

Professional Practice Paper:
Delivering public benefit





This Professional Practice Paper has been developed in collaboration with colleagues at HS2 and Sadie Watson* MCIfA. It is our shared view that archaeological work should deliver real, engaging and innovative public benefit.

The Professional Practice Paper sets out the rationale for putting public benefit at the heart of all archaeological work. This is based on recent and emerging research and grounded in our ethical obligations as professional archaeologists. Using a range of case studies, it also provides practical advice and suggestions for doing so. These range from high-profile public projects to small-scale, privately funded developments. Readers seeking further inspiration should visit the ClfA website at www.archaeologists.net/profession/publicbenefit

*Sadie is undertaking a four-year Fellowship focusing on ensuring that development-led archaeological projects lead to meaningful and relevant research and genuine community participation.

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Cover image: *Research-focused burial ground excavation. Credit: HS2 Ltd*

Inside cover image: *Born digital – collecting data to be shared. Credit: HS2 Ltd*

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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA)

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the leading professional body for archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. Our Royal Charter shows that we work for the public good, and it is a mark of assurance of our institutional values of reliability, integrity, resourcefulness, teamwork and trust.

The historic environment, like the natural environment, is a shared, irreplaceable resource. It is managed – and researched, cared for and conserved – on behalf of, and for the benefit of, society. ClfA promotes high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice, to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society, and the Chartered Institute's standards and guidance documents offer guidance to accredited professionals on how to deliver public benefit. This guidance covers all aspects of the archaeological process: specifying, managing, monitoring and communicating the results of investigation and research.

ClfA's professional accreditation recognises the knowledge and competence of individuals. There are three progressive levels of accreditation – Practitioner (PCIfA), Associate (ACIfA) and Member (MCIfA). MCIfAs are accredited professionals with the highest level of understanding of the sector and its requirements, able to take full responsibility and be accountable for their own work and to deal with complex issues. In addition to individual accreditation, ClfA runs a quality assurance scheme for businesses and suppliers of archaeological services. Registered Organisations are assessed and inspected by ClfA and have demonstrated they have the skills to provide informed and reliable advice and to design and implement appropriate schemes of work.

All professional archaeologists have accepted a responsibility to conserve the historic environment, to use it economically to provide reliable information and to disseminate the results of their work. They have also made an ethical commitment to promote the value of the historic environment and to engage with the public to include, inform and inspire. If archaeological work is not delivering public benefit, it is not being undertaken to a professional standard.

www.archaeologists.net

HS2

HS2 is the country's largest linear infrastructure project and offers some unprecedented opportunities for the historic environment, for communities and for professionals. HS2 aspires to ensure that there is real and substantive public benefit from the project itself, generated during its delivery. That aspiration underpins the project's historic environment programme, articulated in the Historic Environment Research and Delivery Strategy (HERDS).

As a profession we want to improve our understanding of the historic environment, and its preservation, conservation and enhancement, to the benefit of all. We want to create knowledge, engage with communities and the wider public, and contribute to education at all levels. We also want to change, for the better, industry standards for undertaking historic environment work and the skills needed to do that.

At HS2, historic environment work is now well advanced on Phase One; work will help to deliver many of these professional aspirations. We will change the understanding of Britain's past, with amazing stories to tell – from a local to an international level. We will continue to work with our supply chain to enhance existing skills and introduce new innovations. There are many training opportunities at all levels, with the opportunity to inspire and nurture the next generation of professionals. We engage with a range of audiences, actively exciting them about heritage and encouraging them to understand, enjoy and value the past.

HS2 as a whole project has defined measures and benchmarks or targets for its benefits, and already monitors progress against them. HS2 is interested in exploring quantifiable measures for historic environment works to augment the qualitative case studies currently used to demonstrate benefits from the historic environment programme, to provide evidence of the project's success in these main areas of creating knowledge, engaging with communities, education, and improving skills and standards.

www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/archaeology/

What is public benefit?

The concept of public benefit in archaeology is simple – it is about ensuring that our work provides some form of benefit to the public, often referred to within construction as social value. Any professional is expected to place public and client interest above self-interest, and professionals accredited by a chartered institute have an obligation to work to the letter and spirit of the Royal Charter. Royal Charters are awarded to bodies that have ‘demonstrated pre-eminence, stability, permanence, and service of the public interest’ (ClfA 2020b; Privy Council 2021). Accredited professional archaeologists have committed to working in accordance with ClfA’s *Code of conduct* to promote ‘standards of conduct and self-discipline required of a member or Registered Organisation in the interests of the public’ (ClfA 2020c).

Traditionally we have considered increased understanding or knowledge gain to be our primary form of public benefit (Belford 2020: 5). However, this should be expanded to include individual or communal wellbeing, improving community cohesion, improving educational, environmental or economic conditions or providing these opportunities (ClfA 2020a: 2). Despite concerns that public benefit can be difficult to define, we can, in collaboration with various stakeholders, choose how to define it for each project we undertake. Early consideration ensures archaeologists express clearly what the public benefit of any given project is or how it could contribute. Identifying what the benefit is from the outset enables it to be addressed in project design, budgets and communication strategies. It also helps to engage the client early and establish how the archaeological works contribute.

