

Research reveals Glasgow people think their city's heritage makes it a better place to live

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Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

In the results of a major UK-wide study unveiled today, the people of Glasgow have shown themselves to be proud and passionate about their heritage with 92% declaring that it makes their city a better place to live – a marked 12% above the average of the 12 UK towns and cities that were featured.

Specialist research company, BritainThinks, conducted the in-depth research in 12 towns and cities representative of the UK population to mark 20 years and £6billion of investment into the UK's heritage by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The report was commissioned to better understand the public's view of that National Lottery investment and to see to what extent places had been made better places to work, visit and live in.

Key UK findings

- 80% think local heritage makes their area a better place to live
- 64% think heritage has improved in recent years in terms of how well it is looked after and what it has to offer

- Heritage plays a powerful role in bringing people together and helping to improve perceptions of quality of life
- Benefits of heritage seen as both transactional and emotional, encouraging local pride and fostering social cohesion

For Glasgow, the findings also revealed that:

- Seven in ten (70%) of those surveyed in Glasgow said that heritage is an important part of their personal identity – 15% more than the average
- Almost three quarters (74%) of residents believe that Glasgow’s heritage has got better in the time they have lived in the area
- There is strong support for heritage investment with 85% of regular Lottery players rating supported projects in the city as good or excellent use of Lottery funding

Dame Seona Reid, Interim Chair of HLF, said: “Having lived in Glasgow for much of my life, I’m aware of how proud people are of this city - its unique architecture, industry and culture are a fundamental part of their DNA. What’s fascinating is that we found that heritage is firmly at the heart of improving local quality of life right across the UK. People react to heritage not only because of the practical benefits it brings, but also in emotional terms. In those places where heritage has a deep, emotional resonance, such as in Glasgow, it provides a way of helping people better understand their place, their family and their community which in turn makes them feel happier about where they live.”

The research highlighted several reasons why heritage matters so much to people in Glasgow. These were:

- The contribution it makes to people’s identity and sense of pride
- It makes for a better quality of life with things to do, particularly for families and educational opportunities for all ages
- It adds to the city’s visual attractiveness
- It delivers economic benefits, encouraging tourists and creating good jobs

Councillor Gordon Matheson, the Leader of Glasgow City Council, said: “Glasgow is Scotland’s cultural powerhouse and it comes as little surprise to learn that the people of this great city are so proud and passionate about our heritage. From building the Riverside Museum, which was crowned European Museum of the Year in 2013, to the work to transform Glasgow Green and townscapes and projects across the city, we have worked in partnership with HLF to protect and enhance our most treasured assets.

“We remain hugely ambitious, with work already well underway to transform the Kelvin Hall. The people of Glasgow recognise and are rightly proud of our cultural and built heritage and we’re delighted this has been demonstrated once again.”

In the past 20 years HLF has awarded grants worth over £107m to 185 projects in Glasgow ranging from £5,000 for Battlefield Primary School Centenary Celebrations to £21.6m for the Riverside Museum development.

The research went on to ask people about a range of heritage projects which have been funded by HLF including Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow Green, Riverside Museum, Kibble Palace, the Merchant City and Govan Cross.

The results showed that Glaswegians have a high level of awareness of their heritage. An overwhelming 90% said that they enjoyed their visits to local attractions and greatly appreciated the fact that most heritage sites offered free entry.

Dame Seona Reid, added: "At this 20 year milestone, it's heartening to get feedback that investing in heritage is improving places for people and no better is this seen than in Glasgow. But there is a great deal still to do. The public has clear ideas about how heritage could be better promoted, particularly community and intangible heritage like the stories that parents tell their children or the famous Glaswegian humour. Ensuring people from all walks of life are involved in the heritage too remains a key challenge.

"The good news is that the research demonstrates that heritage can play a powerful role in bringing people together, particularly at a local level, to take pride in their past and improve their quality of life. The research gives us a sound rationale to keep on investing - maybe the next 20 years will see heritage and happiness becoming even more closely linked."

Visit the [20 Years 12 Places webpage](#) to find out more, including a UK summary report, an essay of the main findings, research slides, reports for each place with films plus more detail on the methodology.

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Notes to editors

The 107m to 185 projects is the figure for grants awarded to Glasgow City local authority to end September 2013.

20 Years in 12 Places - methodology

The research included talking to and questioning over 4300 people. The randomly selected towns and cities chosen were a mixture of size and type typical of the UK so while interesting results have been uncovered in each place, the overall results are designed to reflect the UK as a whole. Quantitative research and desk research was carried out in all 12 locations with in-depth interviews and public workshops carried in 6 of the places.

The places selected were: Armagh, Bradford*, Durham, Exeter, Glasgow*, South East London, Manchester, Newark-on-Trent, Peterborough, Pontypool*, Portsmouth*, Shrewsbury*.

Quotes

Workshop participant - Glasgow

"HLF funding has raised our ambitions and given the city as a whole new confidence and credibility."

Stakeholder quote - Glasgow

“The Lottery’s impact on funding has been pretty dramatic – prior to that, the city depended on direct funding from central and local government. The arrival of the Lottery made an enormous difference to the capacity of the city to protect its physical heritage assets.”

Stakeholder quote – Glasgow

“Heritage is fundamental to the people that live here. It’s part of their identity. It’s absolutely key part of the DNA of the people of the city. You talk about shipbuilding in this part of the world and you’ll get a fearsome debate in every pub and on every corner of the street. There’s a genuine connection to that because it’s telling as story of who we’ve been.”

Stakeholder quote - Glasgow

“There’s a tremendous pride in the history of the area, even if they’re from Govan or Carlton or wherever. They want to see it look better and be maintained properly. A huge part of that is the heritage and the history. Heritage is very important – the look and feel of a place is key to how people feel about themselves.”

Workshop quote - Glasgow

“I initially thought of older buildings and historical monuments. That’s what I would call the ‘prescribed way of thinking’ about heritage, the dilapidated castle or country home. But really, the city’s heritage is also things like the dark, dry humour of the people that live here.”

Further information

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