



Strategic Plan 2023-26

Vision, mission and aim for the strategic period

Heritage Crafts' **vision** is:

- **A society in which heritage craft skills are popularly acknowledged as being of vital cultural importance, and are nurtured and celebrated for their own intrinsic value, not just for the objects or environments they produce, conserve or restore.**

Heritage Crafts' **mission** is:

- **To support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.**

For 2023-25 Heritage Crafts' **aim** is:

- To achieve its vision and mission by acting as a **bridging organisation**, connecting:
 - **national and regional stakeholders** – to ensure that limited resources are maximised through collaboration
 - **craftspeople and the general public** – to increase the perceived value and appreciation of heritage craft skills
 - **younger and older generations** – to help transmit and exchange heritage craft skills and enthusiasm
 - **geographical, social, cultural and identity communities** – to democratise opportunities in heritage crafts and learn from diverse perspectives
 - **individuals with own creative agency** – to counteract growing disconnects in society and improve wellbeing through heritage crafts

Values

Our work is underpinned by our proactive commitments to:

- **Equity and inclusivity** – removing barriers to participation and fostering appreciation of heritage crafts across diverse communities.
- **Credibility and authority** – based on the extensive knowledge and expertise of our maker communities.
- **Collaboration and cooperation** – facilitating connection and collaboration between makers, supporters and partner organisations.
- **Sustainability and stewardship** – mindfulness of cultural, environmental and economic impacts of our obligation to safeguarding craft practices.
- **Integrity and honesty** – dealing fairly, transparently, accountably and consultatively.
- **Continual learning and development** – to safeguard heritage skills and adapt to changing socio-political and economic contexts.

We work with organisations and individuals who share these values, and expect everyone involved with Heritage Crafts to uphold them.

About us

Heritage Crafts is the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts in the UK. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, networks and organisations, as well as members of the public who care about the survival of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future.

Heritage Crafts is the operating name of 'The Heritage Crafts Association', founded in 2009 and registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (number 1159208) in 2014. Its charitable purpose is to advance public knowledge and appreciation of traditional and heritage crafts, in particular, but not exclusively, through education, advice and training.

Heritage Crafts defines heritage crafts as those practices that require a high degree of hand skill at the point of production and have been active in the UK for two or more generations, regardless of where they originated in the world, including those of migrant and diaspora communities. Its beneficiaries are the public as a whole, for whom craft skills provide a collective cultural resource, not just the craftspeople within whom those skills reside.

In its first 13 years, and resourced through membership income and donations from supportive individuals and charitable foundations, Heritage Crafts has grown organically and achieved a number of significant successes. Today, Heritage Crafts has five part-time staff

members, a dedicated Board of Trustees and a membership of around 1,300, comprising both professional and amateur craftspeople and supporters.

Despite huge successes for an organisation of its size, many of the issues that Heritage Crafts set out to resolve are rooted in national and international social trends that have developed over successive decades, including the reduction in creative and vocational education and training, and the devaluing of human skill and practices that are often not seen as contributing to an increasingly narrow definition of economic productivity. While these issues have not yet been resolved, the work of the first 13 years has put Heritage Crafts in a unique position to make significant in-roads as a catalyst for change.

Progress to date has been achieved amidst rapidly changes in the cultural sector and wider society. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that we had to pivot our work quickly to adjust to online interaction, changes in working patterns and financial difficulties resulting from the pandemic. The re-evaluation of what constitutes fulfilling work and away from city-centred conurbations put the spotlight on traditional craft practices like never before, somewhat counteracting pervading trends of neoliberalism that sought to reduce individuals to units of economic production and consumption.

Meanwhile, a long overdue focus on social justice has been taking place, both in terms of access to and ownership of culture amongst previously underrepresented groups, and the environmental impacts of human activity. Heritage Crafts seeks to challenge assumptions about whose heritage is being referred to when we are talking about heritage crafts, to use its position to give a voice to those that have been traditionally excluded from such discussions, and to challenge explicit and implicit prejudices, including those embedded in the structures of our institutions and public discourses in ways that disadvantage, disenfranchise and alienate people. It does not claim you have the answers but is not afraid to ask the questions, and in turn be questioned and challenged by others, and be prepared to change.

This strategy sets out a three-year plan to make major strides in realising Heritage Crafts' mission and help bring about its vision for the future. It follows a Theory of Change model, working back from the vision of society that would be achieved should Heritage Crafts be successful in its mission, working backwards to identify necessary preconditions and changes required to enable that vision to come about.