How does public benefit relate to public value and public interest?

Terms such as public benefit, public value and public interest can appear interchangeable, but they mean different things. Public value is not the same as public benefit. Instead, it combines the ideas of public benefit and value for (public) money. Public value is therefore of greatest relevance to archaeological work funded in whole or in part by taxpayers. Public-value thinking is a departure from the value-for-money thinking that can pare projects back to their bare essentials to minimise costs and maximise efficiency. For archaeology projects that it funds, Historic England has devised an assessment process that allows both proposers of projects to self-assess and funding decision-makers to satisfy themselves about the extent to which a project is designed to create the optimum public value from the investment of public money. Historic England is explicit in its guidance to proposers of projects that it wants to have the option to pay more for projects that deliver high public value while ensuring that nobody who offers to do so is disadvantaged compared with ‘bare bones’ proposals. For private sector-funded archaeological projects, public benefit is the more appropriate heading under which archaeologists should be seeking to maximise the contribution that their work makes to communities.

Public interest (or public good) is about putting the needs and wishes of the public before the needs and wishes of archaeologists or their clients. Acting in the public interest is what distinguishes a profession from an industry¹. Again, ClfA’s Code of conduct and good practice advice (ClfA 2020d) supports accredited archaeologists to help inform and apply their professional judgement and present their decisions honestly.

¹ The profession: ClfA-accredited archaeologists, or those on other credible professional registers.
The industry: all paid archaeologists

Case study

HS2 Skills, Education and Employment strategy

Emma Hopla MClfA, Historic Environment Manager, HS2 Ltd

It is acknowledged that educational programmes (as advocated by STEM, by professional bodies and through university programmes¹) have a vital role to play in the delivery of public benefit from engineering and infrastructure projects – projects that often entail significant historic environment work. On small and medium-scale projects there is often not the time or resource to focus how, where and when educational engagement happens, and an assessment of educational need is rarely carried out prior to the design or execution of educational work. This means that engagement, while valuable, is usually reactive, and strategic opportunities to deliver at particular key stages or within certain aspects of the National Curriculum cannot be realised.

The HS2 project has the advantages of longevity, scale, and breadth to trial a variety of educational approaches. Several trial pilot projects were developed through a collaboration with the HS2 Historic Environment and SEE (Skills, Education and Employment) teams at HS2, and these will be used to inform an overarching and strategic education programme to be delivered over a longer term. The dedicated SEE team will use feedback from the pilots to assist the Historic Environment team to plan a programme of work that integrates and aligns with the National Curriculum and sector skills needs.

Three pilot projects have already been undertaken by HS2 SEE and the Historic Environment team (2018–2020) to test methods and approaches on three key groups, with a view to rolling out a longer-term programme focusing effort on areas where a) our subject matter offers the most in relation to learning requirements, b) where the potential to engage is the strongest and c) where most benefit will be realised for students and for the sector.

Pilot 1 Primary years (KS3, years 5 and 6, 9–11 years of age)

Why: Children are often introduced to the concept of archaeology at this stage but don't have the opportunity to place it in context. The need to engage imagination and generate excitement was key to this group.

What: HS2 archaeologists gave a lesson 'Archaeology and Me' to Coughton School, Warwickshire (years 5 and 6), using examples from the project. For this group the HS2 team are also producing an education pack that will provide content and presentations on the topic of environmental archaeology and past landscapes.

Pilot 2 A-Level (16–18 years old)

Why: students in this group have usually chosen subjects they have strong academic credentials in during GCSE. Archaeology (and other aspects of the historic environment such as climate change) at this level are often integrated into history and geography. The focus has been to expose students studying these subjects with a view to internships, apprenticeships and courses at universities, and potential careers specific to the historic environment that they would otherwise not have considered.

What: Work experience weeks were organised within the supply chain and students also shadowed members of the HS2 Historic Environment team (this was delivered virtually in 2020). This was a five-day programme with full workplan, induction, projects, activities and outputs specific to each individual student.

Pilot 3 University students (undergraduate, masters and PhD)

Why: The desire, engagement and interest in the historic environment is already established in this group. However, specialist routes and generalist options are still largely unknown and not explored. Exposure to and facilitating integration of students into real life project work formed the focus for this group.

What: An internship of three months was delivered in collaboration with CHASE (Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-East England), with an intern working with HS2 and Contractor CSJV.

Going forward

The initial feedback from the three groups has been positive. The *Strategic Framework for Heritage Science in the UK 2018–2023*,² drawn up by the National Heritage Science Forum, identifies strategic outcomes for a skilled and diverse heritage science community and one of the key areas is to increase engagement with heritage science at school age. The main focus over the next 12–18 months of any historic environment educational strategies within HS2 will be on engaging younger groups and creating a strong alignment with STEM.

