walks. We will continue our focus on staff wellbeing. We will also promote the National Trust Staff Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme at the WHS to help people contribute towards and connect to the local and wider community and to help our staff get the benefits of gifting their time to causes that matter to them.

Training and development – Training and development is central to our People Strategy. All team members are encouraged to plan the development they require and take advantage of the wider Trust network of resources.

Apprenticeships continue to be an exciting and optimistic area to our work. Growing our number of apprenticeships is a priority focus.

At Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal we now have the base for our masonry specialist crafts centre for the North. This will be a recognised centre of excellence to preserve and champion traditional craft skills and develop new and existing talent to provide the highest level of care for our buildings.

We currently have two apprenticeships in our stonemasonry team and an apprentice ranger post generously funded by a private donor and we will look to continue to develop talent through apprenticeships across the site in the years to come.

Office facilities at the Visitor Centre –

The Visitor Centre was built in 1992 and is a highly acclaimed building. Although not originally planned to include offices for staff, which were previously located in Choristers House in the Studley Royal Deer Park, it has accommodated the staff team since the move from Choristers following the Foot and Mouth pandemic in 2001. Since then, the staff and volunteer teams have grown, and the uses of the Visitor Centre have also expanded.

We will develop proposals over the next plan period to both extend the Visitor Centre to allow for an office area and additional meeting rooms and to provide an updated retail and visitor welcome area. This will also allow us to significantly expand interpretation about the WHS.



Some of the WHS leadership team

A snapshot of key findings from staff and volunteer survey results:

2021 survey

- 77% of staff stated they would recommend this WHS as a good place to work
- 94% of volunteers would recommend volunteering at this WHS

2022 survey

- 90% of staff stated they would recommend this WHS as a good place to work
- 97% of volunteers would recommend volunteering for this WHS

Actions to deliver this objective:

- C1** Deliver the key priorities to maintain and diversify WHS income
- C2** Complete and deliver Fundraising Plan
- C3** Explore how marketing knowledge can be shared better by WHSs in the North
- C4** Deliver an annual marketing action plan that delivers 'Everyone Welcome' and promotes the values of World Heritage
- C5** Continue to carry out staff surveys and invest in staff training and wellbeing
- C6** Promote the National Trust Staff Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme at the WHS
- C7** Develop proposals for more office, retail and interpretation space at the Visitor Centre

Objective D: Maintain excellent presentation standards and visitor infrastructure

Why is this objective important?

Ensuring that we continue to attract visitors to the WHS and encourage them to return is vital for its long-term financial sustainability.

While several elements combine to motivate someone to spend their leisure time at the WHS, one important element is the quality of our visitor experience and infrastructure.

'The close attention to detail that we pay to how we present our places applies equally to how we make everyone welcome. It is about thoughtfulness for individual needs and a wish to offer the best possible experience for all'

– **Andy Beer, Director of Operations & Consultancy, National Trust**

This is not just about everyday excellence, it is also about planning for the long term to ensure that we can continue to deliver a fantastic visitor experience.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Delivering the Visitor Journey Toolkit

Central to our visitor experience is the National Trust's Visitor Journey Toolkit. The tools within it are designed to support every National Trust place to deliver a beautiful and welcoming experience for everyone.

The toolkit is split up into a number of components: digital which includes the website and social media, arrival points, welcome and ticketing, toilets, historic buildings and interiors, gardens, retail, food and beverage, parkland and play spaces.

The toolkit is designed to put our staff in the shoes of our visitors and look at each component of the visit through that lens. It helps to take a fresh look at each component of the visitor experience on site, explore where the opportunities are for change and what the priority actions should be. The toolkit details the standards expected for each component. By working together we can provide a consistently good, inclusive and effortless journey for our visitors, inspiring them to return again and again.

A key element of presentation continues to be the conservation and maintenance of the buildings and landscape. A cyclical maintenance programme is a fundamental part of ongoing conservation on the site and a team of estate builders and gardeners as well as local contractors maintain the site. Maintenance of

the abbey ruins and Fountains Mill is delivered by the National Trust and the English Heritage Trust and we will work collaboratively to ensure both buildings are looked after to a high standard.

Improving our visitor infrastructure

Since acquiring the property in 1983 the National Trust has made significant investments in visitor infrastructure with the construction of the Visitor Centre in 1992 which helped to manage the increase in visitors and eased the pressures on the historic entrances to the estate at West Gate and Canal Gates.

One of our priorities in this plan period will be delivering much needed improvements to the visitor infrastructure, landscape quality and appearance of the Canal Gates entrance to the water garden. For almost 300 years the ornate gates at the edge of Studley Lake were the main entrance to the Aislabies' water garden. In the 19th century the owners of the estate built the Studley tearoom to serve the growing numbers of visitors. However, over the last century the Canal Gates entrance has struggled to cope with the needs of visitors and today we have a legacy of temporary buildings, poor quality additions to the tearoom, unsightly external service areas and fencing and planting that is not in keeping with the original design intention. This all prevents this historically significant area of the WHS from playing its part in the genius of the Aislabies' design.

Improving the visual presentation of this area of the WHS alongside improving the accessibility and facilities for visitors through alterations and extension of the

existing tearoom provides an opportunity to enhance how our visitors enjoy the water garden and parklands now and for the future.

There is no doubt this is a complex area of the WHS with significant buildings and important views. There is need to carefully manage any change in this area so that the quality of the landscape and the environment is improved, while new development respects the setting of Canal Gates, the balustrade and Fishing Tabernacles, and surrounding area of the Registered Park and Garden.

Feilden Fowles Architects and Rankin Fraser Landscape Architecture, both with substantial experience in working in historic and sensitive settings, were selected to progress design development of what we have called the Studley Revealed project. Throughout development of the project, we have striven for design excellence with the new design being informed by a full understanding of the historic landscape. To date there has been extensive pre-application consultation on draft proposals with Harrogate Borough Council, Historic England, statutory consultees, stakeholders and the public and the design has been tested and evolved in response to feedback.

The Studley Revealed project provides the opportunity to:

- recreate harmony between the visitor facilities including the tearoom and their surrounding landscape at the junction between the Studley Royal Deer Park and more formal water garden

- improve the standards of care of the Canal Gates entrance and its surroundings

- recreate the feeling of arrival which Canal Gates once had

- create opportunities to engage visitors in the story of the Studley Royal estate, the Aislabie family and the design of the water garden

- improve orientation for visitors and accessibility

We will do this by:

- removing the incongruous and inharmonious elements around Studley tearoom which were installed in the 20th century including the temporary timber shop
- reinstating some of the original 18th century design features
- restoring and sensitively extending the 19th century Studley tearoom to provide new visitor facilities including an interpretation area
- designing the exterior visitor spaces to reflect the original design intent

An application for planning permission and listed building consent has been submitted in 2023. This will be accompanied by a comprehensive suite of documents including a Design and Access Statement and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Impacts on the OUV of the WHS, the Grade I Registered Park and Garden, the Grade II listed tearoom and other heritage assets will be considered

through a Heritage Impact Assessment prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and following the UNESCO Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (July 2022).

In addition to the development of the Studley Revealed project we will also continue to maintain and improve the quality of visitor infrastructure across the WHS. Priorities include:

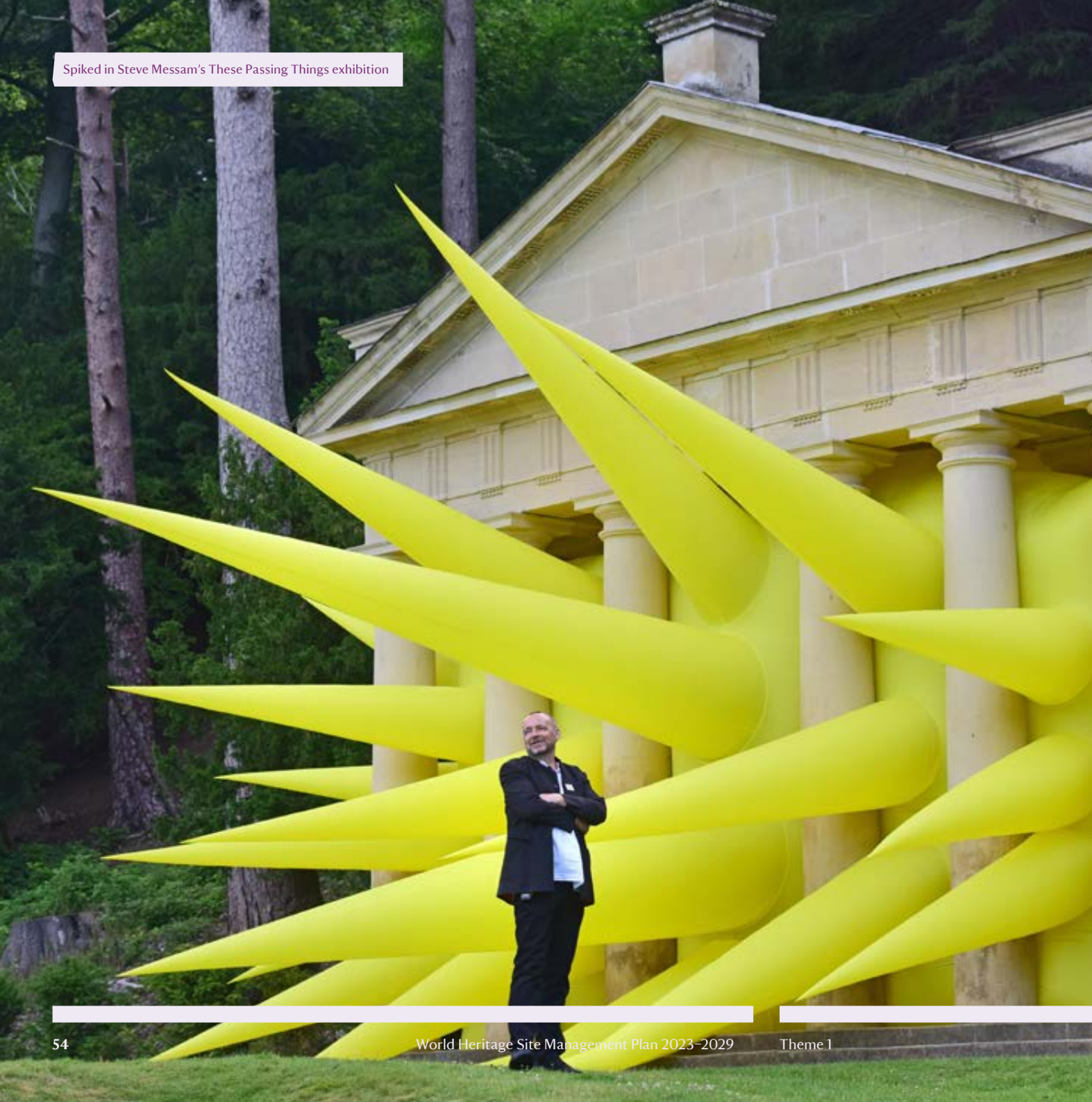
- improving how the Visitor Centre works for staff, volunteers and visitors
- improving the quality and capacity of the car parks – resurfacing the West Gate car park to make it easier to use for disabled people, updating the Visitor Centre car park signage to help with orientation and providing more charging points for electric vehicles

Actions to deliver this objective:

- D1** Use the National Trust Visitor Journey Toolkit to ensure excellent presentation standards and deliver a beautiful and welcoming experience for all
- D2** Develop and deliver the Studley Revealed Project
- D3** Improve the standard of visitor infrastructure including West Gate car park resurfacing, Visitor Centre car park signage and EV charging points and Visitor Centre upgrade

An image of the proposed design from the Studley Revealed Project





Objective E: Ensure the conservation and enhancement of the WHS, its buffer zone and the wider setting are taken into account in the preparation and implementation of planning, regulatory and policy documents which might affect it

Why is this objective important?

The planning system is the main mechanism in the UK for protecting the OUV of WHSs, their buffer zone and setting from development which may cause harm.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

A strong and up to date planning framework

A major achievement of our last management plan was the adoption of robust and up to date planning policies to protect and enhance the WHS, its buffer zone and wider setting.

The statutory development plan for our area now includes the Harrogate District Local Plan (2014-2035) and the Ripon Neighbourhood Plan to 2030.

Although both plans extend beyond the period of this management plan there is a commitment to replace the Harrogate Local Plan with a new North Yorkshire Local Plan as part of the establishment of the new unitary authority for North Yorkshire. The Harrogate Local Plan will remain in place but will then be replaced by a local plan covering the whole of the new authority area by 2028. It is essential that while the review of the Harrogate Local Plan is underway its policies remain in place to protect the WHS.

Although many of the policies in the Harrogate Local Plan are relevant to the WHS the one that manages all development affecting the WHS, the buffer zone and wider setting is Policy HP2: Heritage Assets. The key principles in this policy should be retained in any future North Yorkshire Plan.

The World Heritage Site Management Plan must also be taken into account when deciding planning applications.

Other plans and documents which are material considerations when making planning decisions in and around the WHS:

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance 2019 – National planning policy states that planning authorities should provide for the protection and sustainable use of WHSs. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states:

‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should

require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.’

Harrogate Borough Council Heritage Management Guidance 2014 – This Supplementary Planning Document sets out detailed guidance on how heritage and design policies will be applied in decision making. The main purpose of the guidance is to ensure the conservation of heritage assets and to make sure development enhances or reinforces those characteristics that contribute to the high quality of the environment. The guidance sets out development principles for proposals that would affect the WHS and its buffer zone, scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens, Nidderdale AONB and non-designated heritage assets.

Nidderdale AONB Management Plan 2014 – The WHS and the buffer zone and setting to the west of the site lie wholly within Nidderdale AONB. The plan includes aims and objectives for heritage in and around the WHS.

All planning applications for development in the WHS, its buffer zone or wider setting should be accompanied by a Heritage

Impact Assessment following the guidance set out in the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context 2022. This is a joint publication of UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS and IUCN) and aims to guide users on how to produce impact assessments using a consistent framework for all types of projects in WHSs.

The National Trust and Historic England will continue to respond to any planning applications with a potential impact on the OUV of the site to ensure the impacts on the WHS are considered but also to maximise any benefits such as new footpath and cycle links and interpretation that new development can bring.

There are other policy initiatives currently under development which may impact on planning policy in the WHS in the future. These include:

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill May 2022 – This is a huge and complex bill which proposes many changes to the planning system. The most relevant section for the WHS is Clause 92 of the Bill which proposes statutory protection for WHSs and their settings. This will give the site the same planning protection as already received for listed buildings and conservation areas.

A new Historic Environment Advice Note (HEAN) on Managing Change Affecting World Heritage Sites in England – Historic England is currently working on a new HEAN for world heritage. This will be taken into account in future management of the WHS.

A full description of the planning policy framework for the WHS is set out in Appendix 3.

New development in the WHS

As one of the most visited tourist attractions in Yorkshire we will continue to invest in visitor infrastructure and staff facilities within the WHS. This has the potential to impact on the character and appearance of the gardens and parkland so it is vital that all development is sensitively designed and sited.

During the plan period we aim to deliver a number of visitor infrastructure projects within the WHS which are likely to need planning permission or listed building consent.

In years one to three this will include:

- the extension and remodelling of the visitor facilities at the Canal Gates entrance to the water garden
- a new catering kiosk in the toilet block in the Studley Royal Deer Park
- new offices and a reconfiguration of the use of the Visitor Centre
- sensitive adaptation of the historic buildings in the WHS to make them more accessible
- improvements to the quality, accessibility and capacity of the car parks as well as adapting them to the move to electric vehicles

In the longer term and subject to income and staff resources we will also develop proposals for:

- improvements to the West Gate entrance to the WHS so it connects better to the disabled car park and toilet facilities
- in addition to the new interpretation space that is planned as part of the Studley Revealed Project and the upgrades to the Visitor Centre, we will explore locations for dedicated interpretation space elsewhere on the estate

We will also continue to build on our successful Folly! Art programme. These are temporary art installations which attract new audiences and inspire visitors to see the WHS in a different way.

Finally, some of our conservation work will need planning and listed building consent. Proposed works include:

- repairs and access improvements to How Hill tower
- repairs and a new gate for Mackershaw Lodges
- new decorative schemes for the Temple of Piety and the Banqueting House
- conservation works to the stained glass windows in St Mary's Church
- work to address the drainage and damp issues in Fountains Hall and improve access
- extensive repairs to the river walls



Development pressures in the buffer zone and wider setting of the WHS

The landscape outside the WHS boundary is constantly changing. Over the last decade we have seen an increase in planning applications for housing, renewable energy proposals and agricultural buildings.

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS buffer zone

The buffer zone was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2012 so we have had 10 years now to assess its impact and whether it has delivered its purpose. The National Trust is not a statutory consultee so we rely on our own searches to identify applications in the buffer zone which may affect the OUV of the WHS. Over the last six years we have commented on 12 applications with potential to impact the OUV of the site.

These include new agricultural buildings, residential development, a helipad and a telecommunications mast. In most instances the development has been permitted but it allows an opportunity for any impacts on the site to be carefully considered and any potential harm to be mitigated through siting and design.

Description of the buffer zone

The buffer zone covers the immediate setting of the WHS and the key vista from the main deer park avenue east to Ripon Cathedral and beyond to Blois Hall Farm. Detailed maps of the World Heritage Site boundary (Map 1) and the buffer zone (Map 2) are included in this plan.

The buffer zone aims to:

- protect the visual setting of the monastic precinct and the Aislabies' designed landscape at Studley Royal

- respect the integrity of the Aislabies' designed landscape including the visual setting, contrasting with the agrarian setting, where this was visible from within the bounds of the designed landscape
- protect the views and vistas which were key to the Aislabies' design

It should be noted that the buffer zone does not represent, in spatial terms, the 'setting' of the WHS. Whilst there may be some coincidence between the boundary of the buffer zone and certain areas which contribute to its setting, the setting of the WHS is substantially larger than the area encompassed within its buffer zone.

Development of a Settings Study for the WHS

There has also been a growing number of planning applications in the landscape beyond the buffer zone, particularly on the urban edge of Ripon. This has included applications for new housing at West Lane in Ripon and a large mixed-use development which includes 1,300 new dwellings on the Ripon, Deverell and Claro Barracks site.

West Lane in Ripon – lessons learnt from the planning appeal

In 2016 the National Trust objected to a planning application for 390 houses on a large greenfield site on the edge of Ripon. Although the housing site lay outside the buffer zone the proposed development was visible in distant views from Gillet Hill which is a key viewpoint within the WHS.

The application was refused by Harrogate Borough Council but then allowed on appeal. Following the appeal, the housing site was acquired by Homes England who worked closely with the National Trust and Historic England to address any potential impacts on the setting of the WHS.

Following these discussions, the design and layout of the site was amended to include bungalows in the area of the site visible in views from the WHS and a green landscape boundary treatment to provide screening.

The appeal process led to a growing recognition of the significance of the setting of the WHS and raised many questions about the contribution the landscape setting made to the OUV of the WHS.

The setting of the WHS is complex and not straightforward to define. It will alter over time as understanding of the site evolves, which argues against drawing a single line on a map. It is, though, possible to define the characteristics, broad geographical areas and issues that would be relevant when considering setting and whether a proposed development might have an impact upon it, at a specific point in time. This detailed analysis of setting will be an important tool to guide developers and support assessment of the impact of development proposals on the OUV of the WHS.

At present, no such definition has been formally prepared for the setting of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS. A priority for this plan will be the development of a Settings Study. The study will look at:

- the areas of the designed landscape which lie beyond the WHS boundary, both within and outside the buffer zone
- the Aislabie family's wider landed estate and how it contributed to the designed landscape, especially in its agrarian "estate landscape" setting and routes to and from Studley Royal
- the visual setting of the designed landscape
- the relationship of the buffer zone to the wider setting of the WHS

The Settings Study will follow the guidance laid out in the Historic England Good Practice Advice on the setting of heritage assets and the Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment 2004 (HDLCA). The HDLCA recognised the importance that landscape gardens such as Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey make to landscape character and cultural heritage. It sets out guidelines to protect and enhance the setting of the WHS. It is currently under review and any new guidelines will be reflected in the Settings Study.

Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'

The setting of a historic park or garden, for instance, may include land beyond its boundary which adds to its significance but which need not be confined to land visible from the site, nor necessarily the same as the site's visual boundary. It can include:

- land which is not part of the park or garden but which is associated with it by being adjacent and visible from it
- land which is not part of the site but which is adjacent and associated with it because it makes an important contribution to the historic character of the site in some other way than by being visible from it
- land which is a detached part of the site and makes an important contribution to its historic character either by being visible from it or in some other way, perhaps by historical association

Actions to deliver this objective:

- E1** Ensure that with the transition to a new planning authority, robust and up to date planning policies will be kept in place to ensure protection of the WHS, buffer zone and setting
- E2** Raise awareness of the OUV and managing change in the WHS, buffer zone and setting for planners and other decision-makers
- E3** Finalise and adopt policies which protect the OUV of the WHS, its buffer zone and setting in the new North Yorkshire Local Plan
- E4** Delivery of a programme of development in the WHS to improve visitor infrastructure, interpretive installations for visitors and conservation works
- E5** Commission a Settings Study for the WHS
- E6** Produce a new Landscape Character Assessment for the new North Yorkshire Council area

Objective F: Ensure the boundaries of the WHS include the area that gives the site its outstanding universal value

Why is this objective important?

The current WHS boundary encompasses the land in the National Trust's ownership when the site was inscribed as a WHS in 1986. The boundary does not include the full extent of the historic landscape which was designed and laid out by the Aislabie family in the 18th century. Areas lying outside the WHS do not have the same level of protection as those within the WHS.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Since inscription of the WHS in 1986 there has been a recognition that the boundaries were drawn according to the National Trust ownership at the time and do not include all the parts of the site that contribute to its OUV. This was a key issue flagged up by the ICOMOS-UK monitoring review of WHSs in England in 1995 and reiterated again by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee report approving the WHS buffer zone proposal in 2012.

The boundaries do not currently include all the historic landscape which was designed and laid out by John Aislabie and his son William in the 18th century. Their estate

had its origins in lands acquired by their ancestors since the Middle Ages, but it was greatly expanded and joined up as the family's wealth and power flowered in the 18th century. The designated gardens occupy the core of that estate, but research over the past thirty years has demonstrated that much more extensive areas formed part of the original designed landscape they created.



Some of the immediately adjoining areas include:

How Hill tower and landscape — How Hill lies half a mile south of the WHS. It was part of Fountains Abbey's first acquisition of land in 1134 and was managed as part of the abbey's grange system of farming. By the mid-14th century there was a chapel on top of the hill. The chapel fell into ruin but was rebuilt as a prospect tower in the early 18th century as part of John Aislabie's vision for the Studley Royal designed landscape. How Hill and the tower were acquired by the National Trust in 1992.

Wheatbrigs — Wheatbrigs was built in the 1720s as a house for the head gardener, and extensive productive gardens were planted around it. These fell into disuse in the early to mid-20th century, especially after the loss of Studley Hall to fire in 1946. The house and adjoining lands that constituted the north-east corner of the Aislabie's walled parkland, were sold into private ownership in 1966. As the house and gardens were privately owned when the WHS was inscribed they were not included in the WHS boundary.

Spa Gill — Research completed in 2019 has clarified the extent of Aislabies' ownership in the Skell Valley west of the WHS. The first section of the valley immediately to the west of the WHS, was a carefully designed and important part of William Aislabie's work. His ownership continued as far as Hook Gill but the designed landscape did not extend that far.

Chinese Woods — The Chinese Woods lie to the east of the Seven Bridges Valley. They were an integral part of the Aislabies' design, used as access to How Hill from around 1718. Their real significance arises from their development as a Chinese Garden by William Aislabie in the 1740s. These were some of the largest, earliest and most "accurate" Chinese gardens ever created in Georgian England. Research in 2016 also established that an important route into the property from Ripon was focussed on this part of the estate. The Registered Park and Garden was revised to include the woods in 1997. The land was sold into private ownership in 1966.

Duck House driveways – What is now called Duck House (in private ownership and considerably enlarged from its historic form) was originally built by William Aislabie to a design by Robert Doe in the 1740s and named Cockrose Lodge. It marked an important new point of entry to the estate from Ripon and the Pateley Bridge Road, initially from the north along the line of the present public footpath. This development emphasises the importance of the agrarian setting in the Aislabies' thinking about their landscape design. In the 19th century a more direct route was laid out linking the lodge to Bishopton Bridge and Lodge, which became the estate's main approach. The 19th century drive was included in the Registered Park and Garden in 1997.

Lindrick – The lands north of the Studley Royal Deer Park at Lindrick were part of the family estate from the late middle ages. Of primary significance to the WHS is the Lindrick Drive, which continues the sight line from a main road through the park off to the horizon. Further circulation routes, to and from Laver Banks, made use of this feature and its setting.

Laver Banks – The short river Laver runs around the north side of the WHS before joining the Skell at Bishopton. When William Aislabie vastly augmented the designed landscape from the 1740s to 1760s, he embraced the north-west facing slopes above the Laver as another designed landscape area on the route to Hackfall. Rides were cut through its woodlands and at least one decorative bridge over the river was constructed, complementing the existing historic one near Galphay Mill.

Hackfall – William Aislabie's largest single addition was his garden at Hackfall. Historically this has been seen as a separate garden from Studley Royal, but research has clearly demonstrated that they are two parts of a single design. This is most overtly reflected by the absence of domestic accommodation at Hackfall, six miles from Studley Royal. The routes between the two locations were also part of the designed whole. Hackfall was developed in the 1740s to 1760s and decorated a dramatic gorge on the River Ure in a Picturesque fashion. It is now owned and managed by the Woodland Trust.

Whitcliffe Lane – As well as the approach via Bishopton and Cockrose Lodge there was connection between the estate and Ripon along Whitcliffe Lane. Arguably this route commands the most attractive and interesting views into the estate from any direction. After 1745 this route was ornamented by the oriental garden, as well as connecting with the route to How Hill. Whitcliffe Hall may have been acquired as an additional object of antiquarian interest along the route.

Most of these areas now lie in the WHS buffer zone and Wheatbrigs, the Chinese Woods, the Duck House driveway and Lindrick also lie within the Registered Park and Garden.

SKELL VALLEY PROJECT



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

As part of development of the Skell Valley Project we commissioned a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) which included a condition assessment of Chinese Wood and Spa Gill. The CMP highlighted that there are unrecorded buildings and landscape features which lie within these landscapes including Mann's Cave and the Chinese Garden pillars. Many of these features are in poor condition and may eventually be lost. As part of the project we are working with landowners and volunteers from the local community to research and record landscape features and buildings within the areas adjoining the WHS at Spa Gill and the Chinese Garden. We will also continue to explore opportunities to work with landowners and other partners on the conservation of these landscapes and surviving built and landscape features within them that may be at risk.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- F1** Through delivery of the Skell Valley Project, research and improve our understanding of the wider Studley Royal designed landscape to inform a future boundary review
- F2** Continue to develop partnerships with neighbouring landowners to agree conservation works to heritage features at risk which are part of the Studley Royal designed landscape

Theme 2: Conservation and climate action

Vision: Conserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy, the genius of the place will be captured and celebrated through delivery of all our conservation work



Theme 2:
Conservation and climate action



Objectives



Actions



How does this theme help to protect the site?

This theme is about looking after the landscapes, heritage and nature of the World Heritage Site (WHS) and its surrounding landscape and settlements. This can only be done in partnership with the communities and organisations in and around the WHS. Taking climate action will protect the site from threats like flooding and pests and diseases but will also ensure we play our part in tackling climate change globally by becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and using our voice as a WHS to engage others.

Global to Local – Integration of Key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this Theme

Climate Action, SDG 13 – This goal is about the global community taking action to tackle both climate change and its impact. Wildfires, hurricanes, floods, drought and other climate related disasters are affecting every country in the world

and often the most vulnerable. Through our actions in the WHS we can play a part in tackling this.

Life on Land, SDG 15 – Nature is critical to our survival: it provides us with our oxygen, regulates our weather patterns, pollinates our crops and produces our food. But it is under increasing stress and facing irrecoverable loss. We can play a role in nature recovery through the actions in the WHS and surrounding landscape.

Objective G: Ensure the highest standards of conservation management and enhancement of the whole site. This includes the garden and designed landscape, built heritage and archaeology and the natural heritage of the site

Why is this objective important?

Conservation is one of the key strategic objectives set out in the 1972 World Heritage Convention. We have a clear duty to protect and preserve the WHS and pass it on to future generations to enjoy. This completely aligns with the National Trust's own commitment to promoting and preserving the places we own for the nation – what we call 'for everyone, for ever'.

Choir, and Nave, From the East Window
by J. & H. S. Storer from the Delineations
of Fountains Abbey 1830





How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is a site of outstanding international significance as recognised through the world heritage designation. The designed landscape is also a Grade 1 registered park and garden, this designation extends beyond the boundaries of the WHS to include the 18th century Chinese Garden at Chinese Wood. The Fountains Abbey precinct is scheduled and there are 52 listed buildings.

The wooded parts of the garden and the Magnesian Limestone grassland at the Banqueting House are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation by the Local Authority and there is a wide range of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species and habitats.

Working with our communities, visitors and partners we will continue our ambitious programme of conservation work. Our focus will be:

- looking after the attributes of outstanding universal value of the WHS
- managing a landscape garden where nature and culture thrive
- revealing and exploring our collections
- empowering people to work with us

The Covid-19 pandemic had a major negative financial impact on the National Trust as a whole and on the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal site. However, it has also highlighted the value that our communities and visitors place on the gardens, buildings and parklands we look after. Delivery of the conservation projects in the plan period will depend on our resources. We will continue to invest in conservation both through the income we raise through our visitors and commercial activities and through fundraising.

Looking after the attributes of outstanding universal value (OUV) of the WHS

Attributes are the qualities that express the OUV of the WHS and which contribute to and enhance understanding of the OUV. The attributes are laid out in full in section 1.2 of the plan. We are keen to embed these attributes in the plan and the map and list of actions over the page set out our priorities for protecting and managing the attributes over the next six years.

Our priorities over the next six years to conserve the attributes of outstanding universal value



This map does not show the full extent of the World Heritage Site

A garden of exceptional beauty and harmony

- 1 Produce a vision for the Quebec area of the water garden.
 - 2 Enhance the planting in the yew bosquets with flowering and scented shrubs.
 - 3 Plant Tent Hill with shrubs and flowers used in the 18th century.
 - 4 Restore the moon ponds through circulation pumps and new edging.
- Deliver the Skell Valley Project (SVP) to improve water quality, reduce siltation and enhance the ornamental ponds and lakes.
 - Carry out extensive repairs to river walls.
 - Collect hydrological monitoring data as part of SVP.
 - Record and research heritage sites on the Aislalie 18th century landscape adjoining the WHS.

Views and vistas within and beyond the garden

- 1 Carry out tree works to the lime avenue in Studley Royal Deer Park to maintain the view to Ripon Cathedral.
 - 2 Manage views to the Roman Monument in the Seven Bridges Valley.
- Develop an Avenue Plan and Succession Planting Plan for the Studley Royal and Mackershaw Deer Parks as part of a new Parkland Plan.
 - Commission a Settings Study for the WHS.

Buildings illustrating patronage, status and influence

- 1 Carry out repairs to the stained glass windows at Grade I listed St Mary's Church.
 - 2 Bring to life the interiors of the Grade I listed Banqueting House and Temple of Piety.
 - 3 Research and carry out essential consolidation works to Grade II Mackershaw Lodges.
 - 4 Renew the QI for Fountains Hall and address drainage and damp issues.
 - 5 Research the history and archaeology of the gardens at Fountains Hall.
 - 6 Complete archaeological investigation of Rustic Cottage.
- Carry out structural repairs and improve access to the Grade II* listed How Hill Tower.

An accretion of designed landscape which enhances natural landscape

- 1 Produce a Parkland Plan for the deer parks which balances nature and culture and undertake new planting as recommended in the Parkland Plan.
- Produce a Woodland Management Plan for trees and woodlands in the gardens and parklands.
 - Develop a simple management plan for the site's geodiversity.

Ruins of Fountains Abbey

- 1 Develop and deliver a programme of conservation works to the abbey ruins.
 - 2 Remove all woody vegetation from the abbey walls as part of ongoing maintenance.
 - 3 Develop a solution to the visitor damage to the entrance to the abbey ruins and the poor drainage on the paths.
 - 4 Refresh our approach to landscape management and presentation of the abbey ruins both in terms of nature and the 18th century garden.
- Continue to develop understanding of the archaeological resource to inform climate change risk mapping.
 - Prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Fountains Abbey ruins and surrounding landscape.
 - Progress reporting and publishing of recent archaeological findings.

Revisiting the conservation and presentation of the abbey ruins and their setting

The abbey ruins were the hub of daily monastic life until the dissolution of the monastery by Henry VIII in 1539. In the late 18th century, the ruins of the abbey were embraced into William Aislabie's landscape garden.

They have since lost much of their 'romantic' and overgrown character through the works to consolidate the abbey ruins in the 20th century.

The National Trust will work with the English Heritage Trust and other partners to agree an approach to the future conservation of the ruins. We will work together to produce a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the abbey ruins and their surroundings.

As part of the CMP, we will consider the significance of the ruins in their own terms, as a nationally/internationally significant monument, alongside the part they play in the wider designed landscape and the case for re-establishing an aspect of their romantic character. The future presentation of the ruins should be considered in terms of the amount of vegetation that is allowed.

The separation of the abbey ruins and the water garden is a 20th century construct. In the minds of the Aislabies there was no such segregation. There may well be an argument which suggests, that for the ruins to function as the garden feature it was designed to be in the 18th century then the Ministry of Works' pared back

style of presentation needs to be reviewed. A balance should be sought between the didactic stripped-back approach of the 1950s and the softer more romantic vision of the 18th century.

In addition to the work on the CMP we will review the Condition Surveys for the abbey ruins and develop and implement a programme of conservation works.

Our priorities for the abbey ruins and their setting

Conservation works

- Arrange for the removal of woody growth as agreed with English Heritage Trust and Historic England
- Develop and deliver a programme of conservation works to address the defects identified in the Condition Survey
- Review the painted plasterwork survey undertaken by Tobit Curteis Associates to assess stability, losses, vulnerable areas and conservation options
- Continue to develop understanding of the intact archaeological resource, in partnership with the University of Bradford and others. This will inform climate change risk mapping and enhance the understanding of the monastery and its operation

Research and knowledge

- Produce a Conservation Management Plan for the abbey and surrounding landscape, look at options for presentation of the ruins as a more integrated part of the garden experience
- Using visual resources and contemporary descriptions ensure that our plans for the removal of damaging woody growth are balanced and do not compromise the Romantic character of the abbey ruins. Explore options of allowing managed growth on the abbey ruins
- Understand the drainage issues in the abbey and work with English Heritage Trust and Historic England to find a solution
- Review initial research on the abbey stonework to look at the possibility of returning pieces to the abbey ruins to recreate the 18th century presentation as a Romantic ruin prior to site clearances in the 20th century. The stone work is currently stored at Kitchen Bank Store on the estate

Public access and interpretation

- Develop options for treatment of paths and the eroded entrances to the abbey cellarium and church which are currently surfaced with artificial grass
- Progress reporting and publication of recent archaeological findings
- Improve electricity supply and flood lighting

Writing a plan for Fountains Hall

Completed before 1604 for Stephen Proctor (1562–1619) Fountains Hall has been attributed to Robert Smythson or to Barnard Dinninghof, who was a glass painter and most probably responsible for the armorial glass in the Chapel Room. Whoever the architect might have been, the origins and evolution of the building raises many questions. At first glance it has the look of a classic Elizabethan Manor but it is, in part at least, likely to have earlier origins.

It has long been the unsung component of the WHS, neither part of the great Cistercian abbey or the Studley Royal Water Garden. Split into apartments with only limited public access, it has suffered much from the failed drainage from the hillside behind, causing damp and deterioration in the basement. The gardens surrounding the hall, probably developed in the early 17th century and reworked in the early 20th century have long been neglected.

Since the National Trust took over the site in the 1980s the main hall is open to visitors and the Chapel Room above is used for weddings. Flats for staff and holiday lets have been created in the wings. The tea gardens in front of the hall are open to visitors, but the gardens on the slopes behind the hall itself are partially covered with fruit trees and rough grass.

Our priorities for Fountains Hall

Conservation works

- Carry out tree work to the old yew and sycamore trees behind Fountains Hall to both improve the health of the trees and open up the back of the hall to improve ventilation and aid drying
- Carry out remedial works to alleviate the ingress of water to the basement of the hall
- Commission a building survey to understand the work required to improve the condition of the hall and its basement

Research and knowledge

- Carry out surveys to improve our understanding of drainage in the slope behind Fountains Hall
- Carry out historical and archaeological studies of the garden on the slopes behind Fountains Hall
- Improve our understanding of the uses of Fountains Hall, particularly the architectural changes internally which reflect the history of the building as a multi-household dwelling

Public access and Interpretation

- Improve public access to Fountains Hall, consider access to all of the public spaces in the hall including the Chapel Room
- Explore options for the future use of Fountains Hall and garden to ensure that access is improved and that it becomes an improved part of the WHS experience

- Develop plans to revitalise the gardens and designed landscape around Fountains Hall and improve access to it for visitors

Saving the stained glass in St Mary's Church

St Mary's Church, located in the Studley Royal Deer Park, is one of the most richly decorated churches of the Gothic Revival, designed by William Burges in 1871 and considered to be one of his finest works. This church was commissioned by the Marquis of Ripon to become the Parish Church. The church is one of a pair. The other, the Church of Christ the Consoler, in the nearby village of Skelton-on-Ure was commissioned by Lady Mary Vyner of Newby Hall to commemorate the murder of her youngest son in Greece.

St Mary's Church is executed in a highly elaborate Early English style. The list of its many striking architectural features are, on the exterior, the highly decorative south and west doors, the intricate tracery of the west and east windows, with the east being flanked and surmounted by sculptural groups including a fine crucifixion scene. The interior is extremely lavish in its use of decorative coloured stones and marbles, sculptural detail, gilding and painted surfaces.

Each element of the decorative scheme employed by Burges is entwined and symbolically linked. This is no less true of the stained glass in the windows of the church, all of which carry some form of decoration, which reference and enhances the biblical scenes and iconography of the other surface treatments. The significance of the whole ensemble rests

on the continued existence of each of the elements within it. At the moment there is a real threat to the stained glass, which is actively deteriorating.

The significant amount of loss which has occurred can be explained because paints and enamels used when the panels were manufactured were not fired at a high enough temperature. The details created in this medium are unstable when in contact with moisture and loss of details is threatened every time condensation forms on the inside of the windows. On the south side of the church, the sun has caused the glass panels to distort with the result that at certain times rainwater actually penetrates the windows, both around their perimeter and through defects in the lead came, across the panels' surfaces. This causes water to run down the surface of the glass, effectively washing away remains of enamel and paint, but also means that the painted stonework and wall paintings are threatened with the ingress of moisture.

The stained glass windows in the church of Christ the Consoler are facing the same issues and the Churches Conservation Trust are trialling approaches to addressing the issue.

