

HERITAGE COUNTS 2017

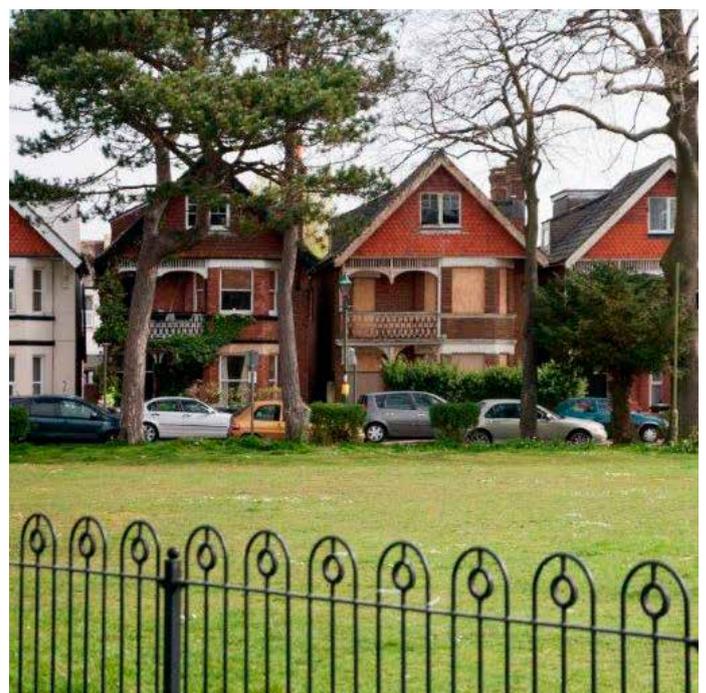
South West

Introduction

Heritage Counts 2017 is the sixteenth annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. This Regional Report is prepared by Historic England on behalf of the South West Historic Environment Forum. This year's theme is Conservation Areas at 50, chosen to celebrate 50 years since the Civic Amenities Act 1967, which introduced the concept of Conservation Areas. Visitors to the [Heritage Counts website](#) can download the complete research projects commissioned to support this year's report and access the full set of local statistics and maps detailing the historic environment for the South West.

Research commissioned for Heritage Counts 2017 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of conservation areas looks at trends in conservation areas based on multiple dimensions of "good growth". Overall the research shows that in absolute terms conservation areas are improving over time.

- According to Census data from 2001 and 2011, conservation areas have on average experienced positive trends in terms of qualification levels, health, housing quality and work life balance.
- Unemployment rates have declined in conservation areas and in particular in town centre conservation areas – from 2.7% in 2005 to 1.9% in 2016. Analysis shows that during the recession, conservation areas were more resilient, less volatile and more stable than non-conservation areas.
- DWP claimant rates were consistently lower in conservation areas relative to their matched non-conservation areas between 2005 and 2015.
- Crime rates in conservation areas were slightly above crime rates in non-conservation areas in 2016.
- Property values in conservation areas are higher than in non-conservation areas and house prices in conservation areas are increasing at a pace that outstrips the pace of growth in non-conservation areas.



What is 'good growth'? And how is it achieved? Our [case studies of Falmouth, Cornwall and Boscombe, Bournemouth](#) suggest the approach is changing over time. **Images:** Left: Church Street Falmouth. © Robin Drayton. Right: Churchill Gardens, Boscombe. © Bournemouth Borough Council

Conservation Areas at 50 in the South West

- In March, Weston-super-Mare became the first Heritage Action Zone in the South West. Weston is growing in popularity as a place to live in, work in and visit. The **Great Weston Heritage Action Zone** wants to capitalise on this and help boost the town's regeneration, harnessing its unique historic character to attract more growth and inward investment. Learn about **Weston's conservation areas**.



Image: The Odeon, Weston-super-Mare. © North Somerset Council

- This year, the grade II Chain Testing House in Swindon's Railway Works conservation area was successfully converted into new housing and taken off the Heritage at Risk Register. Find out how the developer, **Thomas Homes Ltd**, produced an award-winning development in a historic context.