¹ <https://www.stem.org.uk/resources/collection/3165/young-archaeologists-club>, <https://sharewithschools.wordpress.com/> (University of Cardiff), <https://www.raeng.org.uk/education/schools/teaching-and-learning-resources>

² https://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/documents/NHSF_StrategicFramework-FINAL_Web.pdf

STEM – inspiring the younger
age groups at HS2 open days.
Credit: HS2 Ltd



Case study

The #Rooswijk1740 project

Alison James MCI^fA and Sally Evans ACI^fA, MSDS Marine

Since 2017 the #Rooswijk1740 project has been leading the way in delivering public benefit by creating opportunities throughout for visits, training and engagement. This case study focuses on the economic benefit of the project to the local area.

The *Rooswijk* is a protected wreck site located on the Goodwin Sands in Kent. A key aim of the project was engaging with and helping communities and volunteers to understand and care for the remains of the *Rooswijk*. Engagement was seen as a crucial way to increase the site's protection and to reduce the risk to the remains from opportunistic recoveries.

The #Rooswijk1740 project undertook two seasons of excavation in 2017 and 2018 before moving into the post-excavation assessment and analysis phase. The project coincided with the launch of the Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone (HAZ), which sought to build and improve relationships between local partners to manage change and new developments better and to stimulate the productivity of the historic environment through regeneration and growth.

The #Rooswijk1740 project has contributed to Ramsgate's HAZ initiative by providing a focus for community pride, a sense of shared history, and a sense of belonging. This has been realised, in part, through outreach within the local community including local schools and the general public.

Using Ramsgate as the base for the project has allowed the project to have a direct impact on the local economy. It is recognised that the heritage values of wreck sites can generate social and economic benefits, for example through being utilised as a learning or recreational resource or as a generator of tourism (Hamer and Satchell, 2008; Evans and Davison, 2019). These economic benefits of heritage are frequently overlooked when discussing public benefit. However, recent initiatives have sought to better understand these values and benefits. A report commissioned by Historic England in 2012 showed that in just one year the *Coronation* protected wreck site in Plymouth was directly worth nearly £43,000 to the local economy (Beattie-Edwards, 2013), and a suite of projects funded by Historic England in 2018 sought to investigate how heritage gives rise to social and economic values. The economic value of the #Rooswijk1740 project was examined by one of those projects (Evans and Davison, 2019), and further detail is given here.

The #Rooswijk1740 project is high profile and has brought a great deal of attention to Ramsgate. This has resulted in two different types of economic public benefit that relate to Ramsgate HAZ. The first is the directly measurable financial contribution to the Ramsgate economy. This can be measured in terms of the actual spend in Ramsgate and its vicinity during the project. The table shows the direct economic contribution of the #Rooswijk1740 project the local economy in 2017, the first year of the project. Over the three months of the project in that one year, £46,250 was directly fed into the local economy.

Expense	Cost
Harbour fees	£14,500
Fuel	£2,800
Shore-side conservation facility in Ramsgate	£1,500
Local shops used during the project	£5,800
Local hotels used by the project and visitors to the project	£4,800
Food and drink purchased by the shore-side team and the dive team when in harbour	£15,000
Recreation/local attractions visited by the team on days off	£1,200
Local boat charter	£650
Total cost	£46,250

The #Rooswijk1740 project aimed to provide as many opportunities as possible for the public to see the material recovered and to meet the team. The project even provided a British Sign Language guide for deaf visitors and had activities to engage all audiences from old to young. Many visitors stayed in touch after their visits through social media to stay up to date with the project. Credit: #Rooswijk1740 project



The second element is harder to measure directly and is the impact that the high-profile project, and its associated international media coverage, has had on the area. Turning to visitor numbers as a means of understanding value, in 2017 and 2018 the #Rooswijk1740 project hosted four open days, which were attended by over 950 people, and an additional 50 visitors attended an open day specifically for home-schooled children in the area. Additionally, the project also brought a large number of others to the local area including students, divers, conservators, ministers and journalists, primarily from the UK and the Netherlands. Attendees were asked where they had travelled from for the open days and the average distance was 78 miles. From further afield, people had travelled from Lancashire, Plymouth, Bristol, Birmingham, London and even Belgium, specifically to attend the project open day. The spend of these people in the local economy is not included in the figures given above but it is not insignificant.

The public benefit of the #Rooswijk1740 project has been discussed in many places in terms of the reach of the project and the many opportunities for public involvement at all stages.¹ The economic benefits of the project are rarely talked about but are important to consider alongside the other public benefits.

About the #Rooswijk1740 project

The #Rooswijk1740 project is both funded and led by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture), working in collaboration with project partner Historic England and UK contractor MSDS Marine. The post-excavation work is largely undertaken by Historic England in their research facilities at Fort Cumberland.

¹ <https://msdsmarine.com/engagementandtraining/>

Public benefit and clients

The concept of public benefit is well recognised across the construction sector, although in this context it is usually called social value. The Public Service (Social Value) Act placed a formal requirement on public-sector organisations to consider the economic, social and environmental benefits for communities (social value), as well as the overall cost when awarding contracts, so many development projects will have established a social value framework within which the archaeological process can be situated. Such projects will include, but are not restricted to, housing, transport infrastructure or other social infrastructure such as schools, green power projects and streetscape projects.

