

Cornwall Heritage Trust Impact Report 2025/2026



What an incredible year of support, involvement and connection 2025/26 has been. The year marked our 40th anniversary of protecting Cornwall's heritage and there really was so much to celebrate.

From welcoming new historic sites into our care to inspiring the next generation, and from restoring endangered habitats to developing ambitious projects and opportunities, there is so much to be proud of.

This report is a snapshot of all the work we do to protect Cornwall's heritage, and we're sure you'll agree that it has truly been a monumental 12 months.

Protecting heritage is about more than caring for historic buildings and landscapes. It's about keeping Cornwall's stories alive, creating opportunities for people to connect with their past, and ensuring these places remain part of our communities for generations to come.

This work is all made possible by our supporters and funders.

Every membership, donation, grant and act of support makes a difference. We're so proud of what we're achieving together and incredibly grateful to have you alongside us as we continue to grow.







Engagement.

Volunteering.

Education.

Historic Sites.







Case Study: 40th Anniversary celebrations

Last year, we marked a milestone birthday: 40 years of rescuing and caring for the places that tell Cornwall's story. It was quite the celebration!

We hosted a wealth of large public events and community initiatives to celebrate the successes of the last four decades. These events helped raise awareness about the continued importance of our work and ensured we can keep growing for the next 40 years and beyond. Highlights included lighting a specially commissioned brazier at each of our historic sites; partnering with Kresen Kernow to run a free social history exhibition; hosting a special fundraising garden party at Trengwainton and lighting up St Michael's Mount in Cornwall Heritage Trust colours.

We even had a film commissioned to capture the milestone! The year had the most wonderful atmosphere and was such a special way to celebrate the incredible impact of protecting Cornwall's heritage together as a community.

Watch the film here.

We celebrated

40 years of protecting Cornwall's heritage

with **16** **beacon lightings**

involving **10** **partner organisations**

and attended by over **1,000** **people**

More than **700** **celebration cupcakes** were enjoyed as part of the festivities

80% of our members live in **Cornwall**

We welcomed over **12,000** members

When surveyed, the top area most valued for membership was **looking after heritage sites**

"You are supporting the ancient sites of Cornwall and the talks, events and support for children and young people are incredible. I can't praise you highly enough." Member

We hosted **54** heritage community events all across Cornwall

and over **10,000** **people took part**

Castilly Henge Excavation

Nearly **1,000** people came to a story cafe, talk or open day about the dig.

Over **140** people took part in a community group visit or NHS Social Prescribing session as part of the excavation.

"We especially loved the practical elements of the session, from sieving soil to using Polaroid cameras."
NHS Support Worker

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Case Study: Castilly Henge excavation

In Autumn 2025, we were part of a major project to reveal the secrets of Castilly Henge – a unique prehistoric ritual site described by experts as "Cornwall's ancient sacred heart". It involved a four-week archaeological excavation to target important questions about the monument.

A comprehensive community outreach and volunteering programme ran alongside the excavation, ensuring the dig was as socially meaningful as it was scientifically important. As part of this, more than 80 volunteers and two training internship placements gave over 2,200 hours of their time, working alongside professional archaeologists to directly support the dig.

It was extremely unusual to have the opportunity to involve the local community behind the scenes of an excavation on this scale. Accessibility, learning, and shared stewardship were central principles, encouraging people of all ages to learn about the heritage on their doorstep and connect with the site's deep past.

The project was a collaboration between

Historic England

CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CORNWALL HERITAGE TRUST
TREST ERTACH KERNOW



185

volunteers

generously gave their time and expertise to support our charitable work.

They took part in over

97

volunteering events



In total they gave

5,338

hours of their time

That's worth over



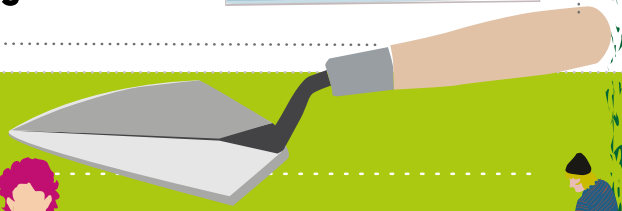


We hosted

30

Volunteer Ranger Days

Castilly Henge Excavation





78 volunteers **&** **2** training internship placements

gave **2,292** hours to the dig

The training internships were open to those not currently in education, employment or training.

