

People, places and partnerships

A presentation by Drew Bennellick Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, (HLF) UK

1 Title slide

I've worked for Heritage Lottery Fund for six years and amongst a raft of things I am responsible for our funding for landscape and natural heritage.

I'd like to explain a little bit about what HLF is, a bit about our key vehicle for investing in landscapes and some thoughts about the benefits of partnership working and engaging people. If you want to know more about our funding programmes then see me any time during the day.

For those that don't know HLF, we distribute 20% of the good causes funding raised each year by the National Lottery – or just under £400million.

We fund time-limited projects across the UK that aim to make a lasting difference for heritage and people.

We don't actually define heritage but simply say it is whatever people consider of value and wish to pass on to future generations.

2 Heritage breadth slide

In reality we fund everything from archives to castles, church bells to historic ships, public parks to endangered species, and from museums to landscapes.

At present we invest around £70m per year in projects associated with green space, habitats, species, citizen science, geoconservation and landscape, and currently have a corporate priority to encourage more fundable projects from the land and biodiversity sectors.

Since 2004, we have been running a targeted investment programme for landscapes with an annual budget now of £20m per year.

When we talk about landscape we simply refer to the European Landscape Convention.

That defines landscape as *“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*.

3 ELC

Our Landscape Partnership programme offers grants of between £100k and £3million to partnerships that conserve distinctive areas of landscape. In line with the convention, it is not restricted to highly designated landscapes and many of our projects operate in landscape character areas undergoing extreme change whether it be from urban expansion, gravel extraction or coastal change, or simply areas that are considered forgotten or seemingly of unspecial landscape.

Through funding detailed landscape and seascape character assessments we support applicants to identify risks, threats and opportunities within a defined area of distinctive landscape character. In response applicants are then helped to develop a series of inter-related projects that address natural and cultural heritage needs across that landscape. It is this ability to work across all landscape types and all aspects of heritage that makes our Landscape Partnerships programme unique.

4 Map of LPs

Since 2004 our Landscape Partnerships programme has been followed by other landscape-scale initiatives such as the Wildlife Trusts Living Landscape programme, the RSPBs Futurescapes programme and most recently Natural England's Nature Improvement Areas. Our 77 Landscape Partnerships overlap with these considerably and for example we are funding 5 of the 12 NIAs but our approach is much broader.

5 Farmer and son slide

Since HLF opened its doors in 1994, we have always believed that connecting people to heritage is fundamental. It's all very well saving heritage but if people don't value it, use it, enjoy it and appreciate it then it won't be looked after.

In the early days it was a struggle getting applicants to realise that we wouldn't simply fund the conservation of a wetland or hillfort. Our conviction was that to ensure sustainability and a legacy from public lottery players investment it is essential to engage people. Now that approach has been mainstreamed across the conservation sector and is enshrined in policy such as the Natural Environment White Paper.

Today we do this through our outcomes approach. For all projects we fund, and Landscape Partnerships is no different, we ask all applicants to achieve a number of 14 prescribed outcomes.

For Landscape Partnerships there are nine outcomes.

6 List them on a slide.

When we wrote these in 2012, we were very confident from evaluating completed Landscape Partnership projects that every project should be more than capable of achieving all these nine outcomes to a high degree.

The composition of each Landscape Partnerships scheme varies depending on the emerging needs identified by assessing landscape character.

Some Landscape Partnerships are all about people and their relationship to land and sea. Touching the Tide is a great example.

7 Touching the tide

Set in the Suffolk Coast AONB this scheme focusses on an area of coast stretching from Felixstowe to Southwold. The coast here is rapidly changing and includes the famous disappearing village of Dunwich. Whilst this scheme is about natural and built heritage, it is principally about improving people's understanding of coastal change. It is about understanding a dynamic coast, about recording how it is changing and what those changes are revealing. It's about celebrating it's cultural

heritage and creating a greater sense of place. They have a fantastic animation about the project so its well worth taking a look.