Our priorities for St Mary's Church

Conservation works

- Work with the English Heritage Trust (EHT) and the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) to find a solution to stabilise the stained glass at the church, following on from the trial at the Church of Christ the Consoler at Skelton-on-Ure

- Work on a joint fundraising plan with EHT, CCT and Newby Hall to pay for the repair works to the windows

- Work with EHT to implement and deliver an improved conservation cleaning regime, reducing pest infestation and tracking environmental conditions

Research and knowledge

- To better understand the commissioning of the church and the exact relationship with Christ the Consoler Church
- Using the survey commissioned by EHT, improve understanding of the environmental problems impacting the mosaic floor

Public access and interpretation

- Use the proposed work to the stained glass as an opportunity to raise awareness of conservation issues, providing interpretation and briefing church guides to provide verbal interpretation/interaction
- Use the stained glass project as a fundraising opportunity, working in partnership with EHT and the CCT at the church of Christ the Consoler
- Improve the electricity supply to enable improved interpretation

Where next for the Studley Royal Water Garden

Conservation works in the water garden were a focus of the previous plan. We replanted overgrown sections of the yew bosquets, reopened views to the Octagon Tower from the head of the lake and the valley floor and vistas to the Temple of Fame. The lead and stone statues were painted white to reinstate their 18th century finish and we commissioned a replica of the Dying Gladiator to replace the statue lost in the 19th century. Where the gardens extended to the abbey we have repaired and rebuilt the river walls and replaced the rotting and collapsed timber edges to the Reservoir. We will continue this programme of repair.

Our biggest project over the next six years will be developing a vision for the Quebec area of the water garden.

The garden buildings such as the Banqueting House, Temple of Piety and the Octagon Tower were an important part of the Aislabies' garden design. They not only provided stopping off points for the Aislabie family and their visitors to enjoy the view or afternoon tea but were also an intrinsic part of the garden design. The buildings were inspired by the European Grand Tour and designs were copied from the architectural drawings and books produced at that time.

In 2021, we commissioned building archaeology surveys and condition reports for the Temple of Piety and the Banqueting House in response to the damp issues affecting the building interiors. The portrait of the Sultan of Surat that

has hung above the fireplace in the Banqueting House has recently undergone conservation works at the Royal Oak Foundation studio at Knole in Kent and will be returned to the site in 2024. As well as carrying out repair work to the building interiors, we will also revisit the decorative schemes and interpretation of the buildings.

There is a great variety of planting to see throughout the garden and parklands including avenues and bosquets. Our gardeners will continue to plant up the yew bosquets and Tent Hill with the scented and flowering shrubs that would have been used in the 18th century.

Our priorities for the Studley Royal Water Garden

Conservation works

- Address the paint and plaster failures at the Banqueting House and Temple of Piety
- Refresh the presentation of the interiors of the above based on sampling evidence and interpretation
- Deliver a programme of planting on Tent Hill and the yew bosquets
- Complete archaeological investigation of Rustic Cottage

Research and knowledge

- Work with partners to develop a vision for Quebec
- Commission further paint sampling and research to better understand the decorative history and conservation

issues associated with the Banqueting House and Temple of Piety

Public access and Interpretation

- Use the return of the Sultan of Surat painting as an opportunity to interpret the history of the Banqueting House
- Interpret the water garden for visitors through the Studley Revealed Project
- Improve electricity supply to enable improved presentation

Managing a designed landscape where nature and culture thrive

The World Heritage Convention was the first international convention to link the concept of nature conservation and protection of cultural heritage and recognise the way that people interact with nature. Although Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey is inscribed on the World Heritage list for its cultural significance it also has a rich natural heritage including an internationally significant collection of ancient and veteran trees planted by the Aislabie family in the late 17th century and 18th century as part of the creation of the parkland and water garden. Our veteran trees are links to our past but they are also species rich habitats that support countless other organisms

Biodiversity in the UK is under threat, with the majority of UK species in long-term decline. The 2019 State of Nature report, put together using wildlife data from a group of 50 conservation organisations (including the National Trust) was an up-to-date health check on how the UK's wildlife is faring. Findings concluded:

- since 1970, more species have seen their populations decrease than increase
- 15% of species are threatened with extinction in the UK

The pressures that have caused the loss of biodiversity over recent decades continue to have a negative effect. These include changing agricultural management, urbanisation, how habitats are managed, invasive non-native species and pests and pathogens and climate change. Many of these threats are mirrored within the wider landscape of the WHS and Nidderdale AONB.

Restoring a healthy, beautiful natural environment is at the heart of the National Trust's ten year 'Playing our Part' strategy, and we are committed to making more space for nature and providing many ways for our visitors and communities to connect with nature. In 2020 we set up a new ranger team in the WHS and they are working with wildlife volunteers and local communities to monitor wildlife across the WHS and to improve habitats for nature. This will include work with Nidderdale AONB to review the condition and management of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the WHS.

There are two deer parks in the WHS, the Studley Royal Deer Park and the Mackershaw Deer Park. Both deer parks have been in an Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship Scheme since 2012. The Government is currently reviewing the land management support for farmers. The new scheme is called the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) and will include 3 schemes – Local

Nature Recovery, Landscape Recovery and the Sustainable Farming Initiative. The Parkland Plan will be prepared in partnership with Natural England and will set out a management approach and actions to inform a future ELMS for the deer parks.

In addition to improving land in the WHS for nature, we will continue to work with partners such as Nidderdale AONB and farmers and landowners both upstream and downstream of the WHS to make more space for nature in the wider landscape.

Geology underpins the natural, designed and built elements of the site's landscape. The Permian Magnesian limestone has had a strong influence on the character and design of the landscape, the large outcrops of limestone inspired the Aislabies' Chinese Garden and were incorporated into paths and features like the Serpentine Tunnel. Many of the buildings have grown from the landscape, their materials extracted from local rock faces and quarries. This can be seen to great effect to the north of the abbey, where the quarry faces used to extract the Carboniferous sandstone and gritstones used to build the abbey are still visible. In this plan period we will deliver key recommendations from the Geodiversity Audit with a focus on survey and mapping local geology and further research into the building stones used in the WHS to inform future repairs.

SKELL VALLEY PROJECT



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

The Skell Valley Project aims to improve land for nature at a landscape-scale through moorland restoration, tree planting, better management of woodland and ancient and veteran trees, healthier rivers and farmland and activities to engage more people with nature.

Working with landowners we are carrying out management works to conserve surviving woodlands and the threatened species they support. We are engaging people with recording and exploring some of the ancient and veteran trees in the valley so they can be added to the Ancient Tree Inventory.

Working with the Friends of Hell Wath Local Nature Reserve in Ripon and the people that live around its fringes we are improving access to the grasslands and river and involving the community in caring for the nature, wildlife and heritage around them with training and hands-on conservation tasks such as butterfly monitoring.

Our priorities for nature

Conservation works

- Look at opportunities across the WHS to support nature
- Work with the Woodland Trust, Friends of Nidderdale AONB and local communities to carry out recording and management of ancient and veteran trees in the deer parks and along the Skell Valley through the Skell 'Hug an Ancient Tree' project
- Work with Nidderdale AONB and landowners and farmers upstream to restore moorland and improve the management of woodlands along the valley
- Work with Nidderdale AONB to review the condition of SINC in the WHS



Working with farmers and landowners

Research and knowledge

- Prepare a Parkland Plan for the Studley Royal and Mackershaw Deer Parks with Natural England and other partners
- Prepare an estate-wide woodland management plan
- Carry out more detailed survey and mapping of geology in the WHS with local geology groups
- Produce a catalogue of building stones used in the WHS and identify sources of building stone for repairs

Public access and interpretation

- Continue to connect communities and visitors with nature and the outdoors through a programme of events and activities in the WHS. Activities include blossom trails, 'on the hoof' deer walks and feeding
- Develop waymarked trails in the deer parks and the routes into Ripon

Revealing and exploring our collections

The chequered history of the estate means that much less survives of the historic collections than might have been expected. The current collections can best be divided between those associated with the abbey, and those relating to the post Dissolution history of the Fountains and Studley Royal estates. Documentation is not always available so provenance is hard to ascertain.

In 1966, a Guardianship agreement was put in place to cover care of the abbey precinct and the related collections. Extensive restoration of the ruins was undertaken and much of the archaeological collection on the site, totalling some 4,500 items, was removed into archival storage, either to Kitchen Bank or to the EHT regional store in Helmsley. The EHT and the National Trust will work together on the Kitchen Bank stone store to ensure storage conditions are improved and the collection is made more accessible.

The estate also has an incredibly rich and large paper archive, known as the Vyner Archive and held by West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS). Papers relate to the estates of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, and their successive owners. Amongst this are charters from the 12th century relating to the Cistercian abbey of Fountains, and a 14th century cartulary summarising the monks' titles to their wool-producing estates. Later documents include over 2,000 letters, mainly dated 1685–1771, and cover the period of the creation of Studley Royal Water Garden.

There is a concerted effort underway as part of the Skell Valley Project and

in partnership with WYAS where volunteers are transcribing the thousands of documents. These rich collections have important stories to tell about the people who lived and worked at Fountains and Studley from the 12th century to the present day.

The National Trust acquired the estate from North Yorkshire County Council in late 1982. The transfer included the historic statues sited within the garden. In the course of transfer a certain amount of accumulated documentation and chattels were passed over, some of historic significance. This included a large Mallorie family portrait of the 1640s, previously hanging in High Stables in Studley Park, and a mid-19th century Aislabie pedigree. Also of significance is a fine carved overmantle now in Fountains Hall, said to have been salvaged from Studley Royal House, and two lead urns in the building came from its gardens.

Along with Fountains Hall, the garden buildings contain a wealth of decorative fixtures and fittings. The Banqueting House contains the Sultan of Surat painting and exquisite Cortese plasterwork, and the Temple of Piety contains the Cortese roundel – all of which require further research.

The Trust has also added to the collections in a modest way. A watercolour of Fountains Hall by Samuel Buckler was acquired in 1996 and a variety of printed and photographic material, particularly where it provides evidence of the past use and development of the estate, has been collected.

Our priorities for collections

Conservation works

- To conserve our own collection and look at opportunities to reinstate/display in the buildings and gardens
- To work with EHT on the Kitchen Bank stone store to ensure storage conditions are improved and the collection is made more accessible
- To make our buildings less susceptible to the agents of deterioration, reducing pest infestation through conservation cleaning regimes, improving environmental control where possible, and reducing light exposure

Research and knowledge

- Continue research into our collection items currently without provenance to ensure we comply with National Trust Collections Standards and review Collections Development Policy
- Engage communities in digitising the archive and researching the development of the estate

Public access and interpretation

- Creation of a new exhibition space at Swanley Barn to display and interpret surviving architectural stone from the abbey
- To make the collection cared for by EHT accessible digitally and provide opportunities to display the collection at Fountains

- Deliver Digging Deep in the Archives (part of the Skell Valley Project) in partnership with West Yorkshire Archive Service

- Plan for opportunities to display our own collection to illustrate the history of the estate. Consider this alongside plans to open up more areas of Fountains Hall

Empowering people to work with us

Looking after the WHS needs skills, energy and enthusiasm across many different disciplines. An important aspect of being a WHS is our commitment to developing skills in the conservation and care of historic places.

Develop our Masonry Centre of Excellence at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal

Ensuring that we have people trained in craft skills is a vital part of looking after our historic buildings and there is currently a shortage of people with these skills in Yorkshire and the UK. The National Trust is developing specialist craft centres at a selection of our properties. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal has been chosen to provide the base for the Masonry Centre of Excellence and we have started to recruit a specialist team of stone masons and apprentices who will repair buildings and structures not only at the WHS but also across the wider region. The vision for the specialist craft centres is:

To create recognised centres of excellence for the provision of crafts skills across the National Trust, preserving and championing traditional skills and developing new and existing talent to provide the highest level of care for our buildings.

The specialist masonry craft centre will build on the site's long and fascinating history of stone masonry – from the early stone masons who travelled across the country in the 12th century to build Fountains Abbey to the more recent work on the abbey by the masons employed by the Vyners in the 1920s and 30s. The abbey was taken into the guardianship of the state in 1966 and since then a full programme of conservation and repair has been in process.

Volunteering in archaeology – a new Heritage and Archaeology Ranger Team (HART) for the WHS

Over the last seven years a team of National Trust archaeology volunteers have worked hard to monitor the condition of around 700 archaeological sites across the WHS ranging from 18th carriage drives to the deer park boundary wall. This team will be revitalised as part of the Trust's Heritage and Archaeology Ranger team initiative. The survey data they have collected will be used to help us manage the rich archaeological resource in the WHS. Archaeology has proved a successful way to engage visitors and communities in the history and conservation we do at the WHS and provides opportunities for people to learn new skills in heritage, archaeology, recording and research.

SKELL VALLEY PROJECT

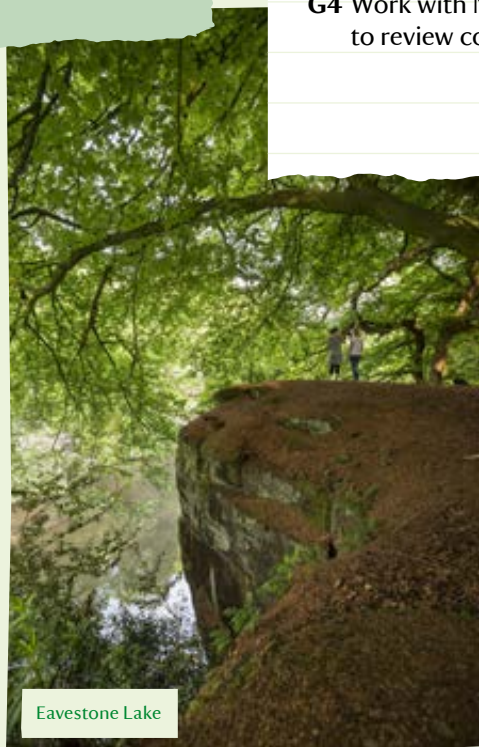


Focus on the Skell Valley Project

With a team of archaeology volunteers, the local community and archaeological consultants, we will research and record historic features of the Serpent Valley and Chinese Garden, Eavestone Lake, Rough House and the 18th century stone bridge at the east end of Spa Gill.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- G1** Deliver a prioritised programme of conservation work to conserve and enhance the attributes of the OUV
- G2** Work with Natural England and other partners to produce a Parkland Plan for the Studley Royal and Mackershaw Deer Parks
- G3** Work with Nidderdale AONB and other partners to play our part in delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy for North Yorkshire (priority habitats include grasslands and fresh water)
- G4** Work with Nidderdale AONB to review condition of SINCS
- G5** Carry out more detailed survey and mapping of geology in the WHS with local geology groups
- G6** Produce a catalogue of building stones used in the WHS and identify sources of building stone for repairs
- G7** Working with EHT, create a new display area at Swanley Barn to exhibit and interpret the abbey stone collection
- G8** Through our Masonry Centre of Excellence provide apprenticeship opportunities and engagement activities for training in traditional skills
- G9** Set up a Heritage and Archaeology Ranger Team to monitor archaeological sites



Eavestone Lake



Stonemasons and apprentices inspect the abbey ruins

Objective H: Play our part in tackling climate change and its impact on the WHS

Why is this objective important?

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face globally and it is threatening nature, people and heritage at local level. As a WHS we have a responsibility to do everything we can to tackle climate change – protecting the WHS for future generations and reducing our own impact on the planet.



How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Understanding the risks the WHS faces from climate change

The new UNESCO Draft Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage (2021) emerged from the update of the 2007 policy document looking at the impacts of climate change on World Heritage properties.

‘World heritage is immersed in unprecedented global change: a rapidly changing climate and the progressive loss of global diversity are perhaps the most prominent indicators of how rapidly humans are negatively transforming the planet.’

The policy document recognises the role that both natural and cultural WHSs can play in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change and delivering ‘transformative change’. In the context of the World Heritage Convention, transformative change would be exemplified by decisions that contribute to making WHSs carbon neutral, as much as possible, and more resilient and better adapted to a changing climate, while safeguarding their OUV. By WHSs becoming exemplars in climate action, they can be catalysts for change and demonstration cases of the change the world needs.

The policy document sets out World Heritage Climate Action Goals towards 2030:

- Goal 1 (Climate risk assessment)
- Goal 2 (Climate adaptation)
- Goal 3 (Climate mitigation)
- Goal 4 (Knowledge sharing, capacity building and awareness)

UNESCO plans to adopt the Draft Policy Document on Climate Action in November 2024.

The climate crisis represents some of the biggest and most urgent threats to WHSs across the world. The impact of this damage is right before our eyes in the form of increased storms, wildfires, landslides and flooding. While the poorest nations are being harmed the most, we are seeing with increasing regularity these damaging impacts felt across the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS, the surrounding countryside and the city of Ripon downstream. One of the priorities for all WHSs is to be clear on the risks that sites face from climate change.

One of the major threats the WHS faces is the catastrophic flooding and levels of siltation which affect the abbey ruins and water garden. The River Skell forms the heart of the water garden and its course was diverted in the 12th century by the monks to power the mill and to build the abbey and then again in the 18th century to create the ornamental ponds, lakes and cascades of the Studley Royal Water Garden. Droughts are also becoming more frequent and prolonged and the low water levels spoil the beauty of the ponds and canals, cause parching to the lawns and harm the wildlife in the river. We are also seeing more landslides and rockfalls particularly around the abbey.

The WHS is also being affected by a growing number of pests and diseases. In 2022 over 600 ash trees were removed due to infection by Ash Dieback which has been exacerbated by changing weather patterns caused by climate change. These diseases have potential for devastating impacts on the trees and planting in the garden and parklands.

Research into the impacts of extreme weather on visitor patterns by the National Trust has found that at temperatures above 24 degrees Celsius visitor numbers start to decline and dramatically reduce at 28 degrees Celsius. With hotter days predicted in the years ahead this could impact on staff, volunteers and visitors to the WHS. We will start to look at how the WHS can be more resilient to changing weather and visitor patterns.

