Playing our part

Across England, Wales and Northern Ireland we exceeded expectations, welcoming record numbers of visitors to our places, opening for longer and creating inspiring experiences in even more of our houses and countryside.

The National Trust’s strategy, Playing our part, is in its third year and we are well into the implementation stage, translating our ambitions for the Trust into the day-to-day activities of our staff and volunteers.

Conservation remains at the heart of all we do. This year we spent over £100 million – more than ever before – on the conservation of our houses, gardens, parks, coastline and countryside, among them Knole in Kent and in the Yorkshire Dales, about which you can read more in this review.

Public discourse in 2016 was dominated by the Brexit vote. We are already working together with our tenants, farming organisations and statutory bodies to rethink how agriculture can be publicly supported to produce the goods we need and support the wildlife we love. We will continue to contribute to this debate and to others that affect our charitable purpose.

None of our successes would be possible without the support of our members, donors, volunteers and staff. So, thank you for helping us to have another ‘best year ever’ in 2016/17.

Dame Helen Ghosh
Director-General

Tim Parker
Chairman
Looking after the places in our care

Conserving and providing access to our coast, countryside, historic homes and gardens remains our top priority. We continue to invest record amounts in major projects and day-to-day conservation, providing greater access and enjoyment for our visitors.

Knole Conservation Studio

Historic treasures secured as part of the largest restoration project in Trust history

In March 2017 a state-of-the-art conservation studio was opened at Knole in Kent. Part of the largest building and restoration project in the National Trust’s history, the studio houses a dedicated team of conservation specialists who work on paintings, furniture and objects from the property in front of some of Knole’s 149,000 annual visitors.

The £19.8 million restoration project, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and others, began in 2013 and also saw historic rooms at the sprawling medieval home reopened following work to transform the interiors, bringing the collections to life and protecting them for future generations to enjoy.

£19.8 million project

Quarry Bank Glasshouse restoration

A rare example of nineteenth-century craftsmanship protected

Staff, conservation experts and volunteers contributed to the reinstatement of 7,400 individual hand-blown glass panes – described as completing a jigsaw with missing pieces – to restore a rare glasshouse at Quarry Bank in Cheshire. The glasshouse is one of the earliest surviving curvilinear cast-iron glasshouses in the country and provided a wealth of produce for the owners. The conservation and repair work, made possible by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and numerous donations from The Wolfson Foundation and individuals who ‘sponsor a pane’, included remaking individual parts of the original iron framework using metal from melted-down automotive parts. A new biomass boiler now heats the central section of the glasshouse so that exotic plants can once again be grown inside.

7,400 glass panes reinstated

We can now share our expertise with our visitors who can see the latest conservation techniques in action and talk to our specialists about the work that goes into looking after some of the country’s most important treasures.”

Hannah Kay, General Manager

Other projects

Clandon – salvaging the ruins

At the end of July 2016, the salvage of the ruins of Clandon Park in Surrey was completed. Remarkable finds included survivals from the fire, like an 800-year-old Korean stoneware duck found 40 feet, and one storey, away from where it had been discovered. The house was reopened for special tours in 2016.

Kedleston Hall restored to glory

The return of the eighteenth century state bed to Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire in March 2017 (see cover) marked the completion of a 30-year restoration of the state rooms. Highly skilled traditional craftsmanship has brought back to life the decoration, precious gilt furniture and works of art. 1,500 metres of bespoke silk damask have been hung on the walls in the state apartment alone, painstakingly recreated from surviving scraps of the original fabric.

Quarry Bank Glasshouse restoration

We carried out archaeological, structural and historic research into the building which revealed that it is one of the earliest curvilinear hot houses in the country. We knew that we had something special and that we had to save it.

Eleanor Underhill, General Manager

£35,000 raised through nearly 200 donations to ‘sponsor a pane’

£19.8 million restoration project

Knole Conservation Studio

Historic treasures secured as part of the largest restoration project in Trust history

Impact Review 2016/17  |  5
Restoring a healthy, beautiful natural environment

The natural world is under threat. What was common is now rare. We’re working in partnership with others to help to restore a healthier, more beautiful natural environment, not just at our places but on a landscape scale across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A vision for the Yorkshire Dales

An evolving landscape – shaped by human activity for hundreds of years

In partnership with our tenant farmers, the Trust is working to create a landscape that does more for more people and the environment. Tenants are being helped to diversify, securing the future of their farms and protecting the natural environment. Over 100,000 trees have been planted on the Malham Tarn Estate and Upper Wharfdale, creating new habitats, improving water quality and silting management in the Dales’ rivers.