100%

said they learnt something new from the experience

"I loved every minute of my volunteering and you provided a great insight into your work. The combined agencies and charities working together seemed seamless to an outsider – I'm sure it was very difficult to organise!"
Volunteer

50%

of volunteers working on the site **were not aware of Castilly Henge before the excavation**



For **66%** of volunteers it was their first experience of an archaeological dig



"Thank you so much for the opportunity... The placement has been incredible and I am coming away from the experience with so much pride."
Training Intern

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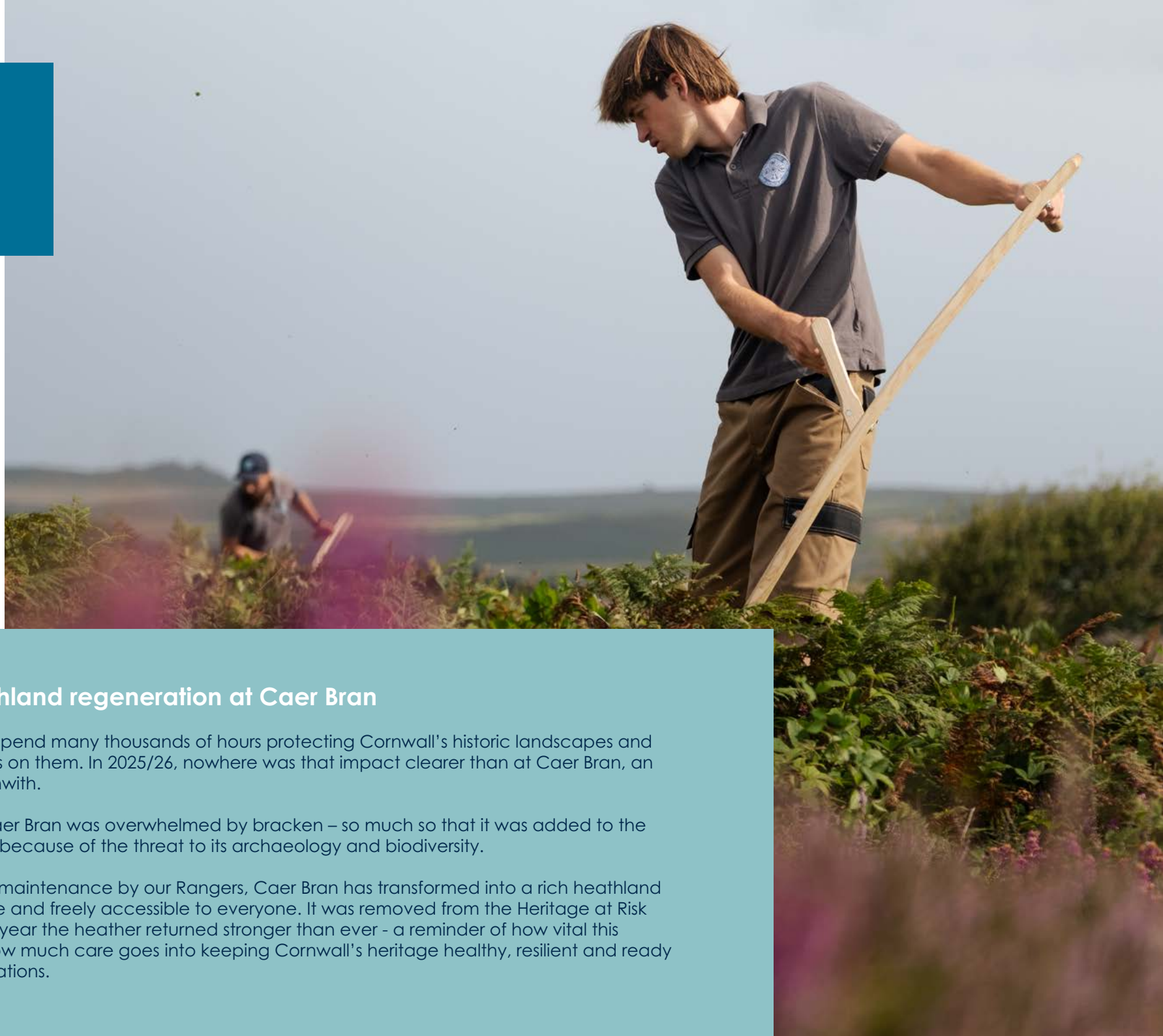
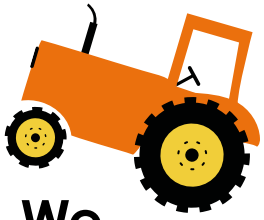


