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Major lottery grant award to strengthen the network of UNESCO Sites in the UK

New funding will help sites support local communities to make the most of the heritage on their doorstep and tackle issues such as climate change.

The UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) has received a [further](#) £250,000 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery Players, to expand and evolve its innovative [Local to Global](#) programme.

The new funding, covering 20 months to September 2026, will help further strengthen the UK network of UNESCO Sites including Biosphere Reserves, Creative Cities, Global Geoparks and World Heritage Sites.

In turn, the strengthened network will be able to work with, and support, local communities across the UK to make the most of their heritage and tackle shared challenges like the impacts of climate change. Planned activities using the funding include:

- **Community Innovation Grants:** Six £10,000 regional / national grants will support UNESCO Sites to test ideas and pilot solutions to shared challenges they, and their local communities, face.
- **Skills and Partnerships Training:** Ongoing support will help UNESCO Sites build fundraising expertise, entrepreneurship, and develop long-term partnerships.
- **Measuring the value of UNESCO to the UK:** A brand-new research study will measure the cultural, economic, and social value of UNESCO Sites as place-based partnerships within communities.

Starting in spring 2025, a series of **Climate Change and Heritage Protection Workshops** will bring UNESCO Sites together to assess and examine climate change impacts on their locales. The workshops will be held in partnership with the HM Treasury funded [Climate Change and UNESCO Heritage](#) Project.

Speaking of the new funding:

James Bridge, Chief Executive and Secretary-General of the UK National Commission for UNESCO, said:

‘UNESCO Sites connect people and places, linking local action to global solutions. Thanks to National Lottery players, the new funding will enable even greater collaboration among Sites, to ensure that this unrivalled collective heritage is secured, and thrives, for generations to come.’

Stuart McLeod, Director of England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

‘We are delighted to offer new support to the UK National Commission for UNESCO for its Local to Global programme. The first phase delivered a myriad benefits to support heritage in communities across the United Kingdom.’

Thanks to National Lottery players the Commission will be able to build on this vital work and aid both the network of UNESCO sites, and the communities in which they are based, to celebrate heritage in all its forms and put in place solutions to tackle some of the most important challenges they face.’

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

About the UK National Commission for UNESCO

The UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) is a constitutional part of the UK’s membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). UNESCO harnesses the power of education, culture, science, communication and information to advance global peace, sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and poverty eradication.

An independent body, UKNC is funded by the UK Government primarily to bring the benefits of UNESCO programmes and international agreements to the UK government, academic community and broader civil society. It also ensures that these elements fully contribute to, and shape, UNESCO’s global aims and activities.

www.unesco.org.uk

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future.

www.heritagefund.org.uk.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK.

About UNESCO Designated Sites in the UK

Biosphere Reserves

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are 'learning places for sustainable development'. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems. Each site promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.

There are currently seven UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the UK and Isle of Man

- Biosffer Dyfi
- Brighton and Lewes Downs (The Living Coast)
- Galloway and Southern Ayrshire
- Isle of Man
- Isle of Wight
- North Devon
- Wester Ross

Creative Cities

UNESCO Creative Cities work towards the mission of placing creativity and cultural industries at the core of their urban development to make their cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable. Each city is accredited in one of seven creative fields: Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts, or Music.

There are currently 13 UNESCO Creative Cities in the UK

- Belfast City of Music
- Bradford City of Film
- Bristol City of Film

- Dundee City of Design
- Edinburgh City of Literature
- Exeter City of Literature
- Glasgow City of Music
- Liverpool City of Music
- Manchester City of Literature
- Norwich City of Literature
- Nottingham City of Literature
- Perth City of Crafts and Folk Art
- York City of Media Arts

Global Geoparks

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education, and sustainable development.

There are currently nine UNESCO Global Geoparks in the UK

- The Black Country
- Cuilcagh Lakelands
- English Riviera
- Fforest Fawr
- GeoMôn
- Mourne Gullion Strangford
- North Pennines
- North West Highlands
- Shetland

World Heritage Sites

UNESCO World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific, or other form of significance. The sites are judged to contain cultural and natural heritage around the world considered of outstanding value to humanity.

There are currently 31 UNESCO World Heritage Sites* in the UK (*Bath has two World Heritage inscriptions).

- Blaenavon Industrial Landscape

- Blenheim Palace
- Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey, and St Martin's Church
- Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd
- City of Bath / The Great Spa Towns of Europe
- Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape
- Derwent Valley Mills
- Dorset and East Devon Coast – The Jurassic Coast
- Durham Castle and Cathedral
- The English Lake District
- Flow Country
- The Forth Bridge
- Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Antonine Wall / Hadrian's Wall
- Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast
- Heart of Neolithic Orkney
- Ironbridge Gorge
- Jodrell Bank Observatory
- Maritime Greenwich
- Moravian Church Settlements: Gracehill
- New Lanark
- Old and New Towns of Edinburgh
- Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including Saint Margaret's Church
- Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Saltaire
- The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales
- St Kilda World Heritage Site
- Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites
- Studley Royal Park including the Ruins of Fountains Abbey
- Tower of London

Further information

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