Strategic priorities

Before detailing the changes necessary to bring about Heritage Crafts' vision, it is necessary to identify the issues preventing this, both current in 2023 and anticipated in the coming years. These include:

- 1. Increase support for heritage crafts at national and local government level.** None of the UK government departments or agencies for the arts, heritage or business have taken responsibility for heritage crafts as a sector, and local government support is still very sparse, compounded by challenging economic factors. In addition, the UK is one of only 12 of the 193 member states of UNESCO that has not ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Countries that are signed up to the Convention are required to map and provide support for intangible heritage (of which traditional craftsmanship is one of five domains), especially instances that are at risk of dying out.
- 2. Increase training routes for people wishing to become heritage craftspeople.** The relatively few government-supported apprenticeships available are often poorly suited to the requirements of the sole traders and micro-businesses that make up the vast majority of the heritage crafts sector. Often accreditation is less important to the craft business in terms of ensuring standards (for often the assessors are not specialists and do not have the required craft expertise), than for drawing down funding, for which it is essential. However, the few funded opportunities that are currently available go towards the salary of the apprentice and do not compensate the trainer for the time spent away from production in order to carry out the training, which is more significant the smaller the business. The lack of support for training is one of the main factors that has led to an ageing sector, with many craftspeople approaching or beyond retirement age with reduced opportunities for passing on their skills.
- 3. Increase the provision of creative subjects and haptic skills taught in schools.** Many employers are finding that young people are leaving the education system with few practical skills, poor dexterity and hand/eye coordination. This stems from the reduction in creative and practical subjects taught in schools in favour of literacy and numeracy, feeding a neoliberal model of education whereby performance can be ranked and market forces relied upon to push up standards. The lack of skills training continues through further and higher education with many graduates of craft degrees reported to be unable to master the basic skills of using tools and working with materials effectively, having focused on theory and conceptual innovation for the majority of their degrees.
- 4. Alleviate the difficulties facing crafts businesses.** This includes the bureaucratic burden for small businesses, business rates and the cost of workshop space, and competition with mass production and low-wage economies.
- 5. Increase appreciation for heritage craft skills among the general public.** This stems partly from the consequence of the lack of craft skills taught in schools, with cohorts of adults having never worked with their hands or had the opportunity to appreciate the skill that goes into making the objects that surround them. It is also the result of the immediate availability of consumer goods and the increasing separation between producer and consumer in a globalised economy. Popular craft television programmes have gone some way to increase the appreciation of craft and this is a major positive.

- 6. Increase social justice in relation to the representation and ownership of heritage crafts.** Throughout history UK society has been full of inequalities, many of which continue to this day. Sometimes these are expressed as explicit prejudices, but often they are implicit, embedded in the structures of our institutions and public discourses in ways that disadvantage and disenfranchise them. It is important to broaden the representation of heritage crafts practices to include those communities that have previously been excluded, provide a platform for a broader range of voices, and a space that is prepared to embrace change in order to improve social justice.
- 7. Alleviate the alienation of individuals, including the segmentation of society and broken relationships with locality and modes of production, including their own creative agency.** There is a widely-reported mental health crisis in the UK, particularly among young people. We believe that this is partly as a result of factors discouraging people from engaging in making activities which are a key component in living a well-rounded life, as has always been the case. Work practices and mainstream media consumption discourage time away from the screen, we have a decreasing connection to, or affiliation with, the trades and industries that made our localities, and we have less information about the products we consume – where they are made, who by, and how. We believe that the act of making has a direct impact on the sense of agency that pervades every other aspect of our lives, including personally, socially and politically.

By addressing and finding solutions for each of these strategic issues, Heritage Crafts believes that it can make great strides towards achieving its vision.

Approaches

The strategic issues laid out need to be engaged with in different ways depending on the nature of the issue. These can be divided into five broad approaches:

- **Knowledge** – increasing knowledge of the status of heritage crafts and the challenges faced
- **Advocacy** – influencing government, policymakers and funders to improve the likelihood of craft skills surviving and flourishing
- **Safeguarding** – ensuring that the highest standard of craft skills are passed from one generation to the next
- **Support** – supporting craftspeople to practice, nurture and pass on their craft
- **Engagement** – raising awareness and interest with the wider public

The first approach, Knowledge, is a way of working in its own right, but it also stands alone in that it informs each of the four other approaches by providing an evidence base upon which they can be strengthened.