Models that we will explore to assess climate change risk

- National Trust Hazard Map – the hazard map illustrates the threat climate change poses and highlights ways to tackle it. It works to a worst-case scenario model in which global gas emissions continue their current trajectory unchecked. Places are plotted alongside existing data on climate change related events such as flooding and landslips
- National Trust Climate Change Adaptation Framework – The framework has four stages. The first stage identifies the hazards faced by National Trust places using tools like the Hazard Map. The second stage is an assessment of vulnerability and the preparation of an Adaptation Plan. Finally, mitigation and adaptation works are delivered through a Climate and Environmental Management System
- Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) – The CVI was first developed to assess the impacts of climate change on all types of WHSs. It has been used in Australia and Germany and closer to home at the Heart of Neolithic Orkney WHS and the

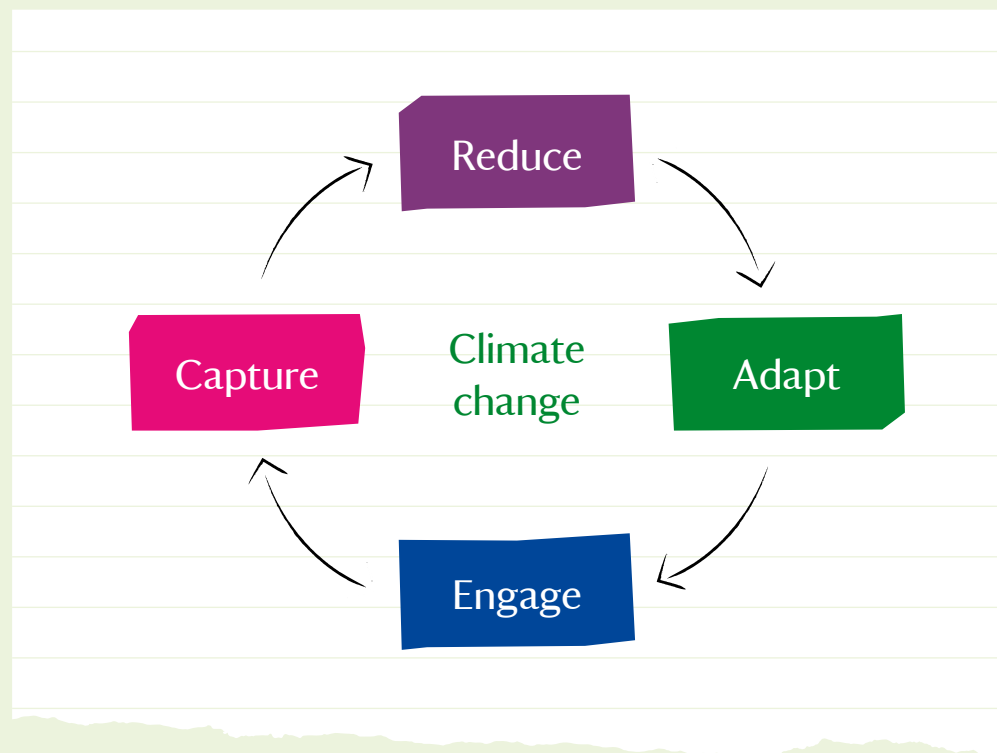
Old and New Towns of Edinburgh WHS. It is designed to assess the physical and ecological impacts of climate change on a site's OUV, but also provides a high-level assessment of the economic, social, and cultural consequences of climate change for communities that depend on the WHS

Tackling climate change at the WHS and across the surrounding landscape

Through the Skell Valley Project we are working with partners, farmers and other landowners to make the WHS and the surrounding landscape, including the city of Ripon, more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

However, we have a wider role to play in the climate emergency, not only dealing with threats to the WHS but also to look at how we reduce our impact on the planet. In the National Trust we use a model called the climate RACE – Reduce, Adapt, Capture, Engage – this aims to protect nature, beauty and history, for everyone, for ever. This means we will:

- **reduce** our carbon emissions and the environmental footprint of our site
- take action to help the WHS **adapt**, recover and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change
- **capture** more carbon in our land and maximise its carbon storage potential
- and across it all, share our experiences widely by **engaging** people in our activities



Priorities for REDUCE

- Monitor our energy usage and continue to implement energy efficiency improvements such as automatic light sensors, review of lighting in holiday cottages, roof insulation, window improvements/replacements, changing from LPG to electric induction cooking in buildings
- Continue our move to electric vehicles and electric gardening and ranger equipment

- Increase the number of electric vehicle charging points in our Visitor Centre car park
- Deliver renewable energy proposals to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels – install photovoltaic panels on the Visitor Centre roof, replacement of oil and LPG heating systems including installation of an air source heat pump at Studley Tea Room
- Continue to reduce landfill waste through increased recycling opportunities and food waste composting
- Reduce plastic usage through national Food and Beverage and Retail buying strategies

- Monitor our water usage and reduce the use of mains water through the introduction of rainwater harvesting systems at Swanley Grange vegetable plot and at the Visitor Centre plant shop

Priorities for ADAPT

- Through the Skell Valley Project repair moorlands upstream of the WHS so the land absorbs more rain and reduces flooding which damages the heritage of the WHS and homes and businesses in Ripon
- Through the Skell Valley Project repair paths and farm tracks to reduce soil erosion and soil run-off into the River Skell
- Continue to ensure all the plants that we grow, those we bring in to plant in the garden and parklands and that we sell in our shops are peat free
- Develop ways of adapting the garden and parklands to the impact of climate change
- Consider staff, volunteer and visitor welfare during extreme weather events through updating or creating emergency procedures and providing equipment where necessary

Priorities for CAPTURE

- Through the Skell Valley Project we will plant 2.2ha of woodland and 1.1km of hedgerow and create 1.2ha of wetland habitat including 7 new ponds

Priorities for ENGAGE

- Talk to visitors about the impact of climate change on the WHS through interpretation and visitor events, social media and our website
- Continue to engage audiences globally, nationally and locally about the work we are doing through the Skell Valley Project to tackle climate change
- Develop visitor activities across the WHS to talk about climate change and encourage our visitors to get involved in solutions
- Engage staff and volunteers in our Climate Action priority through regular newsletter articles, meetings and information sessions
- Explore engaging audiences beyond our boundaries in climate action

Actions to deliver this objective:	
H1	In partnership with other WHSs, partners and communities, carry out a Climate Vulnerability Index for the WHS
H2	Continue to deliver the Skell Valley Project with Nidderdale AONB and farmers and landowners upstream to mitigate the impact of flooding and siltation on the WHS
H3	Produce a Legacy Plan as part of the Skell Valley Project to continue to develop Natural Flood Management works upstream and put in place maintenance plans
H4	Deliver the RACE programme of measures to move the WHS towards carbon net zero by 2030
H5	Work collaboratively with other WHSs through the WHUK Climate Change Network and the UK National Commission for UNESCO to share learning on climate change

Objective I: Develop with partners, long term measures to manage the recurrent problems affecting the water features that arise from the river catchment

Why is this objective important?

Flooding and siltation caused by the River Skell are the biggest threats to the World Heritage Site and delivering the Skell Valley Project to manage this issue is a priority.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Delivery of the Skell Valley Project

In 2021 the National Trust in partnership with Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was successful in a grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for £1.4 million to deliver the Skell Valley Project. We raised £1.1 million in match funding to deliver a total project value of £2.5 million. The project is all about finding a sustainable management approach to addressing challenges to people, nature and heritage in the Skell Valley in North Yorkshire.

The WHS lies in the Skell Valley and at its heart is the River Skell whose natural course was landscaped to create cascades, ornamental ponds and lakes.

Regular flooding damages the abbey ruins and the water garden and the silt deposited in the river threatens the OUV of the WHS and the river’s ecology.

‘There is a deep relationship between the heritage and the river – the world-class water gardens would not exist without the Skell, but the Skell at times can threaten its very existence. If we can’t find a different approach to looking after the land and the water that flows through it, then the heritage of this valley could disappear forever.’

– Excerpt from the Skell Valley Project application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund 2019

Preparation of the World Heritage Management Plan in 2015 was the initial driver for the project, bringing together Historic England, the Environment Agency, Nidderdale AONB and the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust to look at management solutions to address the threats to the WHS from flooding and siltation. Following discussion with partners and communities the aims of the scheme have broadened to address wider challenges around climate change, decline in nature, threats to heritage and the barriers people face to accessing nature and the outdoors.

The Skell Valley Project is made up of 15 individual projects which fit together to form a clear and ambitious vision for the river and the landscape.

The project also seeks to empower local communities living and working along the Skell and the city of Ripon to care for the river. Our 'Watery Wildlife' project, delivered in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and local schools, involves local families and school children in monitoring the river and its wildlife.

The project delivers objectives across the whole World Heritage Site Management Plan and we have highlighted these with 'Focus on Skell' boxes.

The Skell Valley Project is funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Wolfson Foundation, Royal Oak Foundation and other donors. The project will be delivered by 2025 by 16 organisations that make up the Skell Valley Partnership.



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

We are currently working with 15 farmers upstream of the WHS to deliver Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures. These include tree planting, woody debris dams and ponds to slow the flow of water into the river during periods of heavy rainfall and reduce

flooding downstream. Many of these NFM measures are good for nature and improve water quality. Funding for these measures is supported by the European Regional Development Fund up to 2023 and we are monitoring the impact of the measures using hydrological monitoring equipment installed by the University of

Leeds Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme (iCASP) team. We are also looking at innovative ways to connect the farmers upstream to the businesses and people benefiting from the NFM measures downstream through a Landscape Enterprise Network.

Prepare a Water Management Plan for the WHS

Alongside the delivery of the Skell Valley Project it is vital we continue to respond to water management threats in the WHS such as flooding. We will prepare a Water Management Plan by 2025 which will look at how water and silt is currently managed in the WHS, what the future management priorities should be and how we curatorially address siltation around the abbey ruins.

In the short term, large amounts of silt have accumulated in the Reservoir and the moon ponds affecting the reflective qualities of these ornamental water features and we plan to dredge these in the next six years. Flood damage continues to have an impact on the WHS and we will continue the programme of repairs to river walls while scoping a new sluice system to reduce flood damage to the estate.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- I1** Deliver the Skell Valley Project from 2021–25
- I2** Develop a legacy plan for the project which sets out how we continue to protect the WHS by engaging with farmers, landowners and communities beyond 2025
- I3** Prepare and deliver a Water Management Plan for the WHS



Objective J: Minimise the impact of the Shoot on access and on the historic and natural environment and woodland management

Why is this objective important?

There are privately owned shooting rights which cover the whole WHS and impact how the site is managed. The shooting rights affect visitor access and enjoyment of the WHS and conservation of its OUV.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

The freehold shooting rights that cover the WHS were sold off in two lots by the Vyner family in 1966 and 1971. They were purchased by the current owner in 1971, before the National Trust acquired the estate in 1983, and before the estate was inscribed as a WHS in 1986. The shooting rights extend to a wide range of game bird, primarily pheasant, which are reared on the site. The rights extend well beyond the WHS boundary, taking in much of the buffer zone.

The Shoot has a range of impacts on the conservation and management of the WHS. The major challenge identified in the Conservation Management Plan for the WHS is the lack of management of the wooded areas of the garden, particularly the slopes which frame the water garden. These areas include significant historic landscape features such as the High Seat, avenue planting and carriage drives. These areas are used by the Shoot for rearing pheasants. The lack of access to some of the most important areas of the garden is also highlighted as a threat to visitor experience and understanding of the landscape.

The Trust has reached an agreement with the Shoot owners to close much of the WHS on Fridays in November, December and January to minimise disruption to visitors while the shooting takes place. The Shoot however can shoot anywhere on any day under the terms of their sporting rights.

The benefits of acquisition of the shooting rights for the WHS

- Without the control the Shoot has over conservation work across the whole designed landscape we could immediately arrest decline in historic buildings, landscape layout and features and biodiversity
- Being able to provide visitor access to the gardens and abbey from the Visitor Centre down Kendall's Walk to the water garden and abbey would transform the experience of the WHS for visitors

- The reopening of paths along the valley sides and woodlands around the water garden as well as the summit of Gillet Hill means visitors could explore all the designed landscape has to offer, staying far longer at the site
- We would not have to close the WHS on Fridays and there would be no shooting on other areas of the property such as Seven Bridges. This would be better for visitors and the financial sustainability of the WHS

Although the shooting rights are not currently available, we will continue to work with the Shoot owners to improve the condition of the land affected by the shooting infrastructure such as pheasant pens. Most of this land is wooded and a Woodland Management Plan will be developed for the whole WHS, including those wooded areas under Shoot management. We will also carry out a detailed condition assessment of the impact the shooting rights have on the conservation and management of the WHS.

The owner of the shooting rights also owns land adjacent to the National Trust estate at Chinese Wood to the east and Spa Gill to the west. These areas are significant parts of the 18th century designed landscape at Studley Royal. As part of the development of the Skell Valley Project a Conservation Management Plan was commissioned which highlighted the poor condition of structures like the Chinese Ting plinth and gate piers which are important features of the Aislabies' Chinese Garden.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- J1** Seek to acquire the shooting rights that cover the WHS, should they become available
- J2** Produce a Woodland Management Plan to improve the condition of woodlands in the WHS
- J3** Carry out a condition assessment of the impact of the shooting rights on the WHS
- J4** Work with the Shoot owners and other partners to ensure that historical features connected to the WHS and in Shoot ownership are protected and their condition is stable

Objective K: Facilitate and encourage research to improve the knowledge and understanding of the site to inform its management. Ensure the research is shared.

Why is this objective important?

Research is the process by which we can increase our knowledge and understanding, helping us to continually improve our conservation work and the experiences people have when they visit.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

In April 2019 the National Trust became an Independent Research Organisation (IRO) accredited by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). IRO status recognises the excellence of the research that is done within the National Trust and means that we are now eligible to apply to UKRI to fund research activities. However, the vast majority of high-level research is done in partnership with others, in particular universities, either through one off partnerships or with long-term agreements like the one with the University of Oxford.

Before undertaking any research and in order to better coordinate research effort, we plan to develop a research framework. This will ensure that we have a clear understanding of our current level of knowledge about the WHS and identify gaps in our knowledge where further research could give us more information. The framework will also set out a strategy for prioritising and delivering on the research objectives. The framework would be developed in partnership with those who have already carried out research into the WHS and once completed would be published to encourage future researchers.

Research needs to be rigorous and academic, but that should not limit who can be involved in it. There was once a volunteer research group at the WHS who carried out research into subjects related to the site such as the statues. Once the priorities for research have been developed through the research framework this group would be revived as Citizen Researchers to engage more people in this work.



A flavour of what we have discovered over the last six years...

As part of the National Trust and Oxford University Micro-Internship programme, history students explored the Career and Legacy of George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquess of Ripon (1827–1909).

Through the survey and research work with partners to develop the Skell Valley Project we have a far greater understanding of the hydrology and flooding risks in the Skell Valley and their effects on the WHS and the land upstream and downstream.

Our long partnership with Bradford University has revealed information about the abbey's archaeology that is transforming our understanding of its history and archaeological sensitivity. Geophysical findings have enhanced our understanding of the monks' cemetery and in 2019 we discovered a previously unknown building believed to be the monastic tannery.

And storms – a tree that blew over in 2021 revealed the masonry of the Studley Royal House in the deer park – this is now featured in Channel 4's Great British Dig. Excavations by local volunteers discovered remains potentially of medieval date and vivid relicts of the Georgian House that survived until the night of the fire that destroyed the house in 1946.

The National Trust has set out its research priority topics for 2021–2024. The nine topics are crucial for the understanding of the WHS and how people engage with it. Although research will be encouraged under all nine topics the key themes for the WHS are thought to be:

1. Connecting people with nature and heritage
2. Heritage understanding and significance
3. Adapting to environmental change
4. Artistic and cultural production and reception
5. Global and national connections

Research topics might include:

- the understanding of hydrology and drainage around Fountains Hall
- the development of a database of moveable heritage that relates to the WHS, to include, a range of materials including archive material, historic depictions and objects formerly at Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey. It is expected that an understanding of any risks to the future of this material will be included in this work
- following the conservation work to the stained glass at St Mary's Church research will continue into the environmental issues relating to the church and its glass caused by the internal environment

- following the work carried out as part of the Skell Valley Project to better understand some of the adjoining areas to the WHS, particularly Chinese Wood and Spa Gill, further research should be carried out in these and other areas. This work could be extended to areas slightly further away but seen as integral to the Aislabie vision for the designed landscape, such as Hackfall and How Hill
- research to understand the effectiveness of the buffer zone on the conservation of OUV
- investigate the positive impact heritage sites and participation in heritage activities can have on mental health and wellbeing – this will link to North Yorkshire research strategies on health

It is vital to ensure that research is made available once it is complete. Web resources are a relatively easy way to make research available quickly and efficiently. This has been done during the Skell Valley Project to great effect. The National Trust publishes its cultural heritage magazine (Cultural Heritage Publishing | National Trust) twice a year and this will be one of the ways that research will be made available to a wider audience. However, it is important that specialist research is communicated through specialist publications and conferences and opportunities to make research available in these places will be actively sought.

Our ambition is also to look at the feasibility of increasing digital access to all the research that has been done on the WHS and to provide an accessible research library at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.

SKELL VALLEY PROJECT



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

Working in partnership with West Yorkshire Archive Services we are training people in archive research and oral history to collect information about the fascinating history and natural heritage of the Skell Valley. So far 70 volunteers have transcribed over 108,000 words from documents in the Vyner Archive making the records much more accessible and worked on local tithe maps from the mid-19th century allowing an insight into land use and owners within the Skell Valley.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- K1** Work with partners to develop and publish online a research framework to ensure that we understand current levels of knowledge and develop future research questions. Ensure that this is done in line with the National Trust Strategic Framework for Research and Historic England's Research Framework format
- K2** Take advantage of the National Trust's position as an Independent Research Organisation to encourage academic research projects at the WHS
- K3** Develop active research projects drawn from the research framework, working with a new community research group (citizen researchers), academic and community partners and individuals
- K4** Seek to promote the results of research in publications, online and at conferences
- K5** Carry out feasibility study to look at potential for a publicly accessible digital archive and a research library at the WHS

Theme 3: Access, inspiration and learning

Vision: A place which is accessible to all, brought to life for everyone to understand and enjoy



Theme 3:
Access, inspiration and learning



Objectives



Actions



How does this theme help to protect the site?

Jacques Cousteau famously said ‘We only protect what we love, we only love what we understand’.

This theme is about: ensuring our access measures make everyone feel welcome and that they belong, helping our visitors to be inspired and feel connected to the World Heritage Site (WHS), sharing our knowledge, experience and understanding of the WHS and learning from others, and developing and diversifying opportunities for volunteering in and around the WHS.

Global to Local – Integration of Key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this Theme

Reduce Inequalities, SDG 10 – This goal is about reducing inequalities based on income, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, religion and opportunity. We feel the WHS can play a part in working towards this goal and

promoting the inclusion of all as this SDG strongly aligns with the National Trust’s ‘Everyone Welcome’ strategic priority.

Quality Education, SDG 4 – This goal is about ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning. We feel that the WHS can play a part in working towards this goal. We are keen to break down barriers to learning and create opportunities for learning in both formal and informal ways.

Objective L: Ensuring the WHS better reflects the changing communities we serve

Why is this objective important?

Ensuring that the site is welcoming and accessible to all is a key focus for the WHS. When we say ‘accessible’ we mean accessible in all senses including from a physical, financial and information perspective. As society becomes more diverse, we need to evolve so we continue to meet the needs of everyone. That is why one of our goals is to be an organisation where anyone who works, volunteers or visits can have an equally positive experience. We want everyone to feel included and that they belong.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

This objective also aligns with one of the National Trust’s key strategic priorities – to make everyone feel welcome. If we can

work towards removing or working around the physical and invisible barriers that discourage certain people or members of communities or cultures from visiting the WHS then the benefits of the site will be available to everyone.

Our work to make everyone feel welcome over the next plan period will involve a focus on underrepresented groups including disabled people, people of colour, those from the LGBTQ+ community, people who are experiencing social deprivation and children and young people.

Physical barriers: There are physical features in the WHS that make it difficult to access for those in wheelchairs or with mobility issues:

- the water garden, parklands and abbey ruins are extensive and spread over the steep slopes and valley floor of the Skell Valley. Exploring the site can be a challenge and to make the WHS accessible we need to look at alternatives to walking
- many of the buildings, such as Fountains Hall and the 18th century follies, do not have step-free access. There is also a steep hill between the main visitor centre and the abbey and gardens
- there is a good path along the Skell Valley floor connecting the historic buildings and gardens in the WHS, however this path does not extend to the abbey ruins, parts of the deer park and higher level walks in the gardens

Other barriers: There are also other features of the site that are challenges to ensuring the site is welcoming and accessible to all:

- the community conversations we had as part of developing the Skell Valley Project and the consultation events we held for visitors and communities in Ripon identified the cost of entry to the site as a barrier to visiting for some groups
- the lack of public transport is a barrier that makes it difficult for those without access to a car to visit the site. Although close to Ripon, the site is on limited bus routes and the closest opportunity for rail travel is around 11 miles away in Harrogate or Thirsk



The main paths through the WHS are accessible for wheelchairs

Everyone Welcome: the National Trust's commitment to inclusion and diversity

The first of the two strategic priorities of the National Trust's 2020 – 2025 Strategy is by 2030, to better reflect the communities that we serve.

This means we want anyone who works, volunteers or visits the WHS to have an equally positive experience. We want the WHS to be inclusive: for everyone to feel included and that they belong.

We will focus on inclusion at the WHS first by creating a culture which recognises, respects and values difference, where everyone is able to be themselves and feel that they belong.