Some 3,500 hectares of blanket bog have been restored, trapping carbon and reducing flood risk. And, for the first time in 50 years, one of Britain’s most endangered mammals – the water vole – can be found in the Yorkshire Dales, following a National Trust reintroduction programme at Malham Tarn. 100 voles have been released and they will play an important part in the ecosystem, grazing areas of the riverbank and providing the space for rare plants to grow.

‘By reintroducing water voles to the Tarn, we hope to give these rare animals the chance to recolonise streams in the high Yorkshire Dales.’

Róisín Black, National Trust Ranger

‘We leave the field margins to grow out, which gives the birds cover for nesting. We leave the hary stubble out on the field over winter and we don’t trim the hedges back too often. It’s taken a while, but we’ve got used to things like seeing the stubble out on the field.’

Mike Tooze, Farmed at Lower Greenway for 45 years

Numbers have increased by 1,000% since 1991

Cirl buntings back on our farms

Bringing a rare species of bird back from the brink

Following a concerted effort by farmers, conservationists and volunteers, cirl bunting numbers have increased by 1,000% since 1991. More than one-tenth of Britain’s cirl buntings now breed on National Trust farms.

Cirl buntings were once found across the south of England. But by the 1980s there were just 100 pairs – forced into a pocket of south Devon by changes in farming, such as moves to sow cereal crops in winter rather than spring.

At Lower Greenway Farm, once owned by crime writer Agatha Christie and perched above the River Dart on Devon’s south coast, the number of cirl bunting pairs has doubled – to 23 last year – after years of conservation work by tenant farmer Mike Tooze, National Trust rangers and local volunteers. The buntings nest in arable field margins – one of fifty struggling ‘priority habitat’ types hand-picked by government as needing help.

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Impact Review 2016/17 | 6
Experiences that move, teach and inspire

We want all of our visitors to come away from our places having had rewarding and stimulating experiences. We are working hard to make visits interesting, relevant and enjoyable.

Powis Castle

Remembering the Battle of the Somme 100 years on

One hundred years after the Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916, some of the 154,000 visitors to Powis Castle in Wales were transported back in time to experience life in the trenches during the First World War. The installation, which transformed the castle’s empty basement rooms into a full-scale replica trench and officers’ mess, told the story of Viscount Percy Cline, the eldest son and heir of the 4th Earl of Powis. As an officer in the Welsh Guard, he was fatally wounded during the Battle of the Somme. Drawing on a wealth of original letters and diaries, the team at Powis Castle, alongside a group of dedicated National Trust volunteers, were able to piece together the story from the battlefield and the emotions of Percy’s family who remained at home.

Visitors experienced the stark contrast between the splendour of the house where Percy grew up and the cramped, dimly lit conditions of the trenches, with overall visitor experience scores for Powis in 2016, up on the previous year.

It’s been a real eye-opener for us to share such an emotional, engaging story and to see visitors’ reactions. It has challenged us to find the wider resonance in more of our stories.

Gareth Sandham, House and Collections Manager

Croome Court

Expect the unexpected

The spirit of Croome, Worcestershire, has always been one of experimentation and trying new things. This approach was no different when some of the historic collection – absent for over 70 years – was returned in 2016. Croome has worked with artists to bring the stories of the newly returned collection to life, revealing their exquisite beauty in creative new ways as part of the HLF-supported Croome Redefined project.

Artist Bouke de Vries’ ‘Golden Box’ gave a unique perspective on the porcelain in Croome’s collection. The two-metre high reflective cube was a room within a room, adorned with pieces of Meissen, Worcester and Sèvres porcelain, allowing many of Croome’s 273,000 annual visitors to get close to the collection in an unusual way. Other installations included a tower of replica historic chairs, a poetic journey introducing Croome’s beginnings to the present day, and the ‘Treasures of Croome’, two eighteenth-century commodes made by famous cabinetmakers Mayhew & Ince.

Other projects

Trust New Art

Trust New Art connects people to our places through contemporary art. Since 2009 we have been working in partnership with Arts Council England, and from 2015 with the Arts Council of Wales, to create a programme of exhibitions, events and activities including visual arts and crafts, writing, sound, temporary architecture and performances inspired by our places, which have been experienced by over 3 million people.

‘Capability’ Brown at 300

In 2016 the Trust celebrated 300 years since the birth of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, the pioneering eighteenth-century landscape designer. Celebrations included art installations at Berrington Hall, Herefordshire, which won the Best Event and Exhibition Award at the 2017 Hudson’s Heritage Awards, over 28 lectures and an interactive sandbox, so visitors could mould their own landscapes.

