

Six projects shortlisted for Sustainable Project of the Year 2025

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Cyclists arriving at Belton, Lincolnshire. Visitors get a free hot drink when they arrive by train, bus or bike. Photo: National Trust.

From upcycled exhibitions to changing travel behaviour to historic sites, these six projects demonstrate outstanding environmentally-driven initiatives from the past year.

The Museums + Heritage Awards recognise excellence from across the sector, which has an important role to play in addressing our climate emergency.

This year, the entries were particularly strong and it's inspiring to see so many examples of how organisations are adapting and innovating to protect our natural environment.

Alistair Brown, Head of Museums, Libraries and Archives Policy at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Whether it's using energy more efficiently, promoting nature's recovery or inspiring people to take action on climate issues, museums and heritage organisations are perfectly placed to make a positive difference for the environment.

"This year's shortlist was chosen from a highly competitive set of entries which demonstrates just how much the sector is engaging with sustainability issues. We had enormous fun choosing these projects, and we can't wait to see who wins at the Awards Ceremony in May."

The shortlist

Cutting Carbon with Car-Free Travel to the National Trust, Good Journey



Visitors enjoy the cafe at Sizergh, Cumbria. It's popular with cyclists and bus passengers are welcomed with a free hot drink. Photo: National Trust.

Like many heritage organisations, the National Trust sees most of its visitors arriving by car. In 2024, it ran a pilot project with Good Journey to explore how best to encourage greener travel and enable visitors to reach 34 of its properties car-free. It put on a summer bus to Wallington, finding that eight out of 10 passengers said they “couldn’t travel any other way”, an electric bike hire from Arnside station to Sizergh and a free drink for car-free visitors at many other properties.

Entertain and Educate about our Amazing Planet we all call 'Our Home', Railworld Wildlife Haven



Volunteers celebrate growth in the haven. Photo: Railworld Wildlife Haven.

The Railworld Wildlife Haven is a visitor attraction in Peterborough created by volunteers. Once a derelict coal yard, the land was purchased and donated by founder Rev Richard Paten and is now a much-loved community green space and a wildlife corridor along the River Nene. Reclaimed railway infrastructure has been repurposed and the land has been shaped into streams, ponds and habitats to increase biodiversity in this inner-city site where visitors can connect with nature.

Greener Glass exhibition, Stourbridge Glass Museum



Artwork in the exhibition by a 10-year-old glass artist, created in a free family workshop using recycled glass mounted on driftwood. Photo: Stourbridge Glass Museum.

Greener Glass, co-curated by artists and University of Birmingham students, explores environmental themes and showcases eco-friendly glass-making practices. The exhibits and the exhibition panels are made of recycled materials. Visitors can explore a fully carbon-neutral glass studio with electric furnaces powered by solar panels and electric pipe warmers.

The Urban Nature Project, Natural History Museum



The new pond area © The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London.

In response to the increasing pressures of urbanisation, climate change and biodiversity loss, the Urban Nature Project transformed the museum's gardens into a wildlife haven. As a living laboratory, the accessible green space will be intensely studied and the research shared to connect people to nature on their doorstep, inspiring widespread action for our planet.

Water Power Project at Cromford Mills, The Arkwright Society



Visitors at the waterwheel. Photo: The Arkwright Society, Cromford Mills.

Cromford Mills, built in 1771 by Sir Richard Arkwright, used three waterwheels to power its revolutionary cotton spinning machines. Now, the same green energy source that Arkwright once harnessed is being used again to provide energy and heat to the site. A replica waterwheel brings to life the sustainable power of the historic mills that heralded the industrial age.

Waters Rising exhibition at Perth Museum, Culture Perth and Kinross



The community memories display in Waters Rising. Photo: Julie Howden.

Waters Rising frames the global climate emergency through a local lens, examining the impact of flooding on communities in Perthshire, past and present, while also tracing its effects on other cultures and landscapes. Produced using sustainable principles, it features a co-created display of photos and memories from local people impacted by flooding and traces the history of climate activism in Scotland.

The winners

From the shortlist, up to two winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony in London on 15 May.

See the full list of [shortlisted projects for the Museums + Heritage Awards](#).

What we expect from projects we fund

To help make sure your project protects our natural world, read our [environmental sustainability good practice guidance](#).



[Some of the team stand in front of the newly completed roundhouses. Photo: The Scottish Crannog Centre.](#)



[Meet the Changemakers event on Manchester Museum Top Floor. Credit: Manchester Museum.](#)



How we're tackling the climate crisis