Case Study: Heathland regeneration at Caer Bran

Every year, our Rangers spend many thousands of hours protecting Cornwall's historic landscapes and the wildlife that depends on them. In 2025/26, nowhere was that impact clearer than at Caer Bran, an ancient hilltop site in Penwith.

Just a few years ago, Caer Bran was overwhelmed by bracken – so much so that it was added to the Heritage at Risk Register because of the threat to its archaeology and biodiversity.

Thanks to regular, skilled maintenance by our Rangers, Caer Bran has transformed into a rich heathland habitat, alive with wildlife and freely accessible to everyone. It was removed from the Heritage at Risk Register in 2024 and last year the heather returned stronger than ever - a reminder of how vital this continues work is and how much care goes into keeping Cornwall's heritage healthy, resilient and ready to be enjoyed for generations.



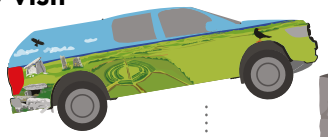


We preserved and strengthened...

20

Cornwall's most important heritage sites to protect their archaeology, support the wildlife that lives there and ensure they are free for everyone to visit











Over **300** acres of historic landscapes

much of which falls within SSSIs, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, County Wildlife Sites or Areas of Great Landscape







More than **60** protected, rare or endangered species





which have the potential to live on, nearby or frequent our sites

Last year, we welcomed into our care...



Castle an Dinas (West)
A rare Iron Age hillfort and 18th-century folly



East Pentire Headland
A clifftop site inhabited since prehistoric times overlooking famed surfing beaches



Warbstow Bury
Cornwall's second-largest and best-preserved Iron Age fort



Houseman's Engine House
An iconic engine house and former home of Minions Heritage Centre

"It's brilliant that you are protecting the ancient sites, not just the castles."
Member

"Cornwall needs to protect and defend its unique culture and monuments. The Cornwall Heritage Trust plays a vital part in ensuring that this not only happens but that the vital importance of this is drawn to the attention of those with power and influence."
Member

"If our heritage is allowed to decay, it cannot be replaced. It is important to act now to protect what has survived this long."
Member

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Case Study: Site workshops and transport grants

Inspiring the next generation to connect with their roots is a vital part of our charitable work. In 2025/26, we saw the need and impact of that in action as our wide-reaching programme of free or affordable workshops for schools, alternative education provision and community groups more than doubled the number of sessions and children and young people benefiting from them.

With fuel prices continuing to skyrocket, we're also incredibly proud to have funded the transport for record numbers of trips to our historic sites and many museums across Cornwall.

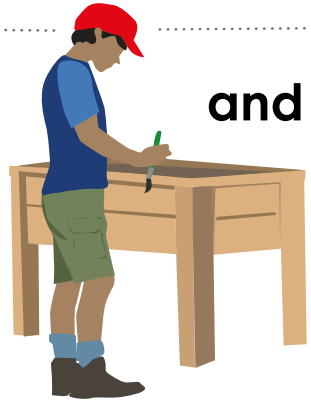
Since our School Transport Grants Scheme was introduced in 2014, over 36,000 children have benefited from this vital funding, helping young people to build a sense of place, identity and pride in the places, stories and landscapes that shaped Cornwall.



Nearly **3,000** young people joined our education events and workshops

Our team hosted **60** school workshops





and **10** sessions for alternative education provision

School Transport Grants Scheme

Last year, this funding benefitted **3,382** children



5x more than when we launched the scheme in 2014



enabling **83** school trips

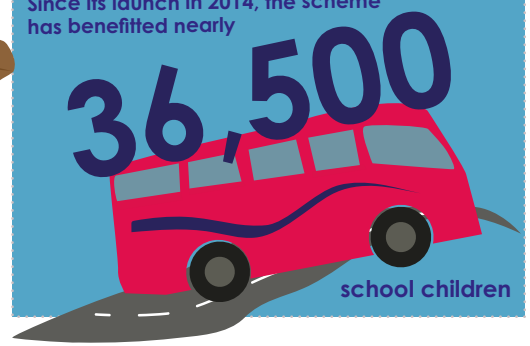


to **25** heritage sites across Cornwall

The top 5 visited were...