Trusted Source

We are working with the University of Oxford to test ways of using academic research to improve visitors’ enjoyment of and engagement with historic places. This Knowledge Transfer Partnership project, supported by Innovate UK and AHRC, is consolidating a wealth of data into hundreds of short online articles.

nationaltrust.org.uk/ktp

Photograph ©National Trust/Steve Rawlins
Places where people live

We are continuing to find new ways to celebrate the heritage that connects people with the places that mean most to them, as well as working beyond our boundaries to help others find innovative solutions to problems of funding, engagement and development.

The future of public parks

A project to help find a sustainable future for public parks and green spaces

Public parks have a special place in the nation’s heart. However, as a non-statutory service, they are at risk due to significant reductions in many local authorities’ budgets.

Over the past year, the Trust has focused on making the case for the value of parks, not only as popular places to spend time, but as essential infrastructure for the health, resilience and economic success of our towns and cities. Working with Vivid Economics we developed the first set of Natural Capital Accounts for a whole city’s green space portfolio, and found that for every £1 spent on parks in the city, around £36 of benefits are generated.

In October 2016, we hosted a major conference, which brought together attendees from local authorities, national agencies and NGOs to identify the support they would need to effect change in how parks are funded and managed. We also launched futureparks.org, an online toolkit outlining our vision for parks and sharing live project learning with local authorities, which has received over 1,500 hits since launch.

Through our work, we have developed a partnership with Newcastle City Council. We will help them over the coming year through in-kind support and advice as they look to establish a charitable trust to care for their green estate.

£36 of benefits for every £1 spent

Other projects

Edge City: Croydon

An exploration of post-war politics, pride and place-making.

The National Trust delved into the contemporary heritage of Croydon, shining a spotlight on the borough as one of the most important examples of the post-war ambition to build a new society. Events included behind-the-scenes access to Fairfield Halls, which has played host to The Beatles, The Who and Morrissey, a Routemaster tour of Croydon, and film screenings of 1960s footage of the town on top of one of its famed seven multi-storey car parks.

Heritage Open Days

Treasuring local treasures.

8 – 11 September 2016 saw the 22nd annual Heritage Open Days festival weekend, coordinated by the Trust and supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery. Some 3 million visitors went to over 5,293 events across England, adding over £10 million to local economies. 40% of visitors had not visited a heritage site in the past 12 months, while 87% of visitors felt HODs made them appreciate their local area more.

The Green Academies Project

Connecting young people and their communities with the natural environment

The Green Academies Project (part of the Our Bright Future programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund) builds on a successful youth project in Birmingham where we’ve been working with partners to develop opportunities for young people to look after the environment in their communities and become advocates for nature. Young people have already spent 20,000 hours looking after Trust properties and local green spaces.

In Birmingham (Clent Hills), South London (Morden Hall Park), Greater Manchester (Dunham Massey and Quarry Bank), North East (Gibside) and Wrexham (Erddig) we are working alongside local partners in the youth, education and conservation sectors to develop volunteering programmes for young people. We are also providing opportunities for them to achieve training and qualifications, and deliver activities to engage the wider community with their local green spaces.
Growing support

Our places connect our visitors and the public with the richness of the past and the beauty of the natural world.

We rely on membership fees, donations and gifts in wills to protect and share the treasured and awe-inspiring places in our care, for ever.

Here are some examples of where your support is making a difference.

Our major fundraising campaign to reinvigorate the legacy of Sir Winston Churchill at his home, Chartwell in Kent, is close to reaching its target. Support through a major grant from The National Lottery, the Royal Oak Foundation and a public appeal has enabled us to launch a three-year project at Chartwell and secure hundreds of Churchill’s historic and personal items for the nation.

The power of partnerships: The Wolfson Foundation

This year we are proud to celebrate 10 years of partnership support from The Wolfson Foundation.

Thanks to grants totalling £4.75m and generous match funding from other supporters, our Joint Programme for Conservation has delivered 43 projects to conserve houses and collections across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. From castles, treasure houses and gardens, the scale and breadth of the work we have been able to undertake is remarkable, bringing huge benefits for people and places. In 2016 there were 5,307,000 visits to the places which have benefited from the partnership.

Projects completed through the partnership include:

• Restoration of the Great Stair at Blickling Hall, Norfolk which had been inaccessible to visitors since the 1990s. The project conserved this fine example of Jacobean carpentry and transformed the route that visitors take through the house.