Social value is coming increasingly to the fore in the context of designated heritage under public management, with an acknowledgement of the complexity of assigning particular 'significance' to sites (Jones 2017). There is much useful work underway on this part of our sector and we can certainly adopt the overall principles, if not always the precise mechanisms, for measuring and ensuring all our work creates public benefit.

For the private sector, the Considerate Constructors Scheme provides social value assessment as a service to their members ([Social Value Portal Best Practice Hub \(ccsbestpractice.org.uk\)](https://socialvalueportal.org.uk)). It focuses on the importance of providing this value to the local community, and provides a list of possible outcomes. Archaeology aligns well with many of the suggested criteria, and this offers us the opportunity to embed our work more meaningfully into development. The client will have their own specific social value plans stating who should benefit from their project, so early conversations during the project design process are crucial to establish how we can contribute. Local development plans prepared by the Local Planning Authority set out the framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social, environmental and public benefit priorities. If, as is increasingly common, the developer has a local neighbourhood liaison group they should be consulted and the conversation about the archaeological works widened to any local research interests, the potential for participatory practice and the eventual plans for dissemination.

Case study

Watching brief on a mid-Wales farm

Trysor

Even a simple watching brief, such as this one for a poultry unit on a mid-Wales farm, can produce valuable results. This site revealed two Bronze Age pits but was also a chance for the sharing of information and oral history with the family who farmed the land. A walk over the fields revealed an earthwork house platform, associated enclosures and a former field system, features unknown to them. The family pointed out a WW2 searchlight battery complex, and the excavating contractor knew of burnt mounds found during field drainage work. The discussion and exchange of information at this informal level leaves everyone, including local people and eventually the regional HER, much better informed.



Sharing local knowledge with the landowner and contractors. Credit: Trysor

Case study

Trams to Newhaven

City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service, Sacyr Farrans Neopol (SFN), Morrison Utilities Services (MUS) and GUARD Archaeology

Trams to Newhaven is a complex £200m+ four year project to connect Edinburgh's New Town with its historic medieval ports at Leith and Newhaven, adding 4.69km of track in both directions to connect to the current end of the Edinburgh tram line. Construction began in 2019 and the line is due to take its first passengers in spring 2023.

Scheme priorities

The potential for archaeological remains on the scheme was high and included the exhumation of 14th–17th-century gravesites. The development was recognised as having a high public interest because of the archaeological work but also because of the potential for disruption to residents while construction is in progress. As a result, the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits is a high priority for the scheme.

Identified benefits include

- targeted recruitment and training, for example through apprenticeships, training and work-shadowing opportunities and the creation of jobs
- supporting employment for people from disadvantaged groups
- mentoring opportunities from suppliers offering support and guidance to local organisations and individuals
- undertaking volunteering within communities
- community enhancements, for example playgrounds, habitat enhancements and environmental improvements
- offering sub-contracting opportunities to local SMEs

Outcome

Given the high visibility and public interest in the project it was decided to undertake the archaeological work in public with a focus on engagement. As a result of the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown, the project needed to use imaginative ways to engage with the public, local community, schools and groups. This included a regular YouTube vlog of the excavations, promoted via social media, local newsletters and the project website,



Tram excavation in Constitution Street, Edinburgh, July 2020.
Credit: City of Edinburgh Council

as well as other online activities including virtual site visits, presentations and video banking key activities throughout the archaeological works, so they can be utilised and shared with the local community: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/tramstonewhaven/community-benefits>.

The project also included the creation and funding of a year-long Archaeological Traineeship, the first of its type in Scotland. Based within the MUS's archaeological contractors GUARD Archaeology, it was designed as a non-graduate opportunity to acquire the appropriate training to become an archaeologist, certified through completion of a vocational qualification and through professional accreditation by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, directly addressing the Skills, Education and Employment targets of the scheme.

Does knowledge creation count as public benefit?

The creation of knowledge and increasing understanding are important aspects of public benefit but are not the only ways we can contribute to the concept, so we need to be innovative and consider alternative ways of providing benefit from our work. Creating archives, producing grey literature reports and communicating results are central tenets of our professional and contractual obligations, but they should not be the sole ways in which we fulfil those obligations. Archaeology is multi-disciplinary and its contribution to many current concerns, with careful consideration of how to embed knowledge innovatively, should ensure our relevance (Holtorf 2020, 69–71).

What else could our public benefit be?