- Castilly Henge
- Cornwall Museum and Art Gallery
- Geevor Tin Mine
- National Maritime Museum Cornwall
- Pendennis Castle

Since its launch in 2014, the scheme has benefitted nearly **36,500** school children



Castilly Henge Excavation



Over **340** children from local primaries, secondaries and home education groups took part in an outreach workshop at the site.



"Caroline's knowledge and enthusiasm were exceptional – she explained complex ideas clearly, answered questions with real expertise, and brought the history of the site to life in a way that captivated both students and staff."
Teacher



"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience to witness history being dug up right in front of our eyes!"
Child

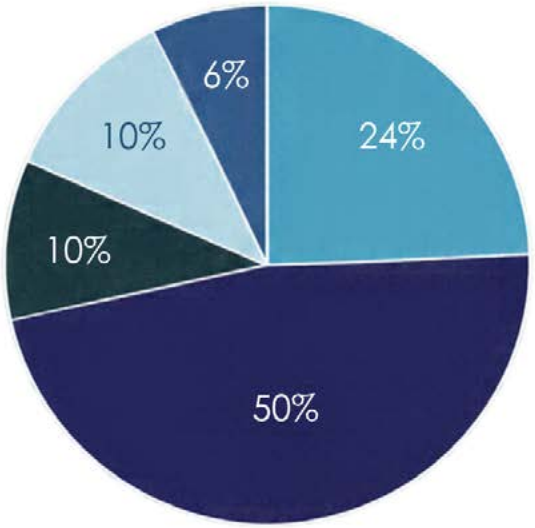
5 schools took part in a collaborative workshop with artist Robin Sullivan



How we are funded.



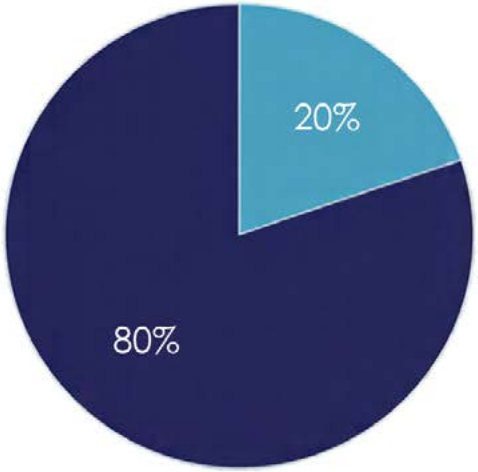
Total Income



- Donations and Legacies £145,638
- Grants £300,804
- Charitable Activities £35,075
- Other Trading Activities £60,790
- Investments £60,308

Total £602,615

Total Expenditure



- Raising Funds £184,432
- Charitable Activities £756,995

Total £941,427

A huge thank you to all our grant funders this past year, what a difference your support makes.

Please note: at the time of publication the annual financial audit was not complete and these figures are subject to change. Please refer to the annual accounts, available on request, it is not anticipated that there will be major changes.

Thank you

A huge thank you to our members, donors, supporters and friends for their contributions to the charity this year. We endeavour to make the best possible use of your gift and appreciate your commitment to preserving and strengthening Cornwall's heritage and the work that we do.

Heritage Friends and Heroes

Our corporate sponsorship scheme enables businesses in Cornwall to have a direct impact on our work. Whether they are part of our Heritage Friends scheme or have a more bespoke Heritage Hero relationship, we are grateful for their willingness to be part of our work. Last year, we partnered with organisations including **Coodes Solicitors, Cornish Lithium, Classic Cottages, Lou Tonkin, Poynton Bradbury, The Cornwall Hotel Collection, Cornish Metals, RBC Brewin Dolphin, Treleavens, Cornish Horizons, Unique Hideaways, St Eval, Aspects Holidays, Lovat Holiday Parks, Cornish Cottage Holidays, BK Plus, Beacon VetCare, St Justin Jewellery, holidaycottages.co.uk, Colwith Farm Distillery, Healeys, Camel Valley and Navas Drinks.**