We recognise we should have a broader diversity of people represented in the demographics of our staff and volunteer populations and want to make changes to enable this.

At the WHS we:

- have established an 'Everyone Welcome' Taskforce that will work towards achieving this priority over the next plan period
- are dedicating specific funds to developing this inclusion and diversity commitment
- will work in partnership with organisations like Ripon Disability Forum, Harrogate and District Community Action (HADCA) and Connecting Ripon to get our approach right both when making changes and on an ongoing basis

We have grouped our work to deliver our Everyone Welcome commitment under three headings:

1. Creating an inclusive and diverse place to work and volunteer

We want to first focus on inclusion by creating a culture that recognises, respects and values difference, where everyone can be themselves and feel that they belong. We plan to do this by:

• Listening, hearing and responding:

We will continue to include inclusion and/or diversity focused questions in the staff and volunteer survey to ensure that we listen and respond to staff and volunteer feedback. We will also monitor feedback from our visitors and communities in terms of inclusion and diversity issues

• Investing in training and development:

Mandatory inclusion training for all staff and volunteers will continue. Inclusion training targeted at more specific needs will also be available in addition to staff and volunteer training on the National Trust's Everyone Welcome strategic priority. We are introducing strength-based recruitment for some of our visitor-facing roles, which moves away from our current standard process of shortlisting and selecting applicants based on previous experience and education, to criteria that is based on their suitability for the role. Our quality induction will ensure our staff have fantastic knowledge about the site and have undertaken the Inclusive Service training

2. Engaging existing and new people and communities through communications

We want to ensure that our communications make the WHS available and accessible to everyone. We plan to do this by:

- **Improving the accessibility and delivery of our free entry options:** We will continue to offer free entry days over the next plan period and will also deliver free entry passes that target specific communities. This will include continuing to offer free access passes to refugees hosted by National Trust members or supported through community groups. We will also work to raise the visibility of ways that people can visit parts of the WHS without an entry charge such as promoting the walks in the deer parks and along the Seven Bridges Valley
- **Improving our access information:** We will redesign our access map to make it easier for people to use. This work will include the production of welcome materials for people with visual impairments and creating a page of access information on our website including a 'sensory story' aimed at our neurodivergent visitors
- **Continuing to present a positive image of people and communities, celebrating differences in our marketing materials:** In pre-visit information, positive diverse imagery will be used to break down barriers to engagement for disabled people and those from other underrepresented groups

- **Non-digital information:** The consultation for the preparation of this plan highlighted that people without access to digital devices would benefit from hard copy, as opposed to digital, information being available about upcoming events and access provisions such as our free of charge mobility vehicle offer. We will work with Ripon Library to provide hard copy posters and information leaflets to help to reach these people

3. Connecting the WHS to the people and communities it serves

We want to build on the work we have done over previous plan periods to ensure the WHS remains relevant and connects with the communities that it serves. We plan to do this by:

(a) Improving access for disabled people

We want to continue to make the site welcoming and accessible to disabled people. As mentioned above the WHS has several challenges when it comes to improving access for disabled people. Some of our successes to date in removing barriers include:

- maintaining our popular volunteer-run minibus service to transport visitors to various parts of the estate. This enables disabled people to use the Visitor Centre entrance facilities and then use the minibus to go to other parts of the estate
- maintaining and adding to our mobility vehicle fleet and manual wheelchairs. All are hired out free of charge

- maintaining a dedicated entrance at valley floor level that enables a visitor to access the abbey and water garden without having to navigate hills or inclines
- delivering staff training on various physical and mental disabilities such as autism, ADHD and dementia awareness
- building accessibility into our visitor programming offer. This will include a quiet hour during crafting activities, British Sign Language tours and providing ear defenders at family activities. When planning and delivering our seasonal programming, we will work with local access led charities such as Henshaws, JennyRuth, Pioneer Project and Orb Community Arts

We will progress our access standards work to build on the achievements above. This will involve:

- working towards meeting the National Trust Access Standards Framework by resurfacing the West Gate car park which provides level access to the valley floor; upgrading our disabled toilets; adding benches and an easy access trail to the Deer Park; providing a step-free solution to access at ground level to Fountains Hall and considering options for improving access to the upper floors including the chapel room. We will explore a step-free access solution to all other buildings on the estate

- working with Ripon Disability Forum and other organisations like Experience Community in Leeds to get our access measures right, both at the point of planning and making changes and also on an ongoing basis. Feedback from members of Ripon Disability Forum on our access leaflet added valuable insight which led to changes that will be incorporated in the new access leaflets. Experience Community based in Leeds have promoted the access measures we have in place

- continuing to offer staff training specific to certain visitor needs such as dementia awareness, autism awareness, visual awareness and deaf awareness courses

(b) Increasing access to the outdoors, by focusing on opportunities for people and nature to connect

We will continue to work with local community groups to provide programmed visitor activities and outdoor experiences for all, including those audiences who are not as familiar with nature and the outdoors.

We will develop this objective through our ongoing property Programming Plan and the Skell Valley Project (the Exploring the Skell Valley Project, the Nature on your doorstep project and the Skell Valley Watery Wildlife project are projects which work towards this) and regular nature programming.

Focus on the Skell Valley Project

As part of 'Exploring the Skell Valley' we will create a range of interactive and easy to follow walking trails which celebrate the wonderful heritage and wildlife of the Skell Valley for local residents and visitors to the area. We will remove many physical and economic barriers that are currently preventing people from accessing the countryside around the WHS and strengthen connections with the City of Ripon.

We are also working with community groups as part of the 'Nature on your doorstep' project to bring nature-friendly places closer to where people live. We are collaborating with groups such as Ripon Walled Garden, Ripon Workhouse Museum, Ripon YMCA and Grantley and Sawley Parish Council to create spaces for nature in the valley.

(c) Increasing the diversity of visitors, by using history and culture to bring people together

Building on the success of the Folly! art programme and the Joe Cornish photography exhibition, we will:

- explore partnerships with the arts and cultural sector to create high profile art installations and exhibitions to attract new audiences to the WHS
- as part of our ongoing interpretation improvements, we will continue to research diverse histories in the context of the WHS to build on current narratives and explore multiple perspectives

(d) Continuing to build and maintain a good relationship with a wide range of groups and communities to help the WHS to become more diverse

During this next plan period we plan to:

- **Prepare a Community Engagement Plan** to explore ways in which we can increase the diversity of our visitors and work more closely with our communities
- **Strengthen our relationships with organisations** who represent and have close ties to communities and people that we have identified as under-represented in the staff, volunteer or visitor communities at the WHS. This will include building on our relationships with Ripon Disability Forum, Experience Community, Henshaws and JennyRuth

- **Engage new audiences through the Skell Valley Project** which identified three target audiences following consultation with the local community. These groups which currently face challenges in accessing heritage and the outdoors along the Skell Valley are low income families, disability groups and elderly and isolated people

- **Make international visitors feel welcome** by continuing to translate our welcome materials into 12 foreign languages and explore providing this digitally

Actions to deliver this objective:

L1 Continue to embed an inclusive culture in our staff and volunteer teams

L2 Deliver a programme of Inclusive Service Training to all staff

L3 Promote and deliver a range of free entry options aimed at target audiences

L4 Continue to present a positive image of disabled people and those from other underrepresented groups in marketing materials

L5 Work with Ripon Library to provide hard copy information about upcoming events or access provisions

L6 Work towards achieving NT bronze, silver and gold access standards including reviewing the access leaflet

L7 Work with local disability groups to seek their input to proposed access improvements in the WHS and a regular review of the current access provision

L8 Deliver the Exploring the Skell Valley, Nature on your Doorstep and Watery Wildlife project which are all part of the wider Skell Valley Project

L9 Deliver an annual programme of nature activities for communities and visitors across the whole WHS

L10 Explore partnerships with the arts and cultural sectors to provide exhibitions, interpretation, events and activities to use the history and culture of the WHS to bring people together and increase the diversity of visitors

L11 Prepare a Community Engagement Plan which sets out how we will work with under-represented groups and the organisations that support them

L12 Continue to translate our welcome materials into 12 foreign languages and explore providing this digitally

Objective M: Ensuring an excellent visitor experience that continues to attract and inspire people

Why is this objective important?

We know Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal has a huge impact on people – a place to make memories and form family traditions. We want to build on that and help as many people as possible to feel moved, fulfilled and inspired by their visit to the WHS.

An engaging and inspiring visitor experience is crucial to ensure that visitors keep coming back and recommend the site to their friends and family. It also helps our visitors to better understand the WHS and form a deeper connection with the heritage, beauty and nature it has to offer.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Our approach to interpretation

Interpretation is anything that we do that deepens a visitor's understanding about the WHS. It is integral that we do this in a way that is inspiring, exciting and in some cases surprising.

Feedback from visitors tells us that they feel that more interpretation is needed across the site and especially around the abbey and water garden. We also know from National Trust member survey results that the top three reasons for a visit to the WHS are to enjoy the beauty of the site, go for a walk and enjoy peace, tranquillity and contemplation.

In addition to building on the reasons that our visitors come for a day out and following both our WHS Interpretation Strategy and Programming Plan, we use seven working principles when planning our interpretation for the WHS which are:

1. Are we creating the right first impression?

We want our visitors to be aware that they are visiting a WHS. We have done a lot of work updating our vehicles, uniforms, on site and digital marketing materials and maintaining high standards of general presentation to both highlight the WHS status and to maintain the quality of experience expected at a WHS.

2. Does the spirit shine through?

During the last plan period we developed a Spirit of Place which is a short statement that expresses the essence of the WHS. We use this Spirit of Place as a guiding principle in everything we do on the estate. For example, the Spirit of Place is used to guide the design and materials of signage used on the estate.

Extract from our Spirit of Place

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal – one place, two ways of seeing its beauty. Each combines wood, stone and water to realise two very different types of beauty that have delighted generations of visitors. On their own they are extraordinary; very different spaces with their own particular atmospheres: one simple, pure and honest; the other elegant, playful and surprising.

3. Does the visit appeal on different levels?

Much work was carried out during the last two plan periods to understand the different audience groups who visit the site and their values and motivations on a day out.

The National Trust carries out visitor surveys to understand the different audience groups who visit the site. Our main audiences are categorised as:

- families with children, most with children under 13
- 'curious adults' meaning adults who are keen to learn and find out more
- those who like to share their experience with friends and who find most things interesting but are unlikely to devote their full attention to anything

This means we can tailor our interpretation and programme of events and activities to appeal to these groups and also develop activities to attract new audiences who are not currently visiting the WHS.

4. Does every detail count?

We are aware that everything we do and every feature of our site speaks to visitors so even the smaller details must be considered. We think carefully about small details such as our bins, seats and signage.

5. Can the place speak for itself?

We are careful not to clutter the landscape when it can speak for itself. In order to preserve the simplicity of the abbey, the beauty of the water garden or the wilderness of the deer parks we carefully consider the number and location of information panels, art installations or exhibitions on the estate.

6. Are there reasons to return?

We do not need to explain everything about the site all at once: a layered interpretation experience over time will allow our visitors to build on their understanding and connection with the WHS with future visits. An example of this is that Porter's Lodge provides a good overview of the history of the estate but guided tours and audio guides are also available which allow visitors to delve a little deeper if they wish either on their first visit or on later visits.

7. Are we stretching and surprising people?

Our Folly! modern art installations in the water garden provoked strong emotional reactions from our visitors. These temporary installations provoked much discussion, delight and thought.

Participatory working

We have had great successes over the last few plan periods in terms of working with local communities, organisations and artists when developing and delivering interpretation at the WHS. We will continue to build on the successes of that participatory work during the next plan period.

Our visitor programming in 2024 and beyond will build on the learnings of this first year of participatory working, exploring the site as a place of artistic inspiration, working with partners to broaden our visitor offer.

We will also work to develop an interpretation plan in the context of the Skell Valley Project and our new property programming and partnerships team will work with external partners on exhibitions and interpretation.

New spaces for interpretation

We are acutely conscious that we do not have enough space for interpretation – the Studley Revealed Project and improvements to the Visitor Centre will help this, but in this plan period we will scope creating a bespoke, accessible, museum standard interpretation space.

Conservation focused interpretation

We will continue to bring our conservation work to life for our visitors and communities by developing a programme to involve them in our conservation work. We will invest in temporary interpretation materials that will enable us to better explain the conservation work we are undertaking, as well as promoting our work on social media channels.

Digital interpretation

Our World Heritage Site Management Plan consultation has also confirmed there is enthusiasm for us to make the most of the opportunities to harness digital interpretation. Expanding our digital interpretation at the WHS could include providing better access to the Fountains Abbey collection at Helmsley Stone Store as well as enable us to interpret the site in a way which protects the tranquil and uncluttered nature of the WHS. Improved digital interpretation may also help bring the WHS to those who may not be able to visit.

SKELL
VALLEY
PROJECT



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

As part of 'Exploring the Skell Valley' and the new walking trails, we will encourage wider exploration and understanding of the currently hidden parts of the valley with the use of creative hubs in selected locations and digital platforms.

Autumn fun on West Green



Key projects planned to enhance the visitor experience at the WHS

The following projects set out on the map are planned over the next plan period with a view to enhancing the overall visitor experience and adding more interpretation across the WHS.

1 The Studley Revealed Project

Enhancing the visitor experience at the Studley entrance and providing much needed interpretation about the designed landscape.

2 Establishing a vision for Quebec

Bringing back to life a lost garden feature of the 18th century landscape.

3 Garden Follies

Reinterpreting and presenting the garden follies.

4 Abbey

Improving the existing abbey interpretation and forming a long term strategy to re-interpret the abbey.

2032 will mark the 900th anniversary of the founding of Fountains Abbey. During this next plan period, we will begin to develop proposals to celebrate this milestone.

5 Stone work

Relocating stone from the Kitchen Bank Stone Store and displaying the abbey stone work to the public in a new visitor exhibition space.

6 Fountains Hall

Trialling and evaluating different approaches for Fountains Hall and settling on a long term strategy.

7 Visitor Centre

Adding interpretation to the Visitor Centre where there is currently none.

8 Deer Park

Delivering a programme of interpretation and activities exploring wildlife and heritage in the deer parks including waymarked trails.

9 Enhanced electricity and wifi provision to the estate



This map does not show the full extent of the World Heritage Site

Filming

One revenue stream that has proved surprisingly resilient post the Covid-19 pandemic is our filming income. In 2020 and 2021 location fees generated £85,000 for the estate. Recent productions include Netflix's 'The Witcher' and Channel 5's 'Anne Boleyn' and 'All Creatures Great and Small'. Filming is a fantastic way to generate profile for the estate, often reaching audiences who may not be aware of the estate or have a pre-existing connection to it.

900th anniversary of the abbey

2032 will mark the 900th anniversary of the founding of Fountains Abbey.

During this next plan period, we will begin to develop proposals to celebrate this milestone. This will include work to establish what we can do to ensure that the abbey is sustainable, relevant, and resilient to give it the best possible chance to still be standing here in another 900 years.

The 900th anniversary of the abbey will also give us a platform to develop and improve the way that we tell the story of the abbey and think about how we can work more collaboratively to protect this special place.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- | | |
|--|---|
| M1 Deliver the Interpretation Strategy and the Visitor Programming Plan | M9 Improved interpretation for main Visitor Centre (including adding large map(s) to Visitor Centre car parks and estate) |
| M2 Work with communities and local partners to develop and deliver the Skell Interpretation Plan | M10 Trial and evaluate different interpretative and programming approaches for Fountains Hall including providing opportunities for wider access to Fountains Hall (such as to the basement and the chapel room) as part of tours and heritage open days |
| M3 New site programming team to work with external partners on exhibitions and interpretation | M11 Develop a long-term strategy for Fountains Hall |
| M4 Improve electricity and Wi-Fi provision estate wide | M12 Improve the abbey interpretation |
| M5 Develop opportunities for digital interpretation. Priorities include providing digital access to the Fountains Abbey collection. | M13 Deliver a programme of interpretation and activities exploring wildlife and heritage in the deer parks including the addition of waymarked trails and an easy access trail |
| M6 Deliver the Studley Revealed Project including delivery of the interpretation hub which will have a water garden and deer park focus | M14 Expand opportunities to promote the WHS to new audiences through filming |
| M7 Reinterpreting and presenting the Banqueting House, the Octagon Tower and Temple of Piety | M15 Prepare and plan for 900th anniversary of the founding of Fountains Abbey in 2032 (Fountains 900) |
| M8 Establish a vision for Quebec | |



A school den building activity

Objective N: Share our knowledge, experience and understanding of the WHS and learn from others

Why is this objective important?

Education and learning are important for passing on the values of WHSs and ensuring that future generations will feel inspired to support and protect those sites.

Transmitting cultural and natural heritage to future generations is a key World Heritage goal which we can support at the site.

We want our visitors and communities to love our WHS as much as we do. We will continue to seize the opportunity for finding relevance for our visitors. Relevance is about revealing contemporary currency in places and things, and providing pleasure, fun and an enthusiasm for learning.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Working with schools: During the last plan period we delivered a programme of school visits, tours and workshops to share learning about gardens, nature and heritage. In 2020 the National Trust embarked on a restructuring project in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which included a move away from directly providing formal learning to a more collaborative approach with places of learning, with children and young people hubs identified in each geographical region. With that in mind, we have developed self-led resources for school groups to use and we will continue to build our relationships with local schools and centres of learning in this way.

We will continue to offer schools Educational Group Memberships which provides entry for school groups at a significant discount. We will also look into supporting some school groups with their travel costs over the next plan period.

Further local, regional and national learning opportunities: In addition to continuing to support schools to make the most of the educational opportunities that the WHS provides, we are also interested to develop wider ways that we can make the most of the learning and educational potential of the site. There are several ways that we intend to continue to promote and encourage learning opportunities, including by the activities listed in the table on the next page.

SKELL VALLEY PROJECT



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

The Skell Valley Project has given us an opportunity to develop our relationship with two local schools: one upstream and one downstream of the section of the River Skell that runs through the WHS. The 'Watery Wildlife' project involves working with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and giving local students, families and community groups upstream and downstream the River Skell the chance to find out more about the river, its habitats, water quality and wildlife.



Programme of Wider Heritage Management Learning Opportunities

Learning Opportunity	A taste of what is involved
Continue to deliver a programme of lectures and talks and tailored site visits	We will continue to support and deliver workshops and talks to share learning about conservation and management of the WHS. Previous topics have included World Heritage challenges and management plans, parkland management and higher-level stewardship, archaeology, climate change and the Skell Valley Project, water management and planning issues.
Seminars and workshops	The Culturally Natural or Naturally Cultural seminar delivered jointly by the National Trust and Natural England brought together WHS managers and other experts to explore the balance between nature and culture at WHSs. We will develop future topics for seminars and workshops and also take part in those organised by our partners and networks such as World Heritage UK.
Opportunities for practical training including in traditional skills and conservation in action	We have run training for traditional skills such as lead statue conservation and building with hot lime which we intend to continue and develop.
Changing exhibitions and displays	The Joe Cornish photography exhibition and the Settlers Society Exhibition have been two successful exhibitions that we have run and we look forward to developing future exhibitions and displays.
Apprenticeships	We look forward to building on the recent apprenticeship success that has included promoting craftsmanship and establishing a joiner apprentice in the WHS Building Team, an apprentice in the Ranger team and two masonry apprentices in the new Centre for Craft and Excellence. We will develop apprenticeships in other job families.
Developing relationships with universities, colleges and other centres of learning – including via mentoring, placements, internships	We intend to continue to develop our connections and opportunities for mutual learning opportunities with universities, colleges and other learning establishments. This will include continuing to host heritage student placements and internships and providing dissertation support.
Our volunteering programme	There is a fully trained group of about 29 volunteer guides who run daily tours about the history and design of the garden and the abbey who also carry out specialist tours on request. The wider volunteering team of around 300 volunteers have various roles across the estate, many of which involve the promotion of learning and education.
Building the knowledge of the staff and volunteers of the WHS	All staff and volunteer inductions include an overview of what a WHS is and why Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal was inscribed on the list. This will be a topic for all future volunteer guide training. Regular articles are included in the staff and volunteer estate newsletter and world heritage themed topics are included at the all staff and volunteer meetings held throughout the year.