There is a strong emphasis on the research and educational value of all areas of archaeological work (Moshenska 2017, 8) and this is of course important to archaeologists as well as other areas of research relating to (for example) climate change, urbanism, population movement and public health. However, work on the potential of archaeology to contribute to wellbeing has illustrated the positive benefits people report after experiencing community archaeology, handling artefacts and even just being in proximity to historic places (Pennington et al 2018). This potential will not be realised if we focus solely on knowledge creation. The provision of interpretation, signage and other information media can be positive but people will not always require these, but rather the space and time to enjoy the unmediated response that some projects have successfully offered (eg Bloomberg-funded artwork based on the Walbrook stream <https://archello.com/project/forgotten-streams>). The display of sites and objects can be a very valuable part of this and even if this is not possible in situ, then some degree of acknowledgement of the past uses of a site can provide this contemplative or reflective opportunity to connect with the past. Archaeology is at its best when research informs design, using an enhanced understanding of the past to create rooted, distinctive places where people wish to live, work and play. The public benefit (and financial returns to the immediate client) we achieve through successful, thoughtful place-making may easily outweigh in reach and impact the contribution of an archaeological report.

How can we ensure public benefit is achieved?

For public benefit to be both sustainable and meaningful, it is important to commit to early intervention. The positive wellbeing impacts reported by Pennington et al (2018) were notably improved when there was the opportunity for meaningful participation. There will be a need to undertake decision-making in collaboration with various relevant communities (for example academic, local populations, special interest groups, education providers, and area or period-specific research groups, online if appropriate). Early identification of whom you want to benefit will steer the project towards its aims effectively. There are useful examples of this benefits-led approach already in operation in archaeology, with the National Lottery Heritage Fund's benefits framework for funding decisions and Cadw's impact reporting expectations in Wales.

Does academic output count as public benefit?

Yes – as long as we are clear about why we think this and how our project will contribute to academic research. It is important to consider from the outset how the academic research might be provided: online data sets, published articles or monographs, collaborative work with academics, archive only. Academic data need not only be from large-scale excavations, but also from smaller projects where assemblages, deposits or structures of specific research potential are expected that could contribute to research frameworks, both national and regional.

Case Study

HS2 Historic Environment Research and Delivery Strategy

John Halsted MCI(A), Senior Historic Environment Manager, HS2 Ltd

Setting objectives

The HS2 Historic Environment Research and Delivery Strategy (HERDS; HS2 Ltd 2017) was developed in response to the scale and archaeological potential of the project, extending 200km from London to the West Midlands across a swathe of English landscape, and affecting dozens of local communities. As a publicly funded project, and one which aspires to deliver a real legacy, the project required a historic environment approach that could maximise public benefit as well as good quality archaeology within programme and budget. The HERDS contains articulated objectives in three key areas: creating knowledge, involving people, and establishing a legacy.

Maximising outcomes

Having established a suite of over 50 objectives within HERDS, further collaboration and discussion has been necessary to refine those objectives and find ways to apply them practically, on the ground. In relation to the knowledge creation objectives, an ongoing series of round table meetings has been held to bring together participants from across the academic sector, commercial sector and relevant specialist groups, to discuss themes such as Palaeolithic archaeology, palaeo-environmental sampling, innovative digital recording systems, and approaches to burial grounds. These meetings have ensured that site by site decisions are taken against a backdrop of the broader archaeological context, best practice and wider knowledge to maximise the value of new knowledge gained. In addition, a variety of events and opportunities have been built into the delivery of the historic environment work to enable the delivery of objectives relating to community engagement, skills and education. These activities, designed by HS2 historic environment contractors and HS2 Ltd are reaching a range of recipients, including schools, students, local communities, local museums and interest groups (see the linked article within this PPP on HS2's Skills, Education and Employment strategy).

Covid-19 restrictions in 2020 presented an unusual challenge to work with communities, but have arguably allowed wider audiences to be reached through webinars (some with live links to site works), and have encouraged new mechanisms for interaction and enquiry to be trialled and developed. Community engagement has also included UAV 'tours', as well as innovative reconstructions of major sites, such as the Curzon Street Roundhouse (working with the University of Bradford), ensuring that the knowledge we are generating is accessible to a range of audiences.

Three communities have benefited directly from HERDS work during the pandemic over 1000 archaeologists, employed throughout, and growing in numbers; the digital community, through HS2's contribution to Heritage Open Days, the Festival of Archaeology and other broadcasts (including a recent BBC series); and a future generation of archaeologists through work experience, university collaborations, data-sharing for PhDs, and the HERDS digital data 'platform'.

Measuring public benefit

HERDS was designed to provide focus for the historic environment programme: the success of it will ultimately be measured by the effects of our work – the results of community engagement on individuals and local places and the impact of the project on sector skills, students and school children. Benefits might also be measured through the extent of the wider adoption of innovative techniques employed on the project or the development of archaeological practice along lines we have trialled, as well as by the impact of our work on new archaeological research in the UK and beyond. The realisation of these benefits will depend on the way in which the HERDS work is communicated – the reach of our community, education, and other legacy work, as well as the design and format of our digital and physical archives and our research publications. Getting this design right will be the driving force behind the HERDS post-excavation programme, the subject of ongoing and many more future collaborative discussions.

Sharing outcomes through collaboration with national media (Lion TV and the BBC). Credit: HS2 Ltd



What do we mean by targeted research aims?