• Conservation of the rare yeoman’s library at Townend in Cumbria, a collection of over 1,500 books, at least 45 of which are entirely unique. Conservation work took place in situ, allowing us to share discoveries with visitors.

• The complete restoration of the south wing at Castle Drogo, Devon, working with leading engineers, architects and master masons to make this Lutyens masterpiece watertight.

• Conservation of a set of 22 chairs at Mount Stewart, Northern Ireland, used at Congress of Vienna in 1814–15. The chairs help to tell the story of the Congress and how delegates shaped European politics.

In 2016 there were 5,307,000 visits to the places which have benefited from the partnership.
Our finances

Where our money comes from and how we spend it

Expenditure on property projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2015/16 £m</th>
<th>2016/17 £m</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise and renewables</td>
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<td>£100.8m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
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<td>Admission fees</td>
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<td>Other property income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holiday House Hotels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other incoming resources</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Expenditure

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<tr>
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</table>

Properties project expenditure for 2015-16 has been restated to include £41.4m of expenditure relating to short term cyclical repairs, small project works and conservation of contents previously reported as part of property operating costs.

Focus on: Renewable Energy Investment

A sustainable, green solution to fuelling our places

April 2017 marks the second anniversary of the Trust’s Renewable Energy Investment programme, a nationally coordinated drive towards renewable energy use at the Trust to meet our commitment to produce 50% of our own energy by 2021. 11 renewables projects were delivered in 2016, meaning 18 projects have now been completed by the programme, including biomass at Stourhead in Wiltshire and Mottisfont in Hampshire, solar photovoltaic at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk and Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire, and hydro power at Berthen in Snowdonia and Hayeswater in the Lake District, with another 20 due to go online in 2017. Since 2009, the Trust has reduced its total oil consumption by 50%, stopping an estimated 3,000 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere. Converting our energy sources not only saves carbon, but also provides financial savings to the Trust, meaning we can invest even more into the conservation of our buildings, gardens and landscapes.

Berthen – micro hydro
340,000 kwhs of energy each year

Sutton Hoo – solar PV
43,500 kwhs of energy each year

Generating cleaner, renewable energy across our estate reduces our carbon footprint, helping us to play our part in reducing climate change. And lower energy bills mean we can spend more on looking after our places for the next generation.

Patrick Begg, Rural Enterprises Director

3,000 tonnes of CO2 saved
1,566 UK cars taken off the road

Photograph ©National Trust/ Linda Goudie
Speaking out

2016 will be remembered for the EU referendum in June. The Prime Minister has described it as an instruction to change the way our country works and the National Trust will be affected too.

One of the biggest areas of change will be farming when the UK leaves the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. We set out the Trust’s principles for reform after CAP at Countryfile Live in August and have been contributing to the debate over what will replace EU funding ever since.

The Common Agricultural Policy has been blamed by many for driving a decline in wildlife but it has also funded lots of projects – including many by the National Trust – to restore landscapes and provide space for wildflowers to spread and for rare animal species to recover.

EU rules are also important for many other areas, so we have joined a new coalition called Greener UK to work for whatever system replaces these rules better to protect the natural and historic environment.

These rules sit alongside the planning system in Wales, Northern Ireland and England. In England, planning continues to go through further changes. Our research with the Local Government Information Unit pointed to a lack of balance in the planning system, with 72% of ward councillors feeling that the system is too weighted in favour of developers at the expense of the local community. We have been calling for a stronger planning system that delivers the localism promised in the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as working to ensure that any further changes do not undermine the protection of archaeology and historic buildings nor turn villages into sprawling settlements.

We also commissioned important new research, alongside the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Campaign for National Parks, to highlight our concerns about inappropriate development in National Parks and to ensure that these nationally protected landscapes continue to have the protection through the planning system that they need.
The year ahead

Major conservation projects to restore the roof at The Vyne, Hampshire and Tredegar House, Newport will continue.

Across our land, we will keep working in partnership with our tenant farmers to reverse the decline in nature and create 25,000 hectares of priority, nature-rich habitat.

We have now launched the competition to find the architects that will bring our vision for the future of Clandon Park to life following the fire in April 2015. We hope to announce the winners of the competition in early autumn this year.

Our series of ‘challenging histories’ programmes will continue. In 2017 we are marking 50 years since the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality, while 2018 will showcase 100 years since the Representation of the People Act with a celebration of the women who have shaped our places.
thank you

Thank you for your ongoing support of the National Trust as a charity and as a cause, and enabling us to continue to look after the places in our care – for ever, for everyone.

Visit nationaltrust.org.uk/join-and-get-involved to find out more

National Trust

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