The table below gives some idea of how these approaches can lead to the kinds of impacts that will help Heritage Crafts achieve its mission using a Theory of Change model.

	Knowledge	Advocacy	Safeguarding	Support	Engagement
Impacts	All stakeholders are aware of and in agreement about the case for supporting heritage crafts	The government has demonstrated its commitment to heritage crafts through legislation and practical support	Fewer craft skills are being lost as a result of problems relating to skills transfer	Craft businesses are more resilient and sustainable and craftspeople from all backgrounds have the resources they need to participate	More people are aware of the importance and relevance of craft to our cultural heritage
Outcomes	An improved evidence base to support advocacy, fundraising etc	Policy decisions are influenced in favour of heritage crafts	More craftspeople remain in the sector and more new craftspeople are trained. Crafts are recorded where one-to-one transmission is unfeasible	Crafts businesses are better resourced and networked to deal with the strategic issues facing them	Interest in and awareness of heritage crafts expands and the market for heritage craft products strengthens and perceived value increases
Activities	Carry out research on endangered crafts and the economic, social and cultural significance of crafts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with government officials • Engage with UNESCO and other partners on ICH • Develop partnerships with other organisations seeking similar outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endangered Crafts Fund • Develop training routes through partnerships in the education and learning sectors • Digital media to record endangered crafts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance resources • Develop access to funding • Provide networking opportunities • Support provided through membership benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR / social media / marketing • Makers Directory • Events • Work with broadcasters and filmmakers on television and radio and social media content

↓ Evidence base ↓

Action framework

The action framework below sets out exactly what Heritage Crafts plans to do to address each of the strategic priorities, what timescale it plans to do it in and how it will recognise whether or not it has been successful.

Strategic priorities addressed	Approach	Objective	Outputs	Key performance indicators
<p>1. Lack of government support</p> <p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p>	Knowledge	Develop the Red List of Endangered Crafts as a key source of heritage craft viability data	<p>Red List is continually monitored and updated every two years, with results/stories actively disseminated to the press.</p> <p>Red List is updated and refined in preparation for launches in May 2023 and May 2025.</p> <p>Four craft-specific symposia are run to unpack some of the broader craft categories and engage communities of practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red List 4 published in May 2023. • Funding/resources secured for Red List 5 by August 2024. • One craft symposium run in 2022/3, two in 2023/4, one in 2024/5 followed by a review of ongoing need in 2024.
<p>1. Lack of government support</p> <p>4. Difficulties facing crafts businesses</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p>	Knowledge	Research the socio-economic case for supporting Heritage Crafts, including cultural significance, to a broad range of communities.	Partner with research agencies and academics to research socio-economic case, producing set of recommendations for Heritage Crafts, sector agencies and government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review, methodology and resource assessment completed in 2023/24.
<p>1. Lack of government support</p> <p>2. Lack of training routes</p> <p>3. Lack of skills taught in schools</p>	Advocacy	Influence government, policymakers and funders to improve the likelihood of craft skills surviving and flourishing	Advocacy meetings with MPs, government officials, agencies and partner organisations on measures to overcome the six strategic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular programme of meetings with DCMS, DfE, IfATE and key sector agencies and organisations