The research aims for an archaeological project will be set by a team who could include local archaeological advisors to the regulatory authority, archaeological practices, and those with an academic interest. Targeted research aims could reflect local concerns, for example assessing how the historic street patterns have been reflected in a modern town; how ancient trade routes and goods have been maintained or abandoned; why particular zones of use such as residential, industrial and commercial are situated in their current location; or the presence/absence in the archaeological record of particular groups or communities. The details of these local research aims should ideally be established through consultation, perhaps through local schools, community groups or other relevant affected communities. Here archaeology can act as a conduit between the developer and the communities, to embed local interest into our strategy and incorporate this aspect of public benefit into the construction. Archaeology as a process can also help to situate people within their local environment, whether or not what we find is of traditional 'archaeological interest'. It is important to remember that research aims need not necessarily be directly related to technical aspects of the archaeological work, but might instead focus on other characteristics of the local landscape: its previous or current land use by particular members of the community, important or valued local history events or people, or the acknowledgement of the impact of change on the communities living and/or working in any buildings to be replaced, or open land to be developed. We won't always recognise these, so some degree of consultation will help to identify where we can contribute to this specifically local focus.

Co-creation of research

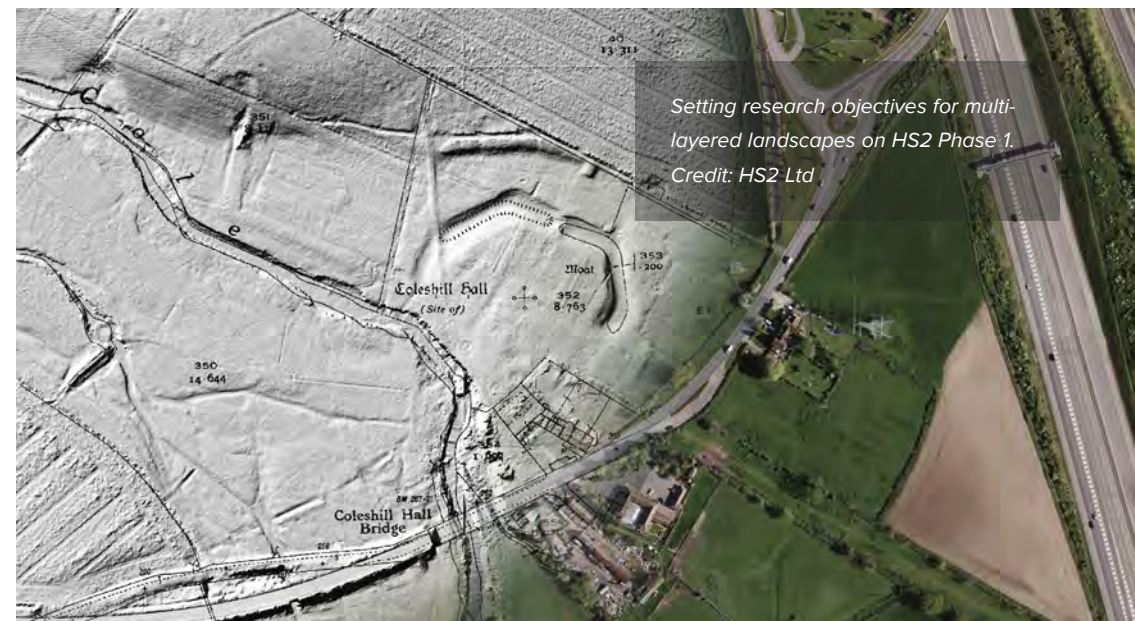
There is evidence that enabling communities to contribute to research designs has positive effects on community wellbeing, including outcomes on social relationships, sense of belonging, pride of place, ownership and collective empowerment.

We should also strive not to assume the position of expert in all topics, as there will be much local or community knowledge that can help refine a project. However, our expertise will be needed to develop the project further and community groups often report the benefit gained from working with professionals (eg the Clachtoll Broch case study included in this guide).

The co-creation of research might also result in the creation of spaces or material targeted towards specific groups, which could be seen as contrary to the concept of public benefit. This shouldn't prevent us undertaking the process however, as the public benefit outcomes of projects will have been identified as provision of specific benefits intended for a target community, age group or related to a particular geographical location.

Is participation always the best way to provide public benefit?

There is no set way to embed public benefit into development-led archaeology. It will depend on the project, the aims of the developer and considerations of the various communities. Co-creation of research is desirable; if thematic/synthetic research is already underway then the aims will necessarily be targeted towards that. Nor is access to sites and rapid dissemination of complex results always possible. The key is to maintain the focus on specific public benefit outcomes and be clear why these specific outcomes have been established. This shouldn't prevent dissemination of results at a later stage, of course.



Case study

Clachtoll Broch: saving an icon in the north

Graeme Cavers MClfA, AOC Archaeology Group

The broch at Clachtoll in Assynt, Sutherland, on Scotland's northwest coast, is one of the area's most iconic archaeological monuments. Sited on a rocky knoll facing the Minch and with views to the Outer Hebrides and Skye on clear days, the dramatic location had also placed the future of the site in jeopardy, as increasingly powerful storms battered its drystone walls and undermined its footings. In the late 2000s, community heritage group Historic Assynt resolved to take action to conserve the site, and instigated a programme of detailed survey, conservation management planning and stabilisation works designed to ensure the short-term survival of the site while a longer-term strategy was devised.

