

Land management in the museum and heritage sector

Prepared by M·E·L Research

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With special thanks to:

- Ulster Folk Museum
- Natural History Museum
- Ushaw Historic House, Chapel and Gardens
- Battle of Prestonpans (1745) Heritage Trust
- Greenfield Valley Museum & Heritage Park
- Wheal Martyn Clay Works

Who were generous enough to host us for site visits.



Front cover image: Gilbert White and The Oates Collection



Why this research?



Research background

Despite the amount of land owned and managed by museums, and the critical importance of land management in the context of museums and heritage organisations, there exists a gap in comprehensive, sector-wide research exploring the opportunities and challenges presented by land and outdoor spaces.

This research seeks to begin to fill this knowledge gap by capturing a snapshot of practice across museums and investigating the multitude of roles land plays within these organisations.

This includes examining land as a component of business models; as a medium for audience and community support; and as a tool for climate resilience and adaptation. In the context of this report, we refer to land as encompassing a range of green and blue spaces of different sizes - from small outdoor areas within urban sites, to meadows, lakes and gardens, to larger landscapes (e.g. outdoor museums and heritage attractions).

Insight was gathered through:

- A comprehensive literature and policy review
- Initial depth interviews with 17 sector professionals
- An online survey open to museums and heritage organisations across the sector (n=52)
- An online community facilitating cross-sector communication
- 6 site visits to understand the practicalities of land management strategies and compile case studies of 'best practice'.

The current context and challenges



Avoncroft Museum, Photo, David Viner

Recent challenges to the sector require museums to go beyond artefact preservation and interpretation, and diversify their role

Challenges facing the culture and heritage sector have included the Covid 19 Pandemic (during which 90% of museums worldwide were forced to close, changing visitor views and behaviours), and increased financial pressures.¹²

As a result, museums and heritage organisations are being encouraged to diversify their strategic goals to be “3-pronged”, considering their social, economic and environmental contributions in order to survive.³⁴



Can Museums Rise to the Challenge: Preparing Museums for the Age of Participation

Power and Privilege in the 21st Century Museum



In light of growing climate awareness, land managers have a potential opportunity

People are increasingly more aware of, and have more concern about the climate emergency. International Council of Museums (ICOM) feel museums are perfectly positioned to address and enhance sustainability as they are able to work with communities to raise public awareness, support research and knowledge creation to contribute to well-being.⁵

However, the scale of the opportunity and impact is not clearly quantifiable in the UK as there is a knowledge gap concerning the amount of land operated by museums and heritage organisations.



The value of outdoor spaces in the development of museums' social role is well recognised

Museums with parks and gardens should consider integrating programmes of outdoor and indoor collections - inspired creative activities permitting combined engagement with nature, art and wellbeing.⁶

Examples of the interaction of the museum and outdoor space to achieve socio-cultural goals include:



**Cultural
placemaking**



**Improving cultural and
heritage access for
excluded audiences**



Social prescribing

And some museums are beginning to use their land to actively improve environmental outcomes

Where published examples exist, these tend to be from well-resourced institutions, outlining what has been done, and not providing guidance of how to achieve the integration of land into strategy.



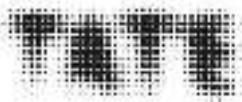
NMDC – Green Museums report⁷

This report documented case studies from member organisations that have used their collections to conduct biodiversity research and inform audiences about environmental issues, along with introducing more sustainable practices at their sites.



English Heritage – Kings Meadows⁸

In celebration of the coronation of King Charles III English Heritage committed to restoring and enhancing 100 meadows across their sites, reversing biodiversity loss.



Tate Modern – Water Conservation⁹

The Tate Modern has introduced water conservation measures, including using rainwater in their toilet flushing process and reducing overall water usage across their outdoor space.



