

Press release: Hadrian's Wall and Great Wall of China to sign unique agreement as Minister launches new heritage strategy

- Two World Heritage Sites to work together on research, education and tourism growth
- New Heritage Council to be launched emphasising value of historic environment, building consensus and ensuring greater coordination across government

Hadrian's Wall and The Great Wall of China will sign a unique collaboration agreement to increase the historical and cultural understanding of the two sites, Heritage Minister John Glen announced today as he set out his priorities for heritage.

Representatives from the two World Heritage Sites will work together to examine the challenges and opportunities of managing large and complex archaeological remains and explore the potential tourism growth in both countries.

The agreement – the first of its kind – was announced by John Glen as he launched his framework for the growth of the heritage sector.

The Heritage Statement outlines how he wants to strengthen the sector, through regeneration and placemaking, skills and environment and how it will contribute to an outward-looking global Britain.

Measures in the statement include:

- Launching a new Heritage Council, chaired by the Minister, to emphasise the value of the historic environment, build consensus and ensure greater coordination.
- A new commemorative scheme to be rolled out across England to mark and celebrate the events, people and places that have shaped local communities.
- Exploring options to strengthen interim protection measures and reduce the risk of damage or destruction to sites while they are being considered for listing.
- Working with Historic England and Heritage Lottery Fund to support the digitisation of historic environment records and heritage archives to help councils make informed planning decisions and increase public appreciation for their local heritage.

Heritage Minister John Glen said:

The Wall to Wall Collaboration is the perfect example of how

heritage can be used to strengthen international partnerships, grow tourism and build a truly global Britain.

Today I am setting out how we will continue to make the case for heritage, and showcase the benefits it brings to our economy, our communities and our quality of life.

Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England, said:

“The Minister has reaffirmed the importance of our heritage to creating great places, to the economy, to communities and to our wellbeing. We look forward to delivering a new place-marker scheme to enable local communities to identify, mark and celebrate the events, people and places that are important to them along with eight new Heritage Action Zones which will help to revive towns and cities that are rich in heritage. I also look forward to a fruitful collaboration between Historic England and the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage with the signing of the Wall to Wall agreement.”

The Wall to Wall Collaboration is part of the People to People Dialogue – a cultural exchange between China and the UK taking place in London this week. The initiative arose from the UK-China Cultural Heritage High Level Dialogue, held in Beijing and Xi’an in February 2017, when the conservation of the two Walls was one of the key topics.

Historic England and Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, which manages the Great Wall, will sign the agreement on Thursday. They will hold a seminar in Newcastle next year – the first step in a wider programme of collaboration between the two sites.

The Minister also celebrated the strength of UK heritage in his speech at the Heritage Day conference, organised by Heritage Alliance.

The UK heritage sector contributed £987 million to the UK economy last year – a rise of 7% on 2015 – and employs 278,000 people. Previous research commissioned by English Heritage in 2010 found that every £1 of public sector investment in heritage-led regeneration generated £1.60 return.

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For more information please contact the DCMS press office: 0207 211 2210