As the 4m-thick composite walls were filled with around 300 tonnes of rubble, and survived to over 4m in height in places, consolidation and repair of the monument was a complex challenge. Engineering appraisals, including experimental modelling carried out by the University of Edinburgh, had shown that the broch survived in a meta-stable state, with the implication that dismantling and restoration in one area would inevitably disturb and destabilise others. Furthermore, the limited stabilisation works carried out early in the project had shown that sensitive archaeological deposits survived within the interior; these were unavoidably at risk in the event of a collapse caused by erosion or from intervention in the process of consolidation. In short, following an options appraisal, there were few alternatives but to design a project that stabilised the broch walls while also dealing with the archaeological deposits in the interior through full excavation. Working with Historic Environment Scotland and AOC Archaeology Group, Historic Assynt raised funds for a collaborative project involving a professional archaeological team coordinating a volunteer workforce, consulting engineers and architects working alongside archaeologists and stonemasons. The field programme took place over three months in summer 2017, with minor follow-up works carried out in 2018 and 2019.

Clachtoll broch is a structure with a long and complex history, and as the excavation works proceeded it became clear that significant structural alterations had taken place in antiquity, some more ill-advised than others, and that the building had suffered catastrophic failures in the past. The low tensile strength of the Old Stoer formation sandstone from which the broch is built meant that lintel failures were probably common, and there is evidence for wholesale rebuilds of the broch in numerous places.

This fact meant that stabilisation and support of failing areas of the structure was often challenging, and the compromise between safety of visitors, safety of the monument and structural authenticity was at times difficult to strike. In close consultation with HES's casework officers and architects, in most places the preferred solution was for light-touch restoration of stonework, but with supporting stainless steel bars and a bedrock-dowelled concrete plinth clearly discernible as a modern insertion where this was unavoidable.

The archaeology of occupation levels in the interior was spectacular. A series of floor refurbishments encompassing three superimposed stone hearths contained evidence for craft activities in the form of textile production, bone and antler carving and cereal processing. Decorated ceramics, carved steatite vessels, a variety of coarse stone tools and, exceptionally, a range of metal tools including reaping hooks and scythes were recovered. The occupation levels were sealed by a final burning event, evidenced by a thick layer of ash and charcoal buried beneath collapsed rubble. A modelled radiocarbon chronology indicates that the occupation layers were likely formed over little more than half a century after 50 BC.

Despite the many inevitable challenges along the road, the *Clachtoll Broch project* in many ways embodies the ideal model for collaboration between statutory bodies, professional archaeologists, local contractors and the local community. Carried out as a community-led excavation, every opportunity was taken for training in excavation, sampling and survey techniques, while an accompanying outreach programme delivered site tours, school visits, web updates, lectures and articles in the local and national press. Working together, Historic Assynt and the project partners secured the future of the broch, promoting engagement with its fascinating archaeology and creating a spectacular heritage asset in one of Scotland's most stunning landscapes. The success of the project is testament to their commitment and a demonstration of the power of community-led, collaborative archaeology.

The Clachtoll Broch project was funded through the Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape Partnership: www.coigach-assynt.org




Aerial image of the broch at Clachtoll, Assynt, following excavation and conservation by Historic Assynt and AOC Archaeology Group. Credit: AOC Archaeology Group/John Town

Questions

What about unexpected discoveries?

The idea that we should promote the benefits-based approach can lead to concerns about chance finds or unexpectedly important archaeological discoveries being uncovered during fieldwork. This is of particular relevance on watching briefs or evaluations that lead to limited further work but might reveal assets and information of local significance. It is important on projects like these to ensure the client is aware of the potential to enhance the development through archaeology, so that an appropriate strategy can be outlined. These will not be projects with significant levels of funding but there are still opportunities for public benefit. A flexible approach during fieldwork and an awareness of how unexpected finds may relate to the public benefit aims of the project can remove these concerns, as (for example) increased social media coverage, temporary provision of access to the site or the artefacts through temporary displays, visits off-site or interpretation boards, online news updates or an adaption of the dissemination plans can ensure the reach of the public benefit is enhanced due to these chance finds.