Summary

A review of the evidence suggests that:

- Whilst steps are being taken by museums to effectively utilise land and outdoor spaces this is disjointed and often limited to examples from well-resourced organisations.
- Published examples tend to err towards summarising the outcomes of land management interventions. Detail about the challenges that were faced and the processes followed to achieve these outcomes is more sparse.



Digging deeper

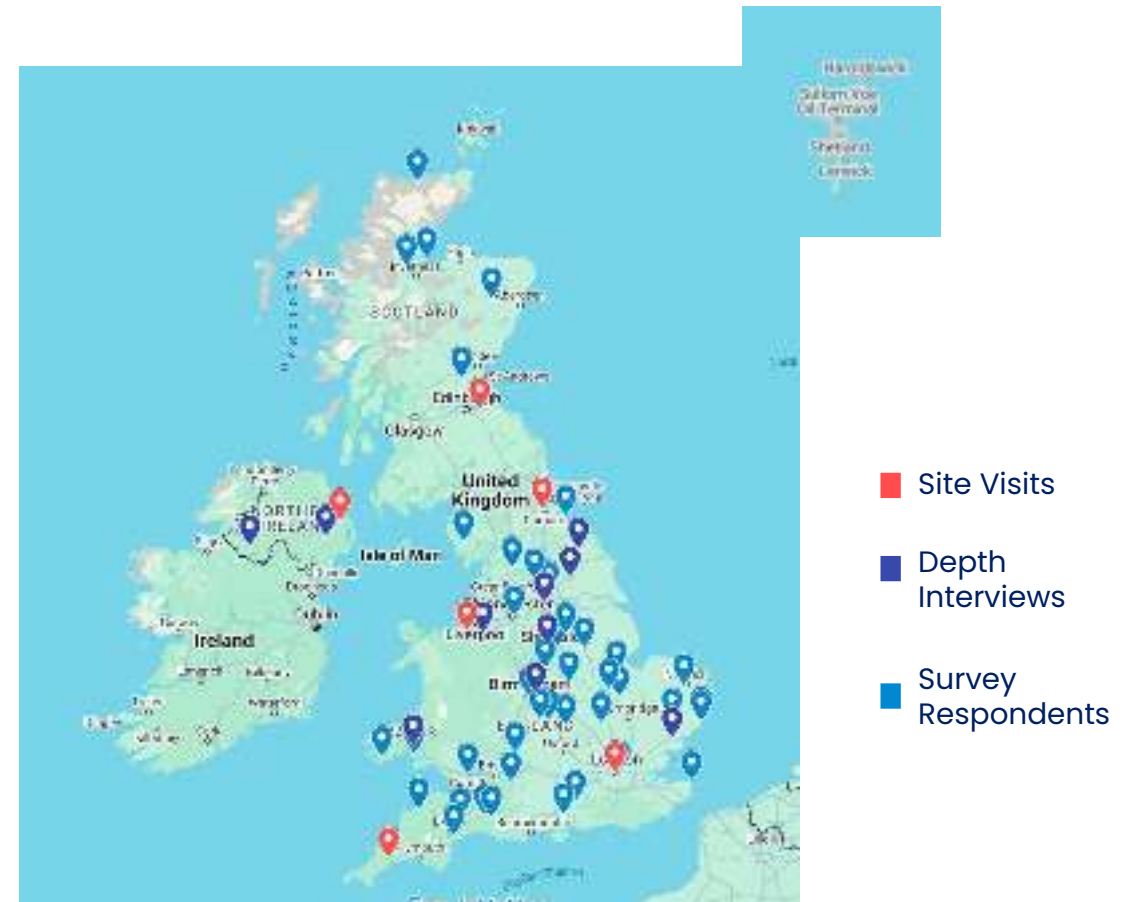


Consulting the sector

Having reviewed the existing evidence and finding limited examples, we sought to engage the sector in detail to understand:

- The steps being taken to incorporate land management into strategic planning
- The enablers and barriers experienced by those responsible for the development and management of outdoor space
- The intended and observed outcomes of changes to outdoor space
- The support required from the broader sector to further maximise the opportunities land ownership presents.