Children and young people: The National Trust has created 19 children and young people hubs across England. Their goals are to:

- develop the quality of visitor experience for children
- prioritise opportunities for children and young people facing barriers to nature, beauty and history
- increase opportunities for young people,

so that all children and young people can thrive in nature, beauty and history.

We will build on this work and use the shared learning from these hubs to improve what we can provide at the WHS for children and young people.

We will also explore opportunities to involve young people in the management of the WHS. We will look at models like the World Heritage Youth Ambassador programmes in place in other WHSs such as Blaenavon and Durham and opportunities to build on the youth volunteering developed as part of the Skell Valley Project

International learning: As the WHS is part of a global network of UNESCO designated sites we are in a unique position to share our experiences and learning from both the global and UK World Heritage networks. During the last plan period we worked closely with the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) and we plan to continue to develop our relationship with INTO and other WHSs during the next plan period so we can benefit from further exchanges of experience and learning.

Actions to deliver this objective:

N1	Maintain a self-led learning resource for school children	N6	Provide training for traditional skills/ craftsmanship via apprenticeships, conservation in action events and workshops
N2	Continue to develop and strengthen targeted relationships with local schools, colleges, universities and centres of learning	N7	Share learning from the Skell Valley Project through the UK network of other WHSs
N3	Look into options to support schools with their travel costs to the WHS	N8	Explore opportunities to involve young people in the management of the WHS
N4	Learn from the National Trust Children and Young People hubs	N9	Continuing to work collaboratively with the International National Trusts Organisation
N5	Working in partnership with organisations to deliver the Programme of Wider Heritage Management Learning Opportunities	N10	Deliver other international learning opportunities and information exchange



Local school visit

Objective O: Provide diverse volunteering opportunities that encourage active involvement and inspire support for the WHS

Why is this objective important?

Our site simply would not be able to deliver the value that it does to so many people without our team of over 300 volunteers. There are also many mental and physical health and other wellbeing benefits for volunteers including making new friends, positive impacts on mood, raised confidence levels, developing new skills, gaining work experience and a raised sense of worth that comes with contributing towards causes that matter. These benefits also make our volunteering opportunities even more important to maintain, especially for the local community.

The 25,000 hours a year that our volunteers gift to the site is key to engaging with our visitors and is invaluable in delivering a great visitor experience. Our volunteers have an in-depth knowledge, understanding and connection to the WHS and play an important role in its conservation and management. Our volunteers also help us to maintain and strengthen links between the WHS and the local community.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Supporting our existing volunteer teams

As our site is ever changing, we will monitor the existing volunteer role profiles and, where appropriate, develop new volunteer roles. We want our volunteers to feel truly a part of the WHS and valued in their role so we will include and consult the volunteers in new projects and site management ideas. We also want to ensure that our volunteers have a positive experience of volunteering for the National Trust at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal. Our annual volunteer survey is one way that we keep communication channels open between staff and the volunteers. We will also continue to keep high standards in terms of volunteer training and induction processes so our volunteers feel as supported and confident as they can in their roles.

A variety of volunteer roles at the WHS



Diversifying our volunteer offer

As part of the National Trust's commitment to inclusion and diversity, known as 'Everyone Welcome', we have recognised that we want to have a broader diversity of people represented in the demographics of our volunteers. We believe that diversity through the mix of identities, experiences and perspectives is an opportunity for the WHS and the National Trust and is untapped potential that will add so much to what we do. We also believe that diversity will only flourish when we create genuinely inclusive conditions at the WHS.

We will work towards achieving a more diverse volunteer demographic by first focusing on strengthening inclusion at the WHS. This also ties in with our work towards diversifying our staff team which is addressed at Objective L in this plan. We will strengthen inclusion at the WHS by creating a culture that recognises, respects and values difference, where everyone can be themselves and feel that they belong. This will involve listening to feedback from our staff and volunteer teams on inclusion and diversity matters and providing inclusion and diversity training for our staff and volunteers.

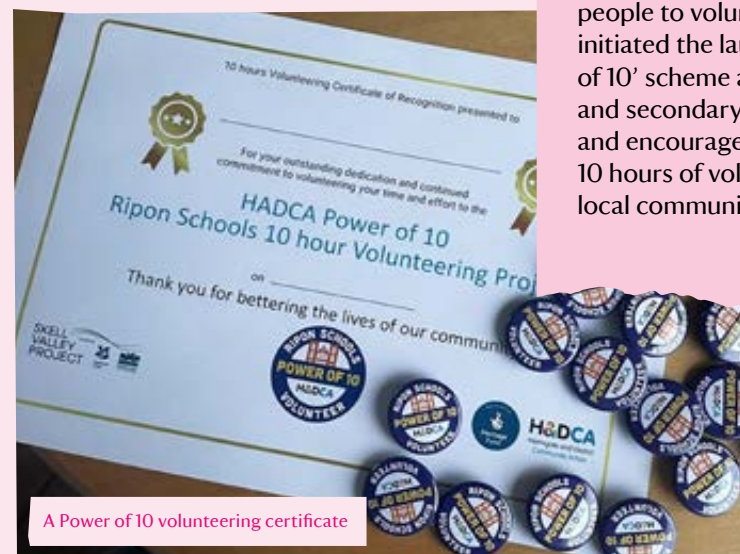
We will also carry out an exercise of identifying the current barriers to people volunteering at the WHS. The results of this exercise will be used to consider and where appropriate to develop more diverse volunteering opportunities over the next plan period.



A young volunteer at work

Encouraging young people to volunteer

We have recently carried out an internal review looking at where and how we can involve young volunteers and we look forward to building on the results of that review over the next plan period. We ensure that our staff working with volunteers have the right training. We have also been working closely with the Skell Valley Project, Harrogate and District Community Action (HADCA) and young people to develop ideas on youth volunteering.



A Power of 10 volunteering certificate

SKELL
VALLEY
PROJECT

Co-led by
National
Trust

Nidderdale
Local Community Action

Focus on the Skell Valley Project

We are working in partnership with Harrogate and District Community Action on the 'Volunteering City of Ripon' project. So far we have recruited a fixed term project co-ordinator who is working with local voluntary organisations to develop a shared approach to recruiting, training, managing and supporting volunteers to make all of the organisations involved more impactful, sustainable and inclusive. The project has already identified a desire to encourage more young people to volunteer which has initiated the launch of the 'Power of 10' scheme at all primary and secondary schools in Ripon and encourages children to give 10 hours of volunteering in their local community.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- 01** Continue to identify opportunities to develop new volunteer roles that support the needs of the site
- 02** Continue to use the National Trust's annual volunteer survey supplemented by estate specific surveys to evaluate the success of volunteering and address any concerns
- 03** Invest in volunteer training, both role specific and general, including continuing to update the volunteer estate handbook
- 04** Continue to develop the confidence and expertise of all staff who manage volunteers
- 05** Offer regular work experience placements to school and college pupils in the local area and ensure that their experience is meaningful and enjoyable
- 06** Consult volunteers during the initiation of new projects and ideas to involve them in the management of the site
- 07** Identify current barriers to people volunteering with the aim of providing more diverse volunteering opportunities
- 08** Deliver Volunteering City of Ripon Project as part of the Skell Valley Project



Theme 4: Local community links and partnerships

Vision: A place cherished by the local community and wider communities of interest and an iconic symbol of Yorkshire

Theme 4: Local community links and partnerships

Objectives

Actions



How does this theme help to protect the site?

As a World Heritage Site (WHS) it is vital that the estate continues to play an important role in the local community. This theme ensures that the site remains relevant and connected to its local and wider communities of interest. By working collaboratively with partner organisations that have similar goals and objectives, we can make an even bigger impact when conserving the WHS.

Global to Local – Integration of Key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this Theme

Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 3 – this goal is about ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for everyone at all ages. We can play a role at the WHS to promote and enable as many people as possible to gain from the health and wellbeing benefits of a visit to the WHS.

Partnerships, SDG 16 – this goal is about revitalizing global and local partnerships for delivering sustainable development. We have had great success with partnership working with other organisations and communities through the Skell Valley Project.

Objective P: Create strong partnerships with local communities and other local, regional and national stakeholders in order to deliver our aim and objectives

Why is this objective important?

When looking at the challenges that the site faces, and the opportunities that are available to us, many of these are not unique to the WHS. In our increasingly interconnected world, many of our partners are grappling with similar issues. We can only tackle challenges such as climate change by working in partnership with other organisations and our local community.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is a special place for many people. We have traditionally thought of ‘community’ as people who live in close geographical

proximity. The WHS is important to communities in the Ripon area, but this is a small part of the ‘community’ of people who feel close to the site. Ripon is also a small, relatively undiverse community. In this plan period we will work to broaden our definition of community, particularly focusing on North Yorkshire and the wider sub-region. We will also explore how we are part of a wider interest led community – our fellow Cistercian sites, our fellow large visitor attractions and our ‘community’ of visitors worldwide.

As a complex site, with several staff working in outward facing roles, our external relationships are increasing in number and variety. Whether it be partners that help us deliver our events and activities for visitors, to community groups assisting us to assess our visitor infrastructure or working with others to influence the global conversation about climate change, our networks grow ever stronger. The opportunities for us to both learn from, and influence, our communities of interest has never been greater.

We will continue to develop our partnerships as set out in the stakeholder map, with a focus on the following key areas:

A legacy for the Skell Valley Partnership

The Skell Valley Partnership has been a huge success, bringing together partners with mutual objectives to share skills and experience. These relationships were formed in the spirit of genuine collaboration and brought energy and focus to the project. Together these partners are improving the landscape’s

resilience to climate change, helping nature to thrive, celebrating the valley's heritage and increasing people's access to green space following the Covid-19 pandemic.

This group of 16 organisations, co-led by the National Trust and Nidderdale AONB, was formed in 2020 to shape the delivery of the Skell Valley Project. Some members of the partnership are also delivery partners, responsible for delivering one of the 15 sub-projects of the overarching project, whereas others sit on the partnership to offer their considerable experience and expertise.

The Skell Valley Partnership includes the National Trust, Nidderdale AONB, Forestry Commission, Natural England, Environment Agency, a representative from the Skell Valley farming community, Grantley Hall Estate, Grantley, Sawley, Skelding and Eavestone Parish Council, Nidderdale AONB Joint Advisory Committee, North Yorkshire Council, Friends of Hell Wath, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Harrogate and District Community Action (HADCA), Ripon Museum Trust, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and Eavestone Estate.

Our focus for the next six years will be strengthening and deepening the Skell Valley Partnership and working with members of the partnership to develop a legacy for the project.

The Skell Valley Project in a nutshell

There are four overarching themes that make up the Skell Valley Project and a set of 15 individual projects under these themes that will help deliver the project objectives.

Theme 1 – Landscape is resilient

We will help tackle the threats of climate change and ensure we play our part in a 'green' recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic – making the landscape, its people and the local economy more resilient.



Theme 2 – Nature thrives

We will reverse the decline in nature, conserve ancient trees and woodlands and the wildlife they support and create nature-rich green spaces near to where people live.



Theme 3 – People are empowered

We will empower people to deliver projects for nature, heritage and landscape by supporting them in learning the skills they need and removing current barriers that stop people accessing the outdoors and nature around them.



Theme 4 – Heritage is celebrated

We will save our heritage from the threats of climate change and general neglect and create new and exciting opportunities for people to explore the nature and history of the Skell Valley and be involved in its care.





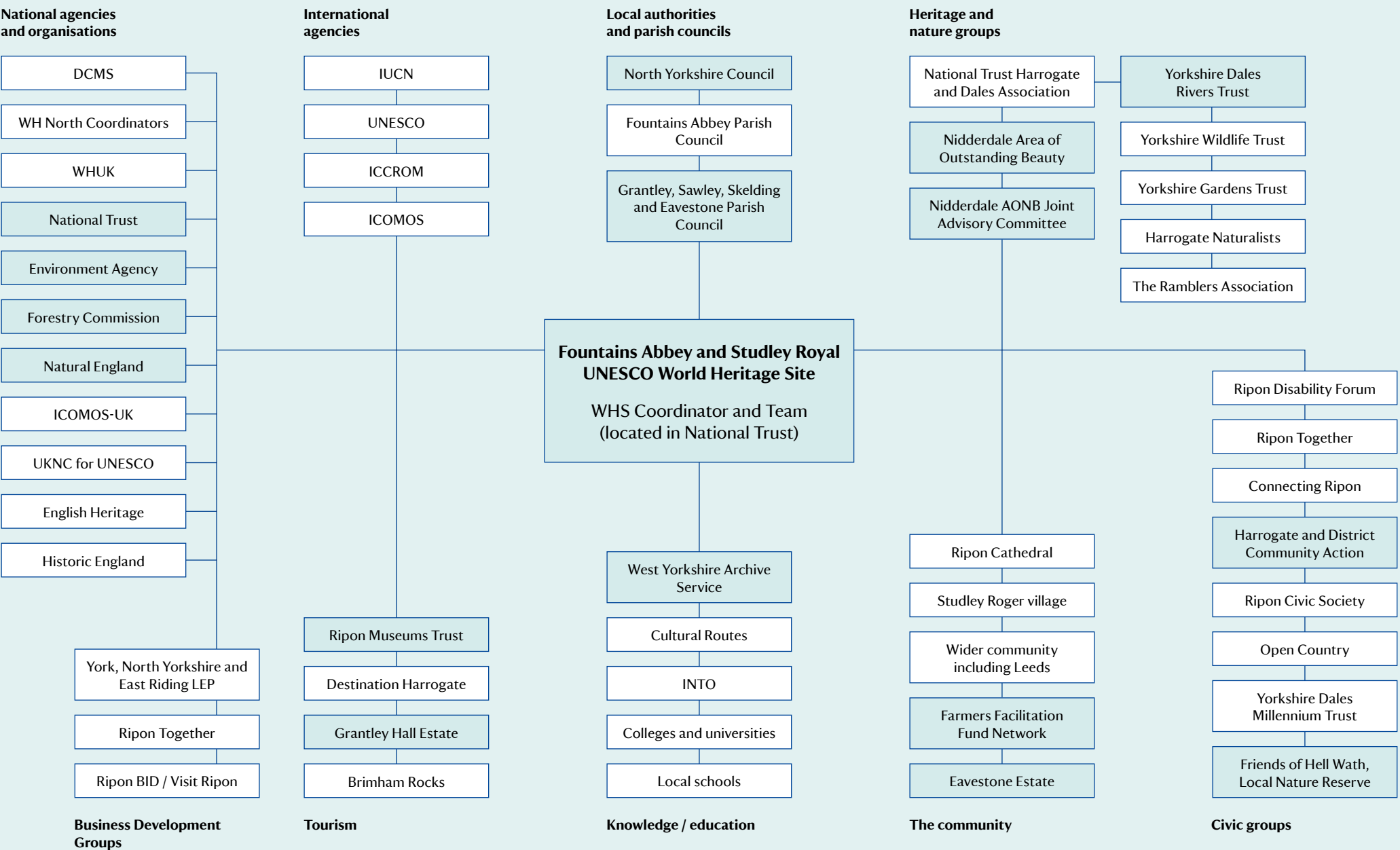
Connecting with our neighbours

Although there are no villages within the WHS, historically the Studley Royal estate covered an extensive land area including the villages of Studley Roger just to the east of the WHS and Aldfield to the west. The historic estate also extended to cover Dallowgill Moor at the top of the catchment and the neighbouring farms. There are also cottages in the WHS let to tenants. These places and the people that live and work in them have a strong connection to the WHS. We are keen to develop a closer relationship with our neighbours, involving them more in the management of the WHS to ensure that we all benefit from the site.

Maintaining and strengthening partnerships with other stakeholders

Over the next plan period we will continue to maintain key partnerships with our other stakeholders in addition to our Skell Valley Project partners and neighbours. We will also carry out a stakeholder mapping exercise to ensure we have a thorough understanding of the partnerships we need to deliver this management plan.

Stakeholders involved in the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site. Diagram below based on the stakeholder diagram in the Sites for Sustainable Development: realising the potential of UNESCO designated sites to advance Agenda 2030 report by the Canadian and UK National Commissions for UNESCO



Shaded blue boxes: Skell Valley Partners

A place for health and wellbeing

‘Heritage has a strong role to play in improving wellbeing for people in the UK. By bringing us together at all stages of our lives, building connectedness and a sense of belonging in our neighbourhoods, supporting individual confidence and self-esteem, and providing opportunities for people to be active, heritage projects can make a significant contribution to the way people feel about their lives.’

– National Lottery Wellbeing Guidance

Working with organisations such as Orb Community Arts who are experts in this area, we will support wellbeing under each of the New Economic Foundations ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’:

Connect – Building connections enriches your life and improves wellbeing. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal can provide a place where visitors and communities can connect with family and friends in the outdoors, surrounded by the gardens and parklands and the wildlife they support.

Be active – Park Run has been hosted at the WHS for around ten years. As part of our events programme we also deliver wildlife and deer walks and have been working in partnership with organisations like Orb Community Arts and Pioneer Projects to create an adult and children wellbeing trail.

Take Notice – Being curious, experiencing beauty, noticing the world around you and reflecting on your experiences all contribute towards good wellbeing. Our seasonal programming aims to bring people closer to the natural beauty of the WHS, the changing seasons and encourage curious minds to discover more. The tranquillity of the water garden and the deer parks are perfect settings to pause and reflect.

Keep learning – Trying something new and learning new things increases confidence as well as being fun. Our daily guided tours of the abbey and the water garden and our programme of wider heritage management learning opportunities give those interested the chance to keep learning about the WHS, nature and climate change.

Give – This can involve volunteering your time, having a sense of purpose and being part of a wider community. At Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal our volunteers work as part of teams, giving people the chance to connect with others and providing a valuable role in management and conservation of heritage and nature. Volunteers are also taking action to tackle climate change in the WHS and beyond our boundaries.

Opportunities to develop community engagement at a sub-regional level

During the next plan period we will also be exploring our role in North Yorkshire, the wider interest led community and worldwide visitors and stakeholders.

The new council for North Yorkshire has started to work with partners to set out its

priorities for the years ahead. For culture, leisure and sport the strategy is to have a local focus but global ambition. Culture, leisure and sport are placed at the heart of the Council’s agenda for growth. The WHS, as a cultural site and heritage attraction, also has a role to play in delivering Council priorities such as better health, tackling climate change, tackling rural isolation and loneliness and offering young people a stimulating place in which to live and work.

Developing international partnerships and cultural connections

Our relationships are not only local, but national and global. Through our World Heritage networks we can access a community of organisations and sites and share best practice.

International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) and other World Heritage Sites – Through INTO, a network of international heritage organisations across the world, and the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) we are sharing skills and knowledge on addressing the impacts of climate change.

INTO has been granted additional funding by the UK Cultural Protection Fund of £1.6 million to use on the ‘Withstanding change: heritage amongst climate uncertainty’ project to work on climate resilience in global historic places and connect organisations across the Middle East, East Africa and the UK. Through participation in these initiatives and others like them, we will continue to develop international partnerships and share learning on tackling the global challenge of climate change.

We will also continue to work collaboratively with other WHSs both within the National Trust and around the world.

Joining the Cultural Routes Programme

– The Cultural Routes Programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe encourage people to discover the rich and diverse heritage of Europe by bringing people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage. They cover a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to the major figures of European art, music and literature.