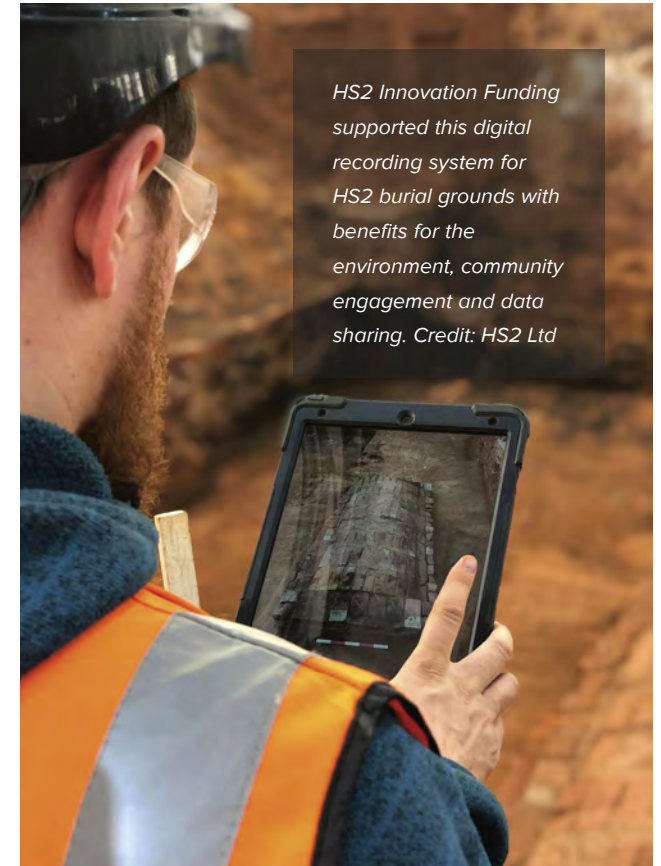


A UAV is captured mid-take-off as it begins an aerial survey of the Site. In the background Wessex Archaeology archaeologists dig, excavate and record features relating to Iron Age occupation at Coleshill, on HS2 Phase 1. Credit: Wessex Archaeology

Putting public benefit at the heart of archaeology

Our profession is facing various challenges. Meeting those challenges means understanding and acting consciously and explicitly on our obligations to the public, and promoting our achievements. We have guidance on how to achieve that (ClfA 2020a, 3–4).

We now need to think innovatively about how to widen the scope of our public benefit, through developing processes and practices, taking inspiration and advice from other sectors, incorporating consultation and collaboration at every stage where possible. There is great potential to gain support for this within our client body if we are clear about the value our work provides and how it can contribute to their own social value obligations. Archaeology is commonly described as the study of material remains of the human past. This should be understood as encompassing a responsibility to ensure that through our professional practice we help people of the present build understanding, knowledge of how our environment shapes our actions and how we navigate our world. The principles of professionalism encourage inclusive practice and provide us with the framework to embed a more open approach to development-led archaeology in the future.



Case study

Demonstrating the economic benefits of bringing historic environment assets back into use – the case of the Regency restoration project, Carmarthenshire

Angharad Phillips, National Botanic Garden of Wales and Andrea Bradley MCifA, Evaluation Consultant

We often talk about the close connection between the historic environment and economic activity, believing that heritage assets contribute to the competitive nature of a place and act as a catalyst for economic growth. The data that inform these statements are challenging to unravel – how much of any impact is due to the historic environment itself, and how much to other factors such as improved infrastructure, changes in the habits of a local community, or the ebb and flow of other economic circumstances?

An example from the National Botanic Garden of Wales (NBGW) clearly shows the ‘before and after’ effects of the reintroduction of restored heritage assets on local businesses over a period of change, from 2018 to 2021, based on targeted evaluation survey undertaken as part of the project. With local and national government involvement and significant contribution by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, evaluating the benefits of the project was a condition of the funding. A framework for evaluation was established at the start of the project with economic benefit, including effects on local and national businesses, a key area of benefit measurement.

The *Regency restoration project*, located in part of the Botanic Garden’s 568 acres, was a five-year project to restore the features of a Regency-period landscape created for William Paxton in the late 18th and early 19th centuries

<https://botanicgarden.wales/about-the-garden/regency-restoration/>. The project’s aims were, through restoration, to increase visitor numbers, create employment and offer educational opportunities. The project has restored a 65,000m³ lake (Llyn Mawr), a 9000m³ lake (Llyn Felin Gât), a 350m dam, cascades, a waterfall and six bridges. New paths as well as viewing platforms connect the features and draw visitors into the historic landscape, connecting it to the adjacent parklands and the rest of the Botanic Garden.

The business evaluation survey targeted local and wider businesses with direct questions about the impact of the restoration of the heritage landscape, aside from the general potential offered by the NBGW. Other economic impacts (on visitor numbers and skills, for example) were also measured, the results not covered here. The data both illustrate and justify the sorts of statements we make all the time, and for which we are often hard pressed to give examples. More frequent evaluation of this sort across the sector on a project basis could provide the kind of evidence we need both to help sustain the sector and attract more investment in our work.

Key business survey results:

- Between 2019 and 2021, 24 local businesses were engaged in the project, 62% of them within a 15-mile radius of the NBGW in 2021
- 50% of these engaged businesses were design and construction based, the other 50% in retail, accommodation, training and other specialist trades
- 35% of businesses involved employed additional staff as a result of their engagement in the project
- For nearly 30% of businesses involved, work on the project was a new area of business for them
- 80% of businesses believe that the restored heritage will bring more visitors to the Botanic Garden in the future, thereby benefiting local business in the longer term.



Photograph of the National Botanic Garden of Wales Regency restoration project taken in May 2021. Credit: NBGW

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