Image: HELM Conservation Areas training, Bath, June 2017

- In June, Historic England ran a Conservation Areas at 50 workshop in Bath. Part of the HELM (Historic Environment Local Management) training programme, and specially created to mark the 50th anniversary, the event considered significance in conservation areas and how impacts on significance can be managed. It included presentations by the Bath Preservation Trust and Bath and North East Somerset Council on their current work and approaches, and site visits to some of the city's conservation areas.
- In October, the **Bristol Heritage Forum's second annual conference** marked the 50th anniversary of conservation areas. The event explored issues that conservation areas have faced in the city over the last 50 years and looked ahead to address questions for their future. Bristol has 33 conservation areas covering a third of the city. The conference discussed how these areas have helped to define the city, how they are valued, and who makes decisions about their future.



Image: Delegates at the Bristol Heritage Forum 'Conservation Areas at 50' conference. © Bristol Heritage Forum

Historic Environment Statistics for the South West

Assets

For total numbers of assets by local authority, please visit <https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/2017-conservation-areas/indicator-data/>

South West	2017
World Heritage Sites	4
Scheduled Monuments	6,988
Total Listed Buildings	89,999
Listed Buildings Grade I	2,043
Listed Buildings Grade II*	5,184
Listed Buildings Grade II	82,772
Total Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG)	303
RPG Grade I	30
RPG Grade II*	94
RPG Grade II	179
Registered Battlefields	10
Protected Ship Wrecks	26
Conservation Areas	1527

Table 1

Heritage at Risk

- In the last year 91 assets were removed from the 2016 Register, whilst 40 new sites have been added. Historic England's target to reduce the number of entries that were on the 2015 Register by 15% has been met one year early.
- 1,507 assets remain at risk in the South West, representing 25% of the Heritage at Risk Register for England.
- In their 50th anniversary year, more conservation areas were added to the Heritage at Risk Register than removed, with 47 new additions and 22 removals across the country. In the South West, there were five new additions to the Register, and three removals.

Asset type	% at risk in England	% at risk in the South West	Number at risk in the South West
Buildings and structures (grade I and II* buildings excluding places of worship)	3.8	2.9	156
Places of Worship	6.3	6.1	179
Scheduled Monuments	12.5	16.0	1,119
Parks and Gardens	5.8	5.3	16
Conservation Areas	6.0	2.9	36

Table 2

For further details go to www.HistoricEngland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk

Planning

- The 4% increase in the number of planning decisions made in the South West last year is now in line with the national figure: previously, the region had not kept pace with the rest of England.
- Listed Building Consent (LBC) decisions have increased by 6% this year, compared to 4% nationally. This is the first year since 2008/09 where there have been over 6,000 decisions in the South West.
- There were 191 Scheduled Monument Consent applications in the South West last year, a slight increase on 2015/16. Since 2002, the average number of SMCs per year has been 189.
- The Gardens Trust was consulted on 152 planning applications affecting Registered Parks and Gardens last year. This is an increase of 12% on the previous year compared to a 4% decrease in applications nationally.

Type of application	Number of decisions taken – England	Change on previous year	Number of decisions taken – South West	Change on previous year
Planning	439,612	↑ 4%	54,734	↑ 4%
LBC	31,285	↑ 4%	6,075	↑ 6%

Table 3

Funding

- The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) made awards totalling £42,921,900 to 163 projects in the South West last year.
- Historic England spent £1.99m in grants. £1.74m supported Heritage at Risk projects.

Staffing

- Table 4 below shows the current provision of local authority historic environment staff in the South West. The loss of posts has been acute in the South West, with a 46% drop in numbers since 2006 as opposed to 36% for England.