The focus of the schemes we support varies widely but is driven by landscape character assessment. Some are inherently all about nature, how we manage land and re-connecting fragmented habitats. Others have a built heritage focus with buildings and designed landscapes key components such as our Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge Landscape Partnership. Most recently we have seen an increase in schemes focussed on dealing with landscape change driven by the Government's growth agenda. We already support one scheme which is wrestling with landscape change being driven by the insertion of High Speed 2 into a wetland landscape and have recently seen other schemes associated with major road and housing infrastructure.

The schemes may be varied but all demonstrate a commitment to conserving and interpreting landscape through partnership working and engaging people.

So how do Landscape Partnerships work in principle and are they using an approach that others could learn from?

We are acutely aware that landscapes are dynamic and change is inevitable. The issue that our programme aims to address is harnessing knowledge of the past to help people and communities understand how a landscape is changing, what is important about that landscape, the services it provides, the feelings it creates, the jobs it sustains etc, and then by engaging people look at how they might influence its future.

Partnerships are key although not always easy. The best schemes we have supported involve very broad partnerships. Each scheme has led by a lead partner, the banker and scheme manager, and a wide breadth of partners.

We would expect to see landowners, local authorities, community groups, the private sector and charities all represented. These groups bring a broad reservoir of expertise as well as help share resources and create efficiencies by avoiding duplication. Partners can also help unite diverse stakeholders, resolve conflicts, engage whole communities and allow the dissemination of impacts and outcomes to a much broader and more inclusive audience.

All are engaged through a legal partnership agreement.

8 Watershed Landscape – partners array

A good example was the South Pennines Watershed Landscape Partnership that completed its three year delivery phase in 2013. 14 key partners delivered projects focussed on built, natural and cultural heritage which engaged 1,500 volunteers, 8,000 school pupils and over 50 community groups.

In addition the project produced surveys of 500 prehistoric carved stones, restored 200 hectares of hay meadow, created full time employment for 8 people, reduced moorland soil erosion and led to overall improvements in soil water quality.

9 Carved stone

A significant challenge for any project is measuring achievement. It's easy to report outputs and the things I have just quoted are primarily outputs or numbers. It is much more challenging to report outcomes and particularly those associated with outcomes for people and communities.

Capturing outcomes in relation to our Landscape Partnerships programme is even more challenging as the three to five year projects are simply a blip of activity in a much longer story of landscape conservation, change and engagement.

However we have developed techniques and support our schemes to record results through project evaluation. We help schemes to run their own evaluation programmes from the outset to establish baseline data and then encourage a process of continual review culminating in an end of scheme report.

By embedding an understanding of the value of evaluation we encourage projects to maintain momentum beyond the end of the HLF funded project.

Projects like Watershed landscape have provided evidence that investing in multi-faceted landscape-scale projects is a good way to connect people to their landscape.

10 Horse slide with quote added

Their project evaluation pointed to examples of local people, businesses, land owners and land managers saying the project had *"raised the profile of the Pennines as a landscape to be valued"* and it was said the project had created a *"new sense of pride in the South Pennines as a distinct and valued landscape amongst communities and organisations working in the area"*.

As an area of landscape previously overlooked by the populations of Bradford, Oldham and Rochdale, this is a typical outcome for one of our schemes – where an area of forgotten landscape is effectively re-branded and thereby better appreciated by local people for a whole host of reasons.

11 20 years in 12 places – intro slide

I also wanted to mention a new piece of evidence that HLF launched yesterday called 20 years in 12 places. The research celebrates 20 years of HLF investment in places and investigates impact in 12 towns and cities.

The research focussed on understanding the levels of awareness of heritage and the perceived benefits which people and wider communities may have experienced as a result HLF investment. Again heritage here is all encompassing.

The research concluded I guess not unsurprisingly that heritage supports local pride, encourages social cohesion, makes local areas more visually attractive, is great for leisure activities and has a positive economic impact by promoting tourism and creating employment.

