

# Sustainability

Conservation can support communities dealing with climate change through direct rescue and refuge but also by helping to inform environmental action by building understanding of materials and change and promoting principles of sustainability.

## The Message

- Conservator-restorers can provide knowledge and expertise to protect and conserve at risk heritage and to inform mitigation and adaptation responses to climate emergency.
- Conservation and heritage science can be used to understand and demonstrate the impacts of climate change and make informed predictions.
- Conservation and cultural heritage can support clean growth by helping communities to become more sustainable and resilient to climate change.
- Cultural heritage can be an accessible resource for communicating climate change, empowering people to confront the challenge and inspiring more sustainable lifestyles.

## The Evidence

Conservators' appreciation of the various values of heritage means they can ensure mitigation and adaptation measures are sympathetic to the significance of heritage. <sup>1</sup>

Conservation professionals understand the chemical and physical properties of materials and recognise evidence and causes of change. <sup>2</sup>

Collections data provides a benchmark for monitoring change. <sup>3</sup>

Conservation is based on the aim of conserving rather than replacing heritage assets, naturally promoting the sustainable use of resources. <sup>4</sup>

Traditional building materials and techniques may be more resilient and recover more quickly from climate change impacts than modern buildings. <sup>5</sup>

Cultural heritage enables information to be demonstrated through tangible material culture, expressing complex and abstract ideas in lateral ways through human stories. <sup>6</sup>



## The Objective

### We will

- Promote the positive role cultural heritage and conservation can play in informing responses to and communicating climate change.
- Encourage organisations and individuals to embed environmental sustainability into their operations and practice.
- Mobilize the cultural heritage sector for climate action in collaboration with partners like the Climate Heritage Network and Fit for the Future network.

### We urge decision makers to

- Take a holistic approach to climate change adaptation that draws on the conservation sector's expertise and experience.
- Support or commission heritage bodies to run environmental projects to encourage wider participation across society and enable messages to resonate with a broader audience.
- Place cultural heritage at the heart of sustainable development.



## The Evidence

1. [www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk)
2. Ibid
3. Urevig, A. Seeking Answers on Climate Change, Scientists Venture into the Vaults of the Past. Available online at: <https://ensia.com/features/natural-history-museums-climate-change/>
4. [www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk)
5. DEFRA, 2018. The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting. Available online at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/727252/national-adaptation-programme-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727252/national-adaptation-programme-2018.pdf)
6. Julie's Bicycle. Resource Hub. Available online at: <https://www.juliesbicycle.com/pages/category/resource-hub?Take=24>