Local Authority Staff	SW FTE 2016	SW FTE 2017	Change % since 2016 (SW/England)	Change % since 2006 (SW/England)
All local authority historic environment staff	120	116	-3.7% / -2%	-46% / -36.2%
Local authority staff working on Conservation (Conservation Officers)	74	72	-3.3% / -1.3%	-46.9% / -36.6%
Local authority staff working on Archaeology (Archaeological Officers)	46	44	-4.2% / -3.3%	-44.3% / -35.5%

Table 4

In June, the South West Historic Environment Forum published the first study in England to analyse the impacts of changed models of local authority historic environment service delivery on service users. The independent research showed that on the whole, service users had positive views of historic environment services, and particularly valued skills and expertise, timely delivery, and value for money.

However, at the same time some users experienced delays, poor access to experienced and specialist staff, and poor online guidance and information. To find out more and to download the research report go to <https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/south-west/research-local-authority-heritage-services-south-west/>

Heritage tourism

- There were **11.8 million visits to historic properties in the South West last year**. This represents 17% of all visits to historic properties in England (third after London with 25% and the South East with 19%). The number is up by 6% on the previous year, twice the national increase of 3%.
- **Overseas visitors** accounted for 23% of all visits to historic attractions in the South West. The South West experienced an 11% increase in overseas visitors in 2015/16, the highest of all regions. The national figure was 1%.
- **Domestic visitors were up by 11% last year**. 42% of visitors to South West historic properties are local or day trippers; 36% come from outside the region.
- **In 2016/17 there were 2.04 million visits to English Heritage Trust sites** in the South West, an increase of 5% on the previous year (1% nationally). **National Trust** properties in the South West experienced a 7% increase in visitor numbers, with 5.90 million visits.

Participation

- **83% of all adults in the South West had visited a heritage site at least once during the past 12 months**. This is:
 - higher than the national rate of 74%
 - an increase of 5% on the previous year
 - the highest rate of participation of any region
 - the highest rate of participation in the historic environment in the South West since the Taking Part survey began in 2005/06
- **74 per cent of people from lower socio-economic groups** have visited a historic site in the last year, up from 65% in 2015/16.
- **1.9 per cent of the adult population** in the South West regularly volunteer in the heritage sector. The national figure is 1.4%.
- **The National Trust have 13,600 volunteers** in the South West in 2017, up by 15% on 2016.

Vital volunteers!

Of the 200 Scheduled Monuments on the South Dorset Ridgeway, 119 have so far been surveyed by volunteers with guidance and training from the Dorset AONB, Dorset County Council Historic Environment Team and Historic England. As well as this vital recording

work, volunteers have also helped clear scrub from the landscape, reducing harm to the monuments and making them visible once again for people to enjoy. To find out more go to <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/our-work/south-dorset-ridgeway>.



Image: South Dorset Ridgeway volunteer. © Historic England

Education

- There were 654 **Heritage Open Days** events in the South West in 2016, the highest number since 2007, thanks to an additional 69 events. No less than 20 of the new events were in Gloucester.
- There were **234,000 school visits** to historic properties in the South West last year, down 9% on the previous year (nationally down 6%).
- There were **77,255 education visits** to English Heritage sites in the region in 2016/17, down by 3% on the previous year. However, English Heritage sites in the region have experienced 46% growth in numbers of education visits between 2001 and 2017.



Image: Gloucester History Parade 2016. © Chris Lacey

Heritage Ability

Heritage Ability is an HLF-funded project, delivered by the charity Living Options Devon, to improve accessibility for disabled and deaf visitors to a range of heritage sites across the South West, for example, through providing all-terrain mobility scooters (as here, as part of the Tin Coast project), and producing film clips in British Sign Language (BSL).

www.heritageability.org



Image: The Tin Coast project. © Neil Warren

This **Heritage Counts 2017** Regional Report is edited by Liz Clare and produced by Historic England on behalf of the South West Historic Environment Forum (SW HEF). SW HEF comprises the following organisations: Architectural Heritage Fund; Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers South West; The Heritage Trust Network; Churches Conservation Trust; Campaign to Protect Rural England; CLA; English Heritage; Heritage Lottery Fund; Historic England; Historic Houses Association Wessex Region; Institute of Historic Building Conservation South West; National Trust South West; RIBA; RTPi; University of the West of England.



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