We engaged with 52 museums via an online survey and a further 17 via more in-depth conversations. In addition, 6 sites across the UK were visited in person.





Research findings

A lack of examples can make knowing where to start particularly challenging

Outdoor spaces are often perceived as unique, which makes it difficult for organisations to 'see' themselves and thus to identify a way forward with respect to the challenges they face.

This is compounded by the limited availability of examples of process and planning rather than solely 'outcomes'.

This can make developing a plan feel overwhelming and in some cases seems to lead to a form of 'paralysis'.

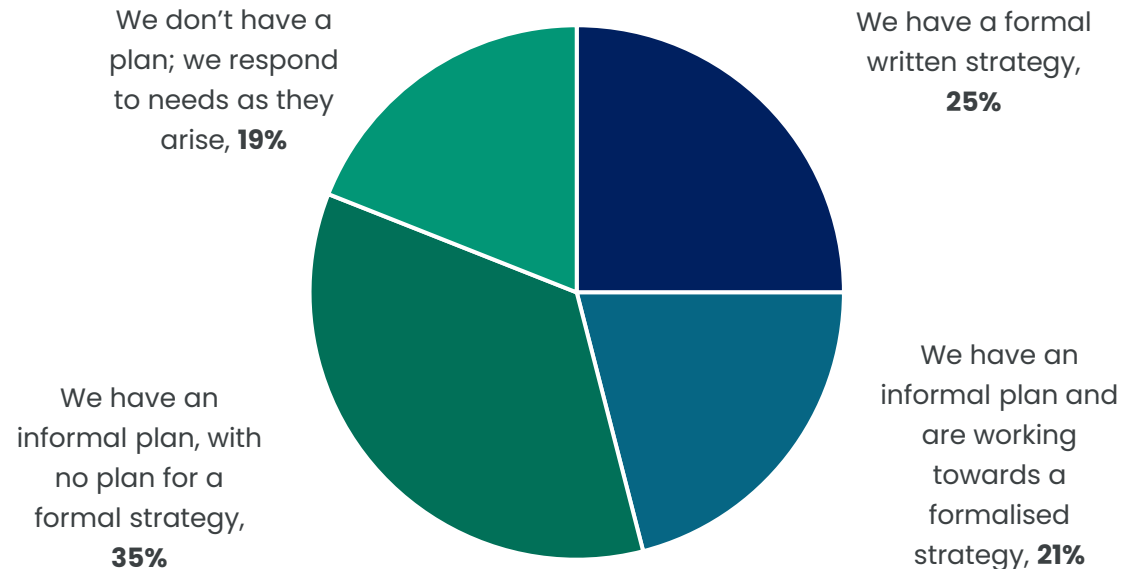


This can lead to inconsistent implementation of strategies, short-term and reactive thinking

Fewer than half of our survey respondents are incorporating their outdoor space into their wider strategic plans, with varied levels of formality – and a fifth (19%) are highly reactive. This indicates a lack of long-term forward planning concerning land and outdoor spaces and how these integrate into the wider museum offer for the majority of organisations we spoke to. However, there are positive signs for the future.

“The site has been closed since 2017 but plans are agreed to work towards reopening. A formal land management strategy will be part of how the site is approached in the future. The timescale is approximately three years.”