Funders

Over the last few years, we have transformed the organisation with more than a little help from external funders, Trusts and Foundations. Their grants have enabled us to increase capacity, introduce new initiatives and build a resilient and sustainable organisation. Their funding allows us to take calculated risks and create a strategic plan which is more challenging but that will ultimately have far greater outcomes for Cornwall's heritage, communities and places. Particular thanks to the **National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Lottery Community Fund, the UK Government (through the Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund), Cornwall Council, Cornwall National Landscape Farming in Protected Landscapes Funding, Garfield Weston, the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, Historic England, the Tanner Phoenix Trust, Great Western Railway** and **FEAST Cornwall**.

Statutory Partners

We are proud of the relationships that we have built with **Cornwall Council, Historic England, Natural England** and **Cornwall National Landscape**, to name only a few. Their advice, guidance and support ensure that we produce the best possible outcomes for the historic sites in our care.

Partner Organisations

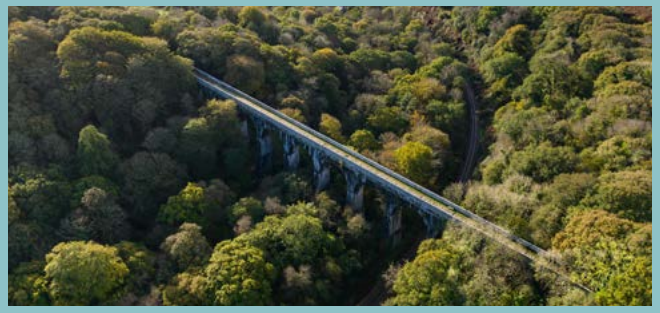
We believe that collaboration results in a stronger project and a greater impact. We work with numerous groups, individuals and organisations through the **Bord Ertach Kernow, Cornwall National Landscape Partnership** and the **Luxulyan Valley Partnership**. Special mentions go to **Cornish Mining World Heritage Sites** team, **Cornwall National Landscape, the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Kresen Kernow, English Heritage** and **Gorsedh Kernow**.

It is a pleasure to work with such passionate and knowledgeable partners. We would also like to thank the organisations that offer free and discounted entry to our members: **English Heritage, PK Porthcurno, Geevor Tin Mine, King Edward Mine, Wheal Martyn, the National Maritime Museum Cornwall** and the **National Lobster Hatchery.**

Bequests

The generous legacies bequeathed to the charity have played a fundamental part in enabling us to grow and build the organisation; we are very grateful to those who remembered us in their Will so that Cornwall's heritage will be appreciated and enjoyed for generations to come.







Looking Ahead.







Building a Sustainable Charity

Looking ahead, we are focused on building a more financially sustainable and resilient charity, ensuring we can continue to protect, conserve and share our heritage for generations to come.

Our strategy sets out an ambitious programme to diversify our income, grow long-term supporter relationships and develop new opportunities for fundraising. This includes expanding regular giving and membership, strengthening our relationships with major donors and corporate partners, and developing a more strategic approach to grants and project-based fundraising.

We will also explore new ways to engage supporters and generate income, including visitor giving, legacy donations, cause-related marketing and an expanded merchandise offer. Alongside this, we will look to develop our events programme and test new membership opportunities to reach wider audiences.

Over the coming years, our ambition is to move towards a more balanced mix of income, with stronger recurring donations, longer-term partnerships and a sustainable pipeline of funding opportunities.

By investing in these areas now, we are laying the foundations for a charity that is more financially resilient, better equipped to respond to future challenges and able to deliver lasting impact for the heritage and communities we serve.



Preserve



To preserve and enhance our Cornish heritage: sites, culture and environment for the benefit of current and future generations.







Promote



To promote and strengthen, with sensitivity, Cornwall's tangible and intangible heritage.







Connect





To tell the story of Cornwall's heritage in an engaging and inspiring way to ensure our history is accessible to the widest possible audience: locally, nationally and globally balancing history, social context and contemporary perspectives, 'bringing to life' our heritage through first class interpretation.





Educate

To educate the communities of Cornwall, and inspire not least our young people, about Cornish heritage and its importance to future generations.



Can you support us in the year ahead?

Get in touch with your ideas fundraising@cornwallheritagetrust.org



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