<p>1. Lack of government support</p> <p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	<p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Increase awareness of role and importance of intangible cultural heritage in the UK</p>	<p>Establish role as a leading infrastructure organisation for ICH, acting as a consultant for other domains and key informant to the government on traditional craftsmanship.</p> <p>Advocate and prepare for UK ratification of the UNESCO 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage or the introduction of alternative measures of equivalent value.</p> <p>Grow links with UNESCO and international partners through the ICH Forum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish articles and speak at events on importance of ICH • Run a UK symposium on ICH in 2023/24 • Work with government and agencies in preparation for possible ratification of the 2003 Convention. • Attend UNESCO ICH Forum events overseas in 2023/24 to consolidate role as leading UK accredited NGO.
<p>2. Lack of training routes</p> <p>5. Difficulties facing crafts businesses</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>Administer a fund to help ensure that endangered crafts have a substantially improved chance of survival</p>	<p>Endangered Crafts Fund administered twice per year in accordance with parameters informed by Red List research and Endangered Crafts Manager post.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten grants per year to increase the likelihood of endangered crafts surviving. • Monitoring and evaluation to ensure grants are directed effectively.
<p>2. Lack of training routes</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>Administer a bursary scheme to ensure that under-represented groups gain access to training</p>	<p>Bursaries administered annually targeted at under-represented groups and protected characteristics, including those experiencing financial hardship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four bursaries of up to £4,000 awarded in 2023/24 • Six bursaries of at least £4,000 awarded in 2024/25 • Eight bursaries of at least £4,000 awarded in 2025/26 • Monitoring and evaluation to ensure bursaries are directed effectively.
<p>1. Lack of government support</p> <p>2. Lack of training routes</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>Develop, and facilitate the development of, additional apprenticeships, qualifications and training standards to allow craftspeople to access funding for training</p>	<p>Apprenticeship standards and qualifications developed in partnership with sector agencies and employers, administered by Heritage Crafts and partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete development of Craft Assistant apprenticeship ceramics option through to completion in 2023/24 • Add three craft options to Craft Assistant apprenticeship in 2024/25 and 2026/27 • Develop NVQ accredited heritage crafts qualification to be administered by Heritage Crafts through a network of freelance trainers and assessors by 2024/25 • Work in partnership with key agencies to develop additional training options

<p>2. Lack of training routes</p> <p>4. Difficulties facing crafts businesses</p>	Safeguarding	<p>Provide support for early career craftspeople looking to develop business, networking and marketing skills to make their businesses more sustainable</p>	<p>A mentoring scheme matching craftspeople with other craftspeople and business advisors for advice, guidance and peer-support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up pilot scheme with at least six mentorships in 2023/24 • Expand mentoring scheme with at least 15 mentorships in 2024/25 and 2025/26
<p>2. Lack of training routes</p> <p>3. Lack of skills taught in schools</p>	Safeguarding	<p>Develop partnerships in the education sector</p>	<p>Initiate a working group to take forward agreed education recommendations from external consultancy.</p> <p>Develop more craft-based learning resources for non-specialist teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education consultant to be recruited in 2022/23. • Education working group to be set up in 2023/24. • 15 craft based learning resources created by 2024/25.
<p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	Engagement	<p>Inform and inspire young people about the possibilities of heritage craft and integrate their voice within the sector</p>	<p>Youth engagement activities, including embedding the youth voice in Heritage Crafts and other sector organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop youth ambassadors or equivalent scheme in 2023/24. • Recruit a young trustee by 2024/25 • Run a youth engagement event in 2024/25.
<p>4. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	Engagement	<p>Encourage local ownership of Heritage Crafts and develop regional Heritage Crafts groups</p>	<p>Continue and expand regional network meetings online and in real life, mobilising members who act as advocates, organising exhibitions/school programmes at a local level etc. Develop induction and management systems to allow volunteers to represent the organisation in line with its core values and messages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular programme of regional networking events. • Induction and management system for regional volunteers in place by 2023/24. • Develop capacity for regional volunteer management by 2024/25.

<p>4. Difficulties facing crafts businesses</p> <p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	Engagement	<p>Ensure that membership of the Heritage Crafts meets the needs of a diverse range of craftspeople</p>	<p>Membership of HCA delivers additional benefits to members – e.g. advice and guidance, insurance, business support, information resources.</p> <p>Implement the recommendations of surveying and research to identify and address barriers to entry and increase diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership benefit reviewed in terms of diversity and recommendations implemented in 2023/24.
<p>4. Difficulties facing crafts businesses</p> <p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p>	Engagement	<p>Provide a single online place for heritage crafts information and inspiration</p>	<p>Create a fully integrated website including makers' directory, training opportunities, and careers advice service all in one branded portal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully integrate main website and Makers Directory on a single seamless platform in 2023/24 • Expand information, advice and signposting provision to those wishing to participate, train, gain employment and build sustainable businesses in 2024/25 and 2025/26
<p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	Engagement	<p>Facilitate a positive representation of heritage crafts in the media</p>	<p>Work with media platforms, traditional and online to raise the profile of heritage crafts amongst the general public</p> <p>Liaise with broadcasters on positive TV and radio coverage of heritage crafts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate at least 40 positive new inclusions about heritage crafts and the work of the HCA in newspapers, periodicals and websites per year. • Generate at least 5 positive new inclusions about heritage crafts and the work of the HCA in TV and radio broadcasts per year.
<p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	Engagement	<p>Connect people with their locality through craft through place-based events, developed from the piloted regional member networks and Making of Coventry project</p>	<p>Run annual event foregrounding local craft connections and individual and community relations to craft heritage, combining speaker programme with demonstrations and hands-on workshops.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event in 2023/24 focusing on skills transmission to young people. • Event in 2024/25 • Event in 2025/26