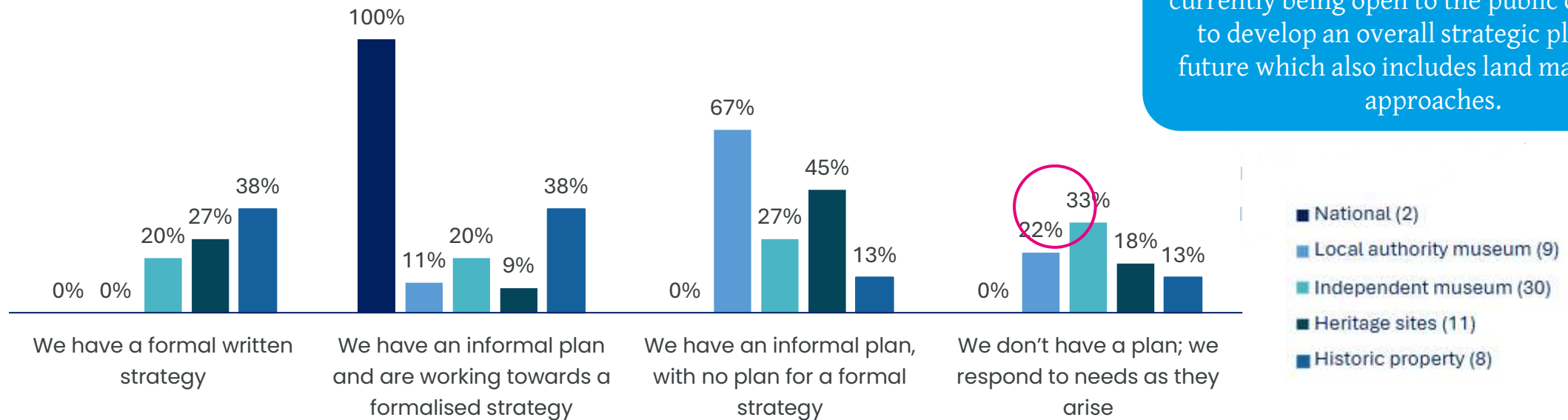
**Kidwelly Industrial Museum
(Carmarthenshire County Council)**



Independent museums are the most likely to be responding ad hoc

For independent museums, not having a plan is often attributed to the resource and / or knowledge available.