We are interested in joining the Historic Gardens Cultural Route which has 38 gardens in nine different countries already signed up. Members are historic gardens and institutions with a shared interest in protecting and promoting the heritage of historic gardens and include the Villa D’Este in Italy and the Pena Park Garden in Sintra, Portugal. There are no members currently in the UK.



Skill team visit to Uganda in 2022

Actions to deliver this objective:

P1 Strengthen relationship with Skell Valley Partners and develop a legacy for the Skell Valley Project

P2 Maintain key partnerships set out in the Key Stakeholders Diagram

P3 Through stakeholder mapping with key relationship owners, ensure a thorough understanding of the partnerships we need to continue, develop and strengthen to deliver the plan

P4 Develop projects and events and activities such as walks in nature to improve the wellbeing of staff, volunteers, visitors and communities

P5 Develop community engagement at sub-regional level

P6 Work with North Yorkshire Council to ensure we play our part in delivering the priorities for the new North Yorkshire Council and investigate opportunities to apply to the Shared Prosperity Fund

P7 Continue to work with INTO and other WHSs

P8 Apply to join the European Route of Historic Gardens, one of the cultural routes of the Council of Europe

P9 Continue to develop our relationship with other international sites and programmes such as other Cistercian WHSs



Seven Bridges Valley



Ripon market square

Objective Q: Optimise the positive impact of the site on the local and regional economy

Why is this objective important?

This WHS plays a key role in the local and regional economy. The site is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Yorkshire with approximately 600,000 visitors each year. It is a significant employer in the local area, sourcing a wide range of goods and services from the local economy.

As important as tourism is for the WHS itself, we are also working towards optimising the positive impact of the WHS on the local and regional economy. We will do this by working with partners to develop and deliver more collaborative activities that encourage visitors to stay in the local area.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

The current tourism landscape

The visitor economy makes up 14.3% of the economy in the Harrogate district. With a value of more than £600 million in 2019, it is the second largest driver of the Harrogate district economy, second only to the real estate sector.

As a long-standing tourist attraction in the area, the site has developed productive relationships with many stakeholders.

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal has been welcoming visitors for more than 300 years. The arrival of the railway in Ripon put Fountains Abbey firmly on the tourist trail. Since that time visitor numbers have steadily grown.

There have been several changes to the national and regional tourism landscape and the way regional Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) deliver and organise their work:

- **June 2021:** 80% of businesses in Ripon ratified at referendum a vote to create a Ripon Business Improvement District (BID). Ripon BID, funded by a levy on local firms, focuses on ideas to drive footfall to the city. The BID area not only covers the city centre but the whole city region, including the WHS. The site is a full member of the BID, and representatives from the estate regularly attend Visit Ripon meetings, hosted by the BID. The BID has created a new website, aimed at both businesses and consumers, and a significant aspect of their work is creating promotions that aim to attract visitors.
- **September 2021:** the de Bois review of DMOs, was published.
- **March 2022:** Yorkshire's main tourism body Welcome to Yorkshire went into administration.
- **July 2022:** the government published their response to the de Bois review. The response recognised that DMOs are a vital part of England's tourism landscape, connecting with local businesses and government agencies to attract investment and visitors across the regions and boosting the visitor economy. For this to happen the government sees it necessary to transform the DMO landscape at a local level and address long running concerns about the structure, funding models and fragmentation of England's DMO landscape. £4 million has been allocated to Visit Britain and Visit England to develop an accreditation scheme for DMOs, which will be renamed Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). The funding will also be used to develop a pilot of the tiering model proposed in the report in one region of the country.
- **April 2023:** North Yorkshire Council replaced the previous county council and seven district and borough councils. 'Destination Harrogate' is the Harrogate district's DMO which showcases Harrogate and the surrounding areas to grow the visitor economy and attract inward investment.
- **April 2023 onwards:** A bid is due to be submitted for North Yorkshire to apply to become a North Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) to promote the new North Yorkshire council area. As part of the preparatory work for that LVEP application a new Destination Development Plan will be produced to provide a clear strategic framework on

which to build a fit-for-purpose tourism development delivery model for the new council. Following the LVEP application process there is also a plan to retain a Yorkshire-wide destination strategy which could see a partnership of a selection of DMOs across Yorkshire.

Given the fundamental changes outlined above, it is more important than ever to maintain strong networks and partnerships with key stakeholders whilst also ensuring we are clear about the contribution we can make, by influencing and advocating for an approach to tourism that delivers the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our vision for sustainable tourism

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism as 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'.

According to UNESCO, tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the Sustainable Development Goals. Recent research has shown that consumer attitudes to travel are changing. The website booking.com is a mainstream, mass market booking channel. In their 'Sustainable Travel Report 2021' they identified awareness of the impact of travel for consumers is at an all-time high. They found that the biggest impact concerns for visitors include:

- excess waste – 43%
- threats to wildlife and natural habitats – 38%

- overcrowding popular sights or destinations – 34%
- CO2 emissions – 22%

The booking.com survey also uncovered that:

- 63% of travellers believe we have to act now to save the planet for future generations
- 74% believe increasing cultural understanding and preservation of heritage is crucial
- 68% want to ensure the economic impact of the industry is spread equally in all levels of society
- 65% want to have authentic experiences that are representative of the local culture when they travel

Delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals, sustainably managing the WHS and protecting its outstanding universal value requires an approach rooted in the principles of sustainable tourism. There is a recognition among key local partners, and in the wider industry that a more sustainable approach to tourism is needed and the site is well placed to play a significant role in both championing and advocating for this approach with partners and assisting with the delivery of key local initiatives.

Using the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme as inspiration, during this plan period we will deliver coordinated and collaborative activity with key partners that will focus on offering deeper, richer visitor experiences close to the site. This approach will:

- through our stakeholder network, champion and role model a sustainable tourism approach
- highlight the local distinctiveness of Ripon and its rural environs to inspire visitors to experience more of the local area instead of travelling further afield
- help visitors to adopt more responsible behaviours when they visit the area
- build local and civic pride, that contributes to a sense of responsibility for the WHS and the wider cultural and natural heritage in the Ripon area
- ensure visitors to the WHS have the information they need to extend their stay/visit in the local area
- consider how we can reduce the carbon impact of visitor travel in line with National Trust initiatives

We will deliver this vision primarily:

- (i) through the 'Tourism Development in the Skell Valley Project'
- (ii) by being a member of Destination Harrogate's 'Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group'
- (iii) by being a signatory to the 'UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge'

SKELL VALLEY PROJECT



Focus on the Skell Valley Project

As part of Tourism Development in the Skell Valley Project, a tourism marketing consultant with excellent knowledge of the local area has been appointed to create and drive activity that encourages visitors to stay longer, spend more and act more sustainably when they are in the area as well as inspiring a local audience to get out and visit too.

In partnership with the BID and Visit Ripon, and incorporating themes from Destination Harrogate's DMP, a Strategic Marketing Action Plan for Ripon and the surrounding area has been created as part of this project.

The Strategic Marketing Action Plan will highlight Ripon's local distinctiveness and, working with Ripon Civic Society, content will be created that tourism businesses in Ripon can use to inform their marketing activity. A collaborative calendar will be created for businesses to align their marketing activity around key themes. The Strategic Marketing Action Plan will also encourage longer stays and less travel with 'doorstep delights' and deeper experiences. It will highlight nature, wellbeing and local retail and food, helping visitors to become absorbed by all that Ripon has to offer.

For businesses, 'How-to' resources will be created to encourage visitors to behave more sustainably.

A series of marketing workshops are being delivered in Ripon that will promote the Strategic Marketing Action Plan, encourage businesses to get involved and increase marketing skills.

An online hub will also be created where businesses can access resources that help to refine their marketing activity.

Destination Harrogate – Responsible Tourism Strategy

Destination Harrogate recently published their Destination Management Plan 2022–23. Within this plan it commits to ‘Work with partners to develop a Responsible Tourism Strategy in order to be recognised as a destination for responsible tourism by 2030.’

Their objectives are:

- 1. Develop and implement a Responsible Tourism Strategy
- 2. By 2030, become recognised as a destination for responsible tourism
- 3. Minimise the negative environmental and social impacts of tourism, and enhance the economic and cultural benefits for visitors, businesses and residents
- 4. Develop Harrogate District as a place where sustainable choices are embedded and easily identifiable across our visitor offering
- 5. Create a district-wide sense of pride in its responsible tourism identity

In their action plan they determine a series of activities under the themes of destination management, advocacy, product development, transport, digital and marketing/campaign development.

Destination Harrogate have recently formed a Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group which will shape activity over the coming years.

UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge

The UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge, which we signed in 2022, aims to promote sustainable travel, community resilience and heritage conservation globally. By signing the Pledge, we have publicly committed to action that will reduce the environmental impact of our business, raising awareness to travellers and helping them to make more sustainable travel choices.

Being a local employer and using local goods and services

The National Trust employs around 90 permanent staff and 25 seasonal staff which makes it a significant employer in the region and locality. Our seasonal staff teams often include younger people and students. We will be working to retain our staff numbers over the next plan period.

The WHS also contributes to the local and regional economy by being a significant purchaser of local goods and services.

Actions to deliver this objective:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Q1 Engage in North Yorkshire Council’s process to create a Destination Development Plan and become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership | Q6 Continue to be an active member of the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group |
| Q2 Create and, together with partners, champion and deliver the Strategic Marketing Action Plan for Ripon and its rural environs | Q7 Shape a Responsible Tourism Strategy for the District and incorporate any activity that delivers our approach to sustainable tourism into our annual business and marketing plans |
| Q3 Create sustainability ‘how-to’ guides for businesses | Q8 Ensure the learnings from the ‘Tourism Development in the Skell Valley’ project are shared with the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group and within the National Trust |
| Q4 Deliver marketing workshops that champion the strategic marketing action plan and improve business marketing skills | Q9 Continue to be a signatory of the UNESCO Travel Pledge and deliver any associated outcomes |
| Q5 Create an online hub for tourism businesses to access resources | |

Objective R: Ensure sustainable access to the WHS by broadening opportunities to travel by bus, bike or on foot

Why is this objective important?

We are aware from surveys carried out to date that most National Trust visitors do not frequently use public transport to travel to our site. Further, the forms of public transport to reach the site are limited. If we can make it easier and more affordable for people to access the site that will help more people to have access to its health and wellbeing benefits.

The location of the site makes this objective challenging as our site is around 11 miles from the closest railway stations (Thirsk or Harrogate) so travel by bus, cycling or travel on foot are the most sustainable alternative forms of transport to travel by car. While bus connections to Ripon from Leeds and Harrogate are reasonable, there are limited fixed bus routes to our site.

How will we work to achieve this objective over the next plan period?

Encouraging travel by bus

The only fixed bus service throughout the year from Ripon to Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is the 139 from Ripon on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

In 2022 we continued the trial of subsidising a bus that runs from York to Grassington, via Fountains Abbey on Sundays and bank holidays. We will continue to subsidise this service in the coming years. We also subsidised a service that ran from York to Harrogate, then on to the WHS and then to Brimham Rocks. The uptake for this service was minimal, so we will not be subsidising this route in the future. We are keen to support bus travel and will be both looking into other opportunities and reviewing our transport strategy during this plan period.

We will also promote travel by bus on the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal website and in our marketing communities on social media.

Yorbus was a flexible on demand bus service pilot scheme provided by North Yorkshire County Council. It started operating in July 2021 on Mondays – Saturdays and connected Ripon, this site, Masham, Bedale and surrounding villages. We had hoped that the Yorbus pilot scheme would develop into a permanent additional bus service for our site but the pilot was not continued after June 2023. We will support future transport initiatives that follow the Yorbus pilot scheme.

The Way of the Roses cycle route runs through the Studley Royal Deer Park



Working with partners to improve public transport to the site

Representatives from Transdev (a prominent bus company in the Harrogate district) and London North Eastern Railway (LNER) sit on Destination Harrogate's Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group. Research, undertaken by Destination Harrogate, has shown that the most frequent question at tourism information centres around the district regarding public transport is how to travel to the WHS by bus. Together with Transdev, LNER and other partners such as Ripon BID, Nidderdale AONB and other Ripon attractions we will investigate how to improve public transport to the site during this plan period. This may involve a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a national funding programme created by the government that North Yorkshire Council administer for the government. £16.9 million is potentially available to the county with the aim of building pride and increasing life chances.

We will work with Ripon BID and the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group to deliver the action in the Destination Management Plan (DMP) to, 'Improve and promote public transport connections into and around the Harrogate district, including exploring opportunities to connect visitors with Ripon via Thirsk train station.'

Other measures to promote more sustainable travel options

The National Trust is conscious that many of its places are in rural locations and that most visitors arrive by car. Visitor travel by private car is the biggest source of carbon emitted in connection with the WHS so we are taking the steps set out below to reduce travel by car and to promote more sustainable travel options.

Encouraging travel by electric vehicles

During the last plan period we added six electric vehicle charging points at our main visitor centre for visitors to use and plan to increase this in the coming years. We also have plans to add electric vehicle charging points to half of the holiday cottages on the estate.

This will also help to deliver the action in Destination Harrogate's DMP to 'improve the network of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points.'

Incentives and promotion of green transport options

We have trialled schemes in which we offered incentives to visitors who travelled to the WHS by bus, bike or on foot. We will reintroduce these during the plan period and monitor their impact. We will also promote alternative transport options both on the National Trust website and social media.

Some local attractions are using the website www.goodjourney.org.uk. This website promotes car free journeys and attractions offer a discount on entry as an incentive to travel by public transport. Other large tourist attractions in the area are using the scheme such as Harewood House and Royal Horticultural Society, Harlow Carr. Both are currently well served by regular established bus routes. Should we be able to improve the bus service to the site, we will offer an incentive on this website to encourage more sustainable travel.

The National Trust has also actively encouraged cyclists for several years and the opportunities around cycling in the area have increased significantly since the Way of the Roses route was formed, passing directly through the deer park. The Way of the Roses is a coast-to-coast route linking Morecambe to Bridlington. Although the Way of the Roses continues to Ripon, part of the route is on the main road.

Walking trails

We will both support future developments from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and work with Ripon Civic Society and other partners to develop walking trails to better connect the WHS with urban areas and the surrounding countryside.

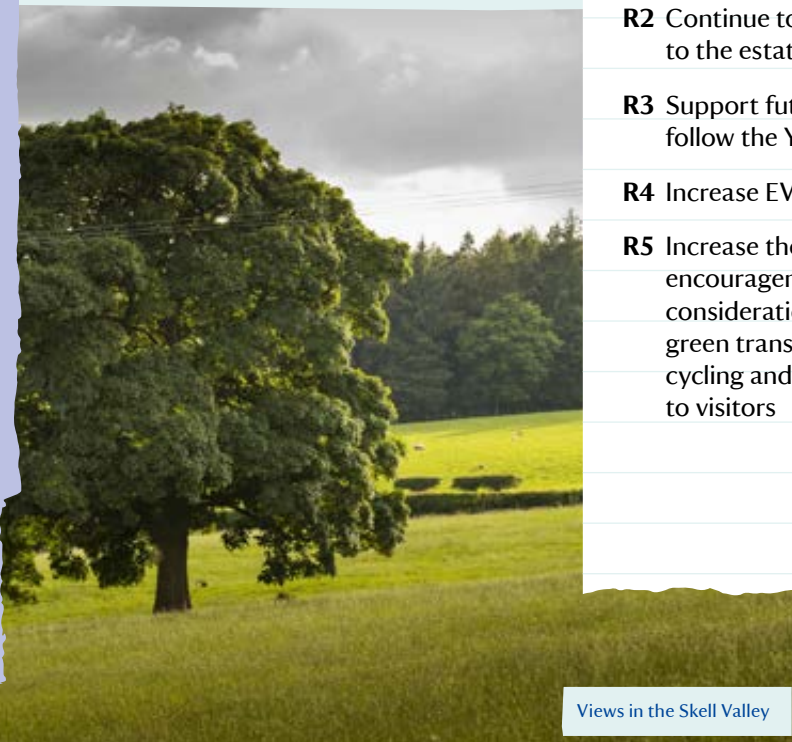
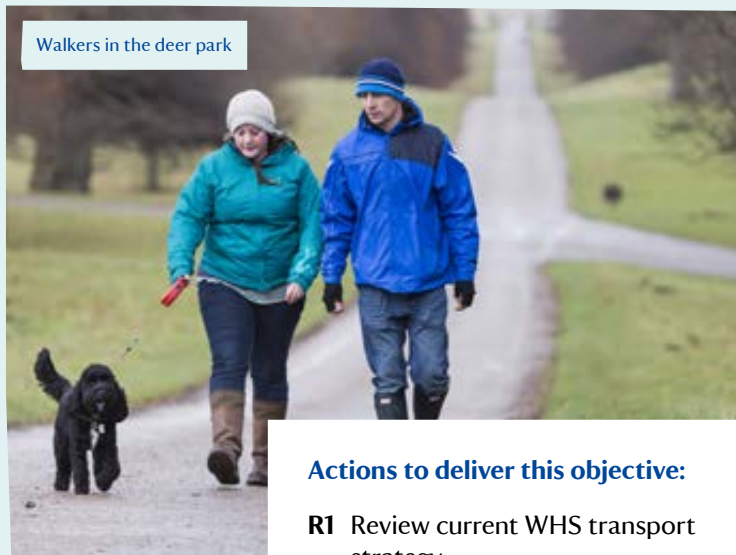
Promoting sustainable travel through the planning system

We will ensure that any new proposals for housing development in Ripon include sustainable travel links to the WHS. Through the planning process we will negotiate with developers for footpath and access improvements as part of new development proposals in Ripon and on the edge of Ripon.

Focus on the Skell Valley Project

We will improve footpaths, wayfinding, interpretation and visitor information in the Skell Valley to break down the barriers that have discouraged people from exploring this area before as part of 'Exploring the Skell Valley'. Improving access will bring the health and wellbeing benefits of getting out into nature to previously unengaged audiences and will improve connectivity between different locations in the area, particularly from the City of Ripon into the countryside. Local people, community groups and visitors to the area will be given the opportunity to learn more about the unique cultural and natural heritage in the Skell Valley and inspire more people to take action to celebrate and protect it. One of the walking trails will be fully accessible for trampers and pushchairs and will better connect the centre of Ripon with the WHS, encouraging local residents and visitors to take in the countryside and leave the car at home.