<p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p> <p>7. Lack of individual wellbeing and connection</p>	<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Increase public awareness and appreciation for heritage crafts at public events</p>	<p>Participate in third-party exhibitions and showcases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in four high footfall events per year.
<p>5. Lack of appreciation among general public</p> <p>6. Lack of social justice</p>	<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Run a suite of awards and facilitate national recognition of the best craftspeople</p>	<p>Expand and professionalise Awards and other forms of recognition.</p> <p>Continue to submit nominations for National Honours to increase the profile of the UK's best craftspeople.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awards offering from 6 to 10 by 2025/26. • Submit at least three successful national Honours nominations per year.

Measures to increase Heritage Crafts capacity to deliver strategic framework

Objective	Outputs	Key performance indicators
Develop earned income through membership	<p>Membership strategy and growth plan.</p> <p>Increase membership fee for individuals and small businesses in tandem with development of The Makers and other benefits.</p>	<p>Membership to grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,800 by end of 2023 • 2,400 by end of 2024 • 3,200 by end of 2025 <p>Five year target (end of 2027): 5,000</p>
Develop a strategy to attract benefactors and major donors.	TBC	
Build capacity within organisation	<p>Apply for funds to undergo development consultancy, modelling a number of different growth scenarios against capacity to deliver present strategic framework and long-term mission, while also providing funding for core functions for the duration of the development period.</p>	<p>Funding for development consultancy required.</p> <p>Staff capacity (currently 2.9 FTE) to grow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.5 FTE by end of 2023 • 4.4 FTE by end of 2024 • 5.6 FTE by end of 2025 <p>Five year target (end of 2027): 7 FTE</p>

Appendix - environmental analyses

The following environmental analyses have been considered while developing the strategic framework set out above.

PESTEL

Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The British exit from the European Union• Dominance of the UK Conservative Party in the current Parliament
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inflation and the cost of living crisis• The economic consequences of future health pandemics• Uncertain trading arrangements following the British exit from the European Union
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ‘culture wars’ and perceptions of a split in society around responses to social justice issues• The impact of COVID-19 and other potential pandemics• The mental health crisis• Portfolio, contract and zero-hours working practices
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased reliance on digital technology and the demands of ‘screen time’• Manufacturing automation leading to changes in working patterns
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The climate emergency and potential environmental collapse
Legislative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertainty about continued regulatory alignment with the European Union

SWOT

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Crafts has achieved a higher level of awareness and interest from the public, policymakers and partners internationally as a result of its work on the <i>Red List of Endangered Crafts</i>. • Heritage Crafts had a dedicated and highly skilled team of staff and Trustees. • Heritage Crafts ‘punches above its weight’ and has influential contacts in the private, public and charitable sectors. • Heritage Crafts is highly appreciated by its existing supporters and advocates. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Crafts has low brand recognition compared with its competitors. • Heritage Crafts is currently unable to access public funding as a result of funding streams prioritising contemporary arts and tangible heritage, and as a result is financially precarious in the medium to long term. • Heritage Crafts currently has little influence in the education sector and moderate influence in the training sector.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active engagement in craft is becoming more popular as people realise that there is more to life than accruing material possessions. • There is more interest in heritage crafts and endangered crafts amongst broadcasters and publishers. • The British exit from the European Union and other factors may put more emphasis on the government to promote British heritage domestically and overseas. • The climate emergency and other factors mean that there may be more emphasis on local and sustainable production and self-reliance, which the heritage crafts sector often (but not always) provides. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘culture wars’ threaten to divide society and restrict opportunities for improved social justice. • The education sector continues to shun creative and haptic subjects in favour of measurable attainment in literacy, numeracy and IT. • The training sector continues to focus exclusively on a narrow vision of the jobs seen to serve the neoliberal growth economy and doesn’t include heritage craft skills. • The majority of the public continue to view heritage crafts skills as irrelevant to modern life. • The heritage crafts sector continues to be recognised as a white middle-class sector. • A health pandemic threatens the stability of working practices and living patterns that support making. • The British exit from the European Union and other factors reduces the movement of craftspeople and skills. • The climate emergency threatens the movement of materials and products.