In addition to these obvious benefits, the research also revealed that people relate to local heritage in emotional terms and that where heritage encourages an emotional connection it helps people to understand where they are from and what this tells them about themselves.

People felt that the projects that best helped create emotional engagement were those that, whilst conserving valued aspects of heritage, were also fun as well as educational and provided a wide

variety of different ways for people to get involved. Projects needed to appeal to people outside a narrow interest group.

Whilst supporting people to increase their engagement with heritage is a key target, getting new people interested and motivated about heritage is a real goal. And the way to do this is often through a variety of approaches which is why Landscape Partnership schemes work so effectively.

12 Fun but educational project

And the research showed that when heritage does reach those traditionally less involved, it can have a far more powerful impact on them than others.

For example people from lower social groups were more likely to say that local heritage is important for their own personal sense of identity.

Our conclusion is that the research provides a clear rationale for continued investment in multi-faceted heritage projects – projects that offer a wealth of opportunity for engagement through a variety of mediums and opportunities, and particularly when they focus on a place.

One word of caution however emerged from the research. As I have said, HLF funds many facets of heritage and when asked about what heritage people valued they were quick to identify old buildings, churches, statues, museums and even public parks. However it was generally only when prompted that people began to consider habitats, species, landscape features (here the river Severn) and countryside as part of their heritage.

13 Word cloud

It could simply be a language issue or may be something more fundamental such as the increasing disconnect between people and the countryside that means participants in the study tended not to initially see landscape or nature as a part of their collective heritage.

One of the greatest challenges for many of our Landscape Partnership schemes is how to achieve engagement and re-connection with nature and the countryside at a landscape scale particularly as we become increasingly urban.

I'm afraid I don't have the answer but our experience is that landscape-scale only works when the scale of the issues and interventions to be tackled is matched with the necessary resources to achieve change. That's why we suggest a maximum size of scheme area which relates both to the scale of the landscape, the scale of the resources available and the density of the population.

If we are however to re-connect people to landscape and nature, we need to become better at finding cost effective ways to achieve it.

Engaging people takes time and resources. Face to face is proven to be best despite modern technology and volunteers always respond best when personally led, valued and rewarded. Modern tech can help people access and learn about landscape but I think we need to learn more about its long-term impact in relation to its value for money.

14 Engaging with volunteers

We do have very strong evidence that people have engaged well through our Landscape Partnership schemes. Some of the most creative ways of engaging people have been beyond the traditional

conservation projects and skills. Intangible heritage has a vital role to play in drawing in people to appreciate landscape. Most of our schemes have found ways of engaging people through art and literature. Many thousands have engaged with landscapes through storytelling, tapestry, photography, poetry, writing and drawing.

15 Multi slide with art etc

HLF projects have and are undoubtedly making a huge difference but the scale of the task ahead is still daunting. Annually we see demand for our Landscape Partnership programme grow.

My hope is that our Trustees continue to see the value of investing in landscapes through our reporting the outcomes achieved, and that learning and good practice gained through HLF funded projects helps others to make a difference for heritage and people too.

16 End slide with resources

With that in mind here are a few resources we can share via our website.

We have also created an online forum for all those leading Landscape Partnership schemes although it has now widened to include a broader family of people discussing landscape topics.

Slides 17, 18, 19, 20 Ring of Gullion

I do also have a short audio clip that I would love to share if we have a spare 45 seconds!

This is from a BBC Radio broadcast about a new Landscape Partnership scheme in the very southern border territories of Northern Ireland. This is an amazing geological landscape called the Ring of Gullion named after the horseshoe of mountains that define the area. It is a place of severe past conflict which was known as IRA bandit country. However the landscape is rich in history and legends which the Landscape Partnership aims to explore and use to reconnect people to the landscape as well as opening this previously closed countryside to a wider audience.