Walkers in the deer park



Views in the Skell Valley

Actions to deliver this objective:

- | | |
|---|---|
| R1 Review current WHS transport strategy | R6 Together with the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group, investigate opportunities to bid for funding from the 'Shared Prosperity Fund' to improve public transport to the site |
| R2 Continue to subsidise bus travel to the estate | |
| R3 Support future initiatives which follow the Yorbus pilot | R7 Deliver the 'Exploring the Skell Valley' project and develop walking trails with Ripon Civic Society and other partners to connect the WHS with urban areas and the countryside |
| R4 Increase EV charging points | |
| R5 Increase the promotion and encouragement (including consideration of incentives) of green transport options including cycling and walking available to visitors | R8 Support future developments from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) |
| | R9 Ensure that any new proposals for housing development in Ripon include sustainable travel links to the WHS |

Chapter 5: Action plan

A family explore the Temple of Fame



Theme 1: Overall management approach

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
A Ensure sustainable management to maintain the outstanding universal value of the WHS and contribute to wider UN and UNESCO goals	A1 Hold a workshop to produce a list of components constituting the attributes of the OUV of the WHS	List of components	SG		X					
	A2 Review membership of the World Heritage Site Steering Group		SG		X					
	A3 Continue to hold an annual stakeholder event and produce annual progress reports for partners	Annual events and reports	Stakeholders	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	A4 Develop an Evaluation Framework for monitoring the delivery of actions and key outcomes of the World Heritage Site Management Plan	Delivery of WHS Plan	SG		X					
	A5 Working in partnership with the UKNC for UNESCO, WHUK, Newcastle University and local partners and communities, trial approaches to deliver the Promoting Peace project		UKNC for UNESCO WHUK Newcastle University NT RCS R.Cathedral Connecting Ripon		X	X				
	A6 Input to peace initiatives in Ripon and the surrounding area		NT The Poppy Group Ripon Military History Trust Ripon Museums Trust Ripon Cathedral		X	X				
	A7 Identify current practices and further mechanisms to deliver and support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals		SG Stakeholders		X	X				
	A8 Work collaboratively with other UNESCO designated sites and WHUK to share knowledge and experience in sustainable management		NT WHUK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	A9 Ensure that we continue to develop innovative approaches to delivery of the SDGs and share our learning widely		NT WHUK UKNC for UNESCO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B Retain the distinctiveness, sense of historical continuity and peaceful beauty of the site	B1 Complete the Quiet Garden and continue to develop spaces within the gardens where visitors can find calm and contemplation		NT	X						
	B2 Review measures for managing visitor pressure during peak periods such as summer holidays and Bank Holidays		NT		X					
	B3 Implement policies to protect the green and peaceful setting to the WHS and capture this aspect of setting in the Settings Study		NT NAONB NYC		X	X				

Theme 1: Overall management approach

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
C Ensure there are adequate and sustainable financial resources to manage the WHS and support the staff and volunteers that work there	C1 Deliver the key priorities to maintain and diversify WHS income	% increase annual income Visitor numbers	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	C2 Complete and deliver Fundraising Plan	Annual grants/ legacy income	NT		X					
	C3 Explore how marketing knowledge can be shared better by WHSs in the North		NT Northern WHSs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	C4 Deliver an annual marketing action plan that delivers 'Everyone Welcome' and promotes the values of World Heritage		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	C5 Continue to carry out staff surveys and invest in staff training and wellbeing	Staff satisfaction scores	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	C6 Promote the National Trust Staff Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme at the WHS	Number of staff volunteering under scheme	NT		X	X	X	X	X	X
	C7 Develop proposals for more office, retail and interpretation space at the Visitor Centre		NT			X				
D Maintain excellent presentation standards and visitor infrastructure	D1 Use the National Trust Visitor Journey Toolkit to ensure excellent presentation standards and deliver a beautiful and welcoming experience for all	Condition of visitor infrastructure	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	D2 Develop and deliver the Studley Revealed Project		NT	X	X					
	D3 Improve the standard of visitor infrastructure including West Gate car park resurfacing, Visitor Centre car park signage and EV charging points and Visitor Centre upgrade		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E Ensure the conservation and enhancement of the WHS, its buffer zone and the wider setting are taken into account in the preparation and implementation of planning, regulatory and policy documents which might affect it	E1 Ensure that with the transition to a new planning authority, robust and up to date planning policies will be kept in place to ensure protection of the WHS, buffer zone and setting	Inclusion of WHS policies in new development plan covering the area	NYC NT HE	X	X					
	E2 Raise awareness of the OUV and managing change in the WHS, buffer zone and setting for planners and other decision-makers		NYC NT HE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	E3 Finalise and adopt policies which protect the OUV of the WHS, its buffer zone and setting in the new North Yorkshire Local Plan		NYC NT HE NAONB Ripon City Council RCS Local parish councils	X	X					
	E4 Delivery of a programme of development in the WHS to improve visitor infrastructure, interpretive installations for visitors and conservation works		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Theme 1: Overall management approach

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
	E5 Commission a Settings Study for the WHS		NT SG NAONB Ripon City Council RCS Local parish councils		X	X				
	E6 Produce a new Landscape Character Assessment for the new North Yorkshire Council area		NYC NT NAONB			X	X			
F Ensure the boundaries of the WHS include the area that gives the site its outstanding universal value	F1 Through delivery of the Skell Valley Project, research and improve our understanding of the wider Studley Royal designed landscape to inform a future boundary review	Area of the WHS	Skell Valley Partnership HE	X	X	X				
	F2 Continue to develop partnerships with neighbouring landowners to agree conservation works to heritage features at risk which are part of the Studley Royal designed landscape		NT Neighbouring landowners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Theme 2: Conservation and climate action

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
G Ensure the highest standards of conservation management and enhancement of the whole site. This includes the garden and designed landscape, built heritage and archaeology and the natural heritage of the site	G1 Deliver a prioritised programme of conservation work to conserve and enhance the attributes of the OUV	% improvement in condition of land, buildings and collections	NT EHT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	G2 Work with Natural England and other partners to produce a Parkland Plan for the Studley Royal and Mackershaw Deer Parks	% of archaeological sites monitored	NT NE HE EHT	X	X					
	G3 Work with Nidderdale AONB and other partners to play our part in delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy for North Yorkshire (priority habitats include grasslands and fresh water)		NT NAONB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	G4 Work with Nidderdale AONB to review condition of SINC		NT NAONB		X					
	G5 Carry out more detailed survey and mapping of geology in the WHS with local geology groups		NT Local geology groups				X	X		
	G6 Produce a catalogue of building stones used in the WHS and identify sources of building stone for repairs		NT				X	X		
	G7 Working with EHT, create a new display area at Swanley Barn to exhibit and interpret the abbey stone collection		NT EHT		X	X	X			
	G8 Through our Masonry Centre of Excellence provide apprenticeship opportunities and engagement activities for training in traditional skills		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	G9 Set up a Heritage and Archaeology Ranger Team to monitor archaeological sites		NT	X	X					

Theme 2: conservation and climate action

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
H Play our part in tackling climate change and its impact on the WHS	H1 In partnership with other WHSs carry out a Climate Vulnerability Index for the WHS	Carbon emissions and sequestration (tonnes CO2e)	NT Other WHSs			X				
	H2 Continue to deliver the Skell Valley Project with Nidderdale AONB and farmers and landowners upstream to mitigate the impact of flooding and siltation on the WHS		Skell Valley Partnership Farmers Landowners	X	X	X				
	H3 Produce a Legacy Plan as part of the Skell Valley Project to continue to develop Natural Flood Management works upstream and put in place maintenance plans		Skell Valley Partnership NT		X	X				
	H4 Deliver the RACE programme of measures to move the WHS towards carbon net zero by 2030		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	H5 Work collaboratively with other WHSs through the WHUK Climate Change Network and the UKNC for UNESCO to share learning on climate change		WHUK-CCN UKNC for UNESCO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I Develop with partners, long term measures to manage the recurrent problems affecting the water features that arise from the river catchment	I1 Deliver the Skell Valley Project from 2021-25	Number of days WHS flooded	Skell Valley Partnership	X	X	X				
	I2 Develop a legacy plan for the project which sets out how we continue to protect the WHS by engaging with farmers, landowners and communities beyond 2025	Flow levels and turbidity	NT Skell Valley Partnership Farmers Landowners		X	X				
	I3 Prepare and deliver a Water Management Plan for the WHS		NT EA		X					
J Minimise the impact of the Shoot on access and on the historic and natural environment and woodland management	J1 Seek to acquire the shooting rights that cover the WHS, should they become available	Woodland Management Plan condition assessment	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	J2 Produce a Woodland Management Plan to improve the condition of woodlands in the WHS		NT	X	X					
	J3 Carry out a condition assessment of the impact of the shooting rights on the WHS		NT					X		
	J4 Work with the Shoot owners and other partners to ensure that historical features connected to the WHS and in Shoot ownership are protected and their condition is stable		NT HE Shoot owners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
K Facilitate and encourage research to improve the knowledge and understanding of the site to inform its management. Ensure the research is shared	K1 Work with partners to develop and publish online a research framework to ensure that we understand current levels of knowledge and develop future research questions. Ensure that this is done in line with the National Trust Strategic Framework for Research and Historic England's Research Framework format	Number of research projects	NT WYAS HE Local history & research groups Universities and colleges				X			
	K2 Take advantage of the National Trust's position as an Independent Research Organisation to encourage academic research projects at the WHS	Number of digital records	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	K3 Develop active research projects drawn from the research framework, working with a new community research group (citizen researchers), academic and community partners and individuals		NT WYAS HE Local history & research groups Universities and colleges				X	X	X	X
	K4 Seek to promote the results of research in publications, online and at conferences		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	K5 Carry out feasibility study to look at potential for a publicly accessible digital archive and a research library at the WHS		NT				X			

Theme 3: Access, inspiration and learning

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
L Ensuring the WHS better reflects the changing communities we serve	L1 Continue to embed an inclusive culture in our staff and volunteer teams	Access standards improvements (£s spent) Visitor survey data	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L2 Deliver a programme of Inclusive Service Training to all staff		NT Other partners such as Every Day Racism	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L3 Promote and deliver a range of free entry options aimed at target audiences		NT Connecting Ripon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L4 Continue to present a positive image of disabled people and those from other underrepresented groups in marketing materials		NT RDF	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L5 Work with Ripon Library to provide hard copy information about upcoming events or access provisions		NT Ripon library		X	X	X	X	X	X
	L6 Work towards achieving NT bronze, silver and gold access standards including reviewing the access leaflet		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L7 Work with local disability groups to seek their input to proposed access improvements in the WHS and a regular review of the current access provision		NT RDF	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L8 Deliver the Exploring the Skell Valley, Nature on your Doorstep and Watery Wildlife project which are all part of the wider Skell Valley Project		Skell Valley Partnership Local community groups	X	X	X				
	L9 Deliver an annual programme of nature activities for communities and visitors across the whole WHS		NT OCA Henshaws Jenny Ruth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L10 Explore partnerships with the arts and cultural sectors to provide exhibitions, interpretation, events and activities to use the history and culture of the WHS to bring people together and increase the diversity of visitors		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	L11 Prepare a Community Engagement Plan which sets out how we will work with under-represented groups and the organisations that support them		NT HADCA Connecting Ripon		X	X				
	L12 Continue to translate our welcome materials into 12 foreign languages and explore providing this digitally		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Theme 3: access, inspiration and learning

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
M Ensuring an excellent visitor experience that continues to attract and inspire people	M1 Deliver the Interpretation Strategy and the Visitor Programming Plan	Visitor satisfaction scores	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	M2 Work with communities and local partners to develop and deliver the Skell Interpretation Plan		Skell Valley Partnership	X	X	X				
	M3 New site programming team to work with external partners on exhibitions and interpretation		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	M4 Improve electricity and Wi-Fi provision estate wide		NT		X	X	X	X	X	X
	M5 Develop opportunities for digital interpretation. Priorities include providing digital access to the Fountains Abbey collection		NT Bradford University		X					
	M6 Deliver the Studley Revealed Project including delivery of the interpretation hub which will have a water garden and deer park focus		NT		X	X				
	M7 Reinterpreting and presenting the Banqueting House, the Octagon Tower and Temple of Piety		NT		X	X				
	M8 Establish a vision for Quebec		NT	X	X					
	M9 Improved interpretation for main Visitor Centre (including adding large map(s) to Visitor Centre car parks and estate)		NT	X	X					
	M10 Trial and evaluate different interpretative and programming approaches for Fountains Hall including providing opportunities for wider access to Fountains Hall (such as to the basement and the chapel room) as part of tours and heritage open days		NT	X	X	X	X	X		
	M11 Develop a long-term strategy for Fountains Hall		NT	X	X	X	X	X		
	M12 Improve the abbey interpretation		NT Bradford University EHT	X	X					
	M13 Deliver programme of interpretation and activities exploring wildlife and heritage in the Deer Park including the addition of waymarked trails and an easy access trail		NT RDF Experience Community CIC	X	X					
	M14 Expand opportunities to promote the WHS to new audiences through filming		NT Screen Yorkshire	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	M15 Prepare and plan for 900th anniversary of the founding of Fountains Abbey in 2032 (Fountains 900)		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Theme 3: access, inspiration and learning

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
N Share our knowledge, experience and understanding of the WHS and learn from others	N1 Maintain a self-led learning resource for school children	Increase in school visits Number of apprenticeships	NT Local schools / colleges	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	N2 Continue to develop and strengthen targeted relationships with local schools, colleges, universities and centres of learning		NT Local schools / colleges / unis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	N3 Look into options to support schools with their travel costs to the WHS		NT		X	X	X	X	X	X
	N4 Learn from the National Trust Children and Young People hubs		NT	X	X	X				
	N5 Working in partnership with organisations to deliver the Programme of Wider Heritage Management Learning Opportunities		NT Universities and colleges ICOMOS-UK YGT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	N6 Provide training for traditional skills/ craftsmanship via apprenticeships, conservation in action events and workshops		NT Hamish Ogston Foundation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	N7 Share learning from the Skell Valley Project through the UK network of other WHSs		Skell Valley Partnership	X	X	X	X			
	N8 Explore opportunities to involve young people in the management of the WHS		NT HADCA			X	X			
	N9 Continuing to work collaboratively with the International National Trusts Organisation		NT INTO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	N10 Deliver other international learning opportunities and information exchange		NT International WHSs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
O Provide diverse volunteering opportunities that encourage active involvement and inspire support for the WHS	O1 Continue to identify opportunities to develop new volunteer roles that support the needs of the site	No of volunteer hours % of volunteers who would recommend working for the NT	NT Volunteers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	O2 Continue to use the National Trust's annual volunteer survey supplemented by estate specific surveys to evaluate the success of volunteering and address any concerns		NT Volunteers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	O3 Invest in volunteer training, both role specific and general, including continuing to update the volunteer estate handbook		NT Volunteers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	O4 Continue to develop the confidence and expertise of all staff who manage volunteers		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	O5 Offer regular work experience placements to school and college pupils in the local area and ensure that their experience is meaningful and enjoyable		NT Local schools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	O6 Consult volunteers during the initiation of new projects and ideas to involve them in the management of the site		NT Volunteers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	O7 Identify current barriers to people volunteering with the aim of providing more diverse volunteering opportunities		NT Volunteers Skell Valley Partnership, HADCA		X	X				
	O8 Deliver Volunteering City of Ripon Project as part of the Skell Valley Project		HADCA Skell Valley Partnership	X	X	X				

Theme 4: Local community links and partnerships

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
P Create strong partnerships with local communities and other local, regional and national stakeholders in order to deliver our aim and objectives	P1 Strengthen relationship with Skell partners and develop legacy for the partnership	Community organisation involvement in WHS	Skell Valley Partnership LEPs Local farmers & businesses	X	X	X				
	P2 Maintain key partnerships set out in the Key Stakeholders Diagram		NT Various partners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	P3 Through stakeholder mapping with key relationship owners, ensure a thorough understanding of the partnerships we need to continue, develop and strengthen to deliver the plan		NT Various partners		X	X	X	X	X	X
	P4 Develop projects and events and activities such as walks in nature to improve the wellbeing of staff, volunteers, visitors and communities		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	P5 Develop community engagement at sub-regional level		NT			X	X	X	X	X
	P6 Work with NYC to ensure we play our part in delivering the priorities for the new North Yorkshire Council and investigate opportunities to apply to the Shared Prosperity Fund		NT NYC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	P7 Continue to work with INTO and other WHSs		NT INTO CCFU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	P8 Apply to join the European Route of Historic Gardens, one of the cultural routes of the Council of Europe		NT ERHG				X			
	P9 Continue to develop our relationship with other international sites and programmes such as other Cistercian WHSs		NT INTO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q Optimise the positive impact of the site on the local and regional economy	Q1 Engage in NYC's process to create a Destination Development Plan and become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership		NYC NT	X						
	Q2 Create and, together with partners, champion and deliver the Strategic Marketing Action Plan for Ripon and its rural environs.		Ripon BID Visit Ripon Destination Harrogate NT	X						
	Q3 Create sustainability 'how-to' guides for businesses		Ripon BID Visit Ripon Destination Harrogate NT	X						
	Q4 Deliver marketing workshops that champion the strategic marketing action plan and improve business marketing skills		Ripon BID Visit Ripon RCC NT	X	X					
	Q5 Create an online hub for tourism businesses to access resources		Visit Ripon Ripon BID RCC NT	X						

Theme 4: Local community links and partnerships

Objective	Action	Key Monitoring Indicators	Leader (in bold) & key partners	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
	Q6 Continue to be an active member of the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group		Destination Harrogate RTSG NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Q7 Shape a Responsible Tourism Strategy for the District and incorporate any activity that delivers our approach to sustainable tourism into our annual business and marketing plans		Destination Harrogate RTSG NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Q8 Ensure the learnings from the 'Tourism Development in the Skell Valley' project are shared with the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group and within the National Trust		Destination Harrogate Skell Valley Partnership RTSG	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Q9 Continue to be a signatory of the UNESCO Travel Pledge and deliver any associated outcomes		NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
R Ensure sustainable access to the WHS by broadening opportunities to travel by bus, bike or on foot	R1 Review current WHS transport strategy	% of visitors arriving by means other than car	NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	R2 Continue to subsidise bus travel to the estate		NT NYC Bus companies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	R3 Support future initiatives which follow the Yorbus pilot		NYC NT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	R4 Increase EV charging points		NT		X					
	R5 Increase the promotion and encouragement (including consideration of incentives) of green transport options including cycling and walking available to visitors		NT NAONB NYC Bus companies		X	X	X	X	X	X
	R6 Together with the Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group, investigate opportunities to bid for funding from the 'Shared Prosperity Fund' to improve public transport to the site		RTSG		X	X				
	R7 Deliver the 'Exploring the Skell Valley' project and develop walking trails with Ripon Civic Society and other partners to connect the WHS with urban areas and the countryside		Skell Valley Partnership RCS	X	X	X				
	R8 Support future developments from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)		NT NYC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	R9 Ensure that any new proposals for housing development in Ripon include sustainable travel links to the WHS		NT NYC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Abbreviations:	
CCFU	Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda
EA	Environment Agency
EHT	English Heritage Trust
ERHG	European Route of Historic Gardens
HADCA	Harrogate and District Community Action
HE	Historic England
ICOMOS-UK	International Council on Monuments and Sites
INTO	International National Trust Organisation
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
Nidderdale AONB	Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
NE	Natural England
NT	National Trust
NYC	North Yorkshire Council (formerly North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council)
OCA	Orb Community Arts
SG	World Heritage Site steering group: NT/ HE/EHT/ NYC/ ICOMOS-UK
Skell Valley Partnership	16 Skell Valley scheme partner organisations set out at page 95, led by the NT and NAONB
Stakeholders	See the diagram showing some of the WHS's main stakeholders on page 95
RCS	Ripon Civic Society
R.Cathedral	Ripon Cathedral
RDF	Ripon Disability Forum
Ripon BID	Ripon Business Improvement District
RTSG	Responsible Tourism Stakeholder Group
UKNC for UNESCO	UK National Commission for UNESCO
WHs	World Heritage Sites
WHUK	World Heritage UK
WHUK-CCN	World Heritage UK Climate Change Network
YGT	Yorkshire Gardens Trust





Chapter 6: Implementation and monitoring

Monitoring will take place regularly and the WHS Steering Group will meet twice a year to review progress on delivery of the plan. The monitoring process will include a review of the delivery of actions and key performance indicators set out in the six-year action plan

This process may involve analysing quantitative data such as the results of National Trust staff, visitor and volunteer surveys, looking at the 19 National Trust KPIs that the National Trust monitors across all of its properties and assessing financial performance. The new National Trust visitor survey will collect more detailed information than we have done in previous plan periods such as detail on visitors' socio-economic status which will enhance the evaluation and monitoring process. We are also now collecting more data than we have done previously through the property digital comment database and through sites such as TripAdvisor.

The Skell Valley Project work has involved much work on evaluation. We are keen to work with partners to further develop our evaluation framework for the management plan during the next plan period. The active involvement of partners will be essential to both the implementation of the plan and reviewing the effectiveness of its outcomes.