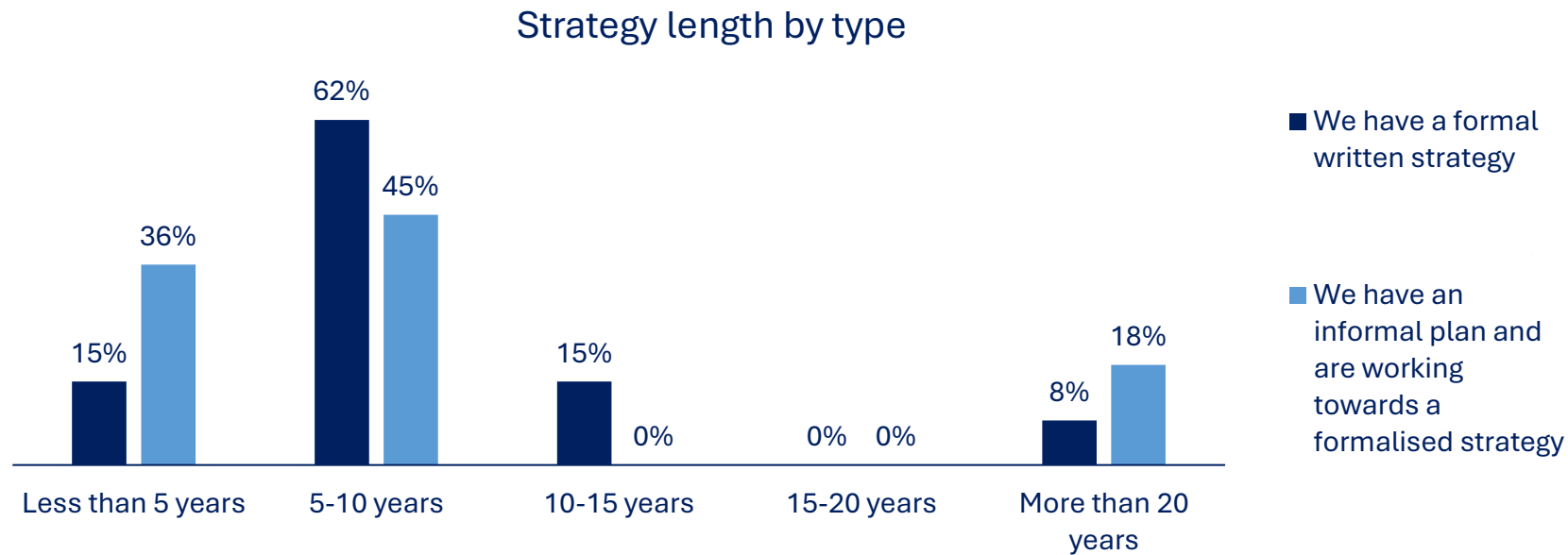
Strategy by museum type



Those who respond to needs as they arise often attribute the lack of plan to not currently being open to the public or planning to develop an overall strategic plan in the future which also includes land management approaches.

The majority of existing strategies are relatively short-term and developed in-house

There is however some evidence that some organisations are starting to think more long term about their land management strategy. Formal strategies are more common where the landscaping of outdoor space needs to fit the fixed context of the site, suggesting strategies are more common where the organisational / site strategy and land strategy can be clearly aligned.



Those further along in their land management journey are focused on integrating indoor and outdoor spaces

Where strategies are being developed, interviewees describe these as being part of a broader approach aimed at integrating their outdoor space into their offer.

Typically, this focuses on having a sense of a flow through from museum to outdoor space, rather than being 'a museum with a garden'.

"I want that inside and outside experience to be connected from a visitor and from an income generation [perspective]..."

Ushaw Historic House, Chapel and Gardens



Embedding land into the complete offer: Ulster Folk Museum

At Ulster Folk Museum, land is a fundamental part of the overall experience of the museum.

This has been done by:

- Using the land to grow vegetables that would have been grown during the period covered by the museum (heritage vegetables)
- Managing the land and recreating landscapes that would have existed around the reconstructed buildings to recreate the historic atmosphere and setting
- Creating a heritage farm on the grounds to create a more immersive experience, which uses historic techniques.





Overcoming distance: Prestonpans Battlefield

At Prestonpans, the museum and battlefield are geographically distanced. In the face of this the museum volunteers are trying to draw links between the museum and the battlefield and encourage a flow of visitors between the two.

They are doing so by encouraging visitors to access the history in the museum building then bring it to life by being in the physical space; or go to the battlefield and 'feel' the space then go to the museum to learn the history.

This is facilitated by:

- Guided audio tours
- Walking tours
- Maps.



There is no clear agreement on the desired outcomes for land and outdoor spaces

Without a clear, long-term strategy many organisations struggle to trade-off the pros and cons of different approaches, decisions and priorities which are competing in the short-term.

- “...And it's always the battle of which of them will win out and come out top. You know, they've all got their priority.”

Peak District Mining Museum

Using a prioritisation technique called MaxDiff, we asked respondents to rank the relative importance of six different aspects of land management:

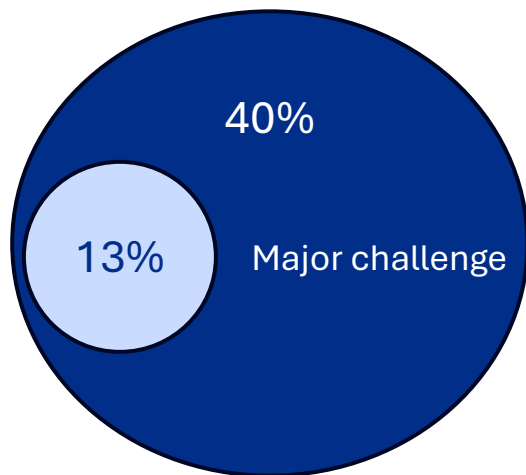
The results showed no clear ‘winners’ in terms of priority areas – for example, equal proportions rated income generation as very important vs. not at all important



This is reflected in mixed views regarding the extent to which outdoor spaces present a challenge or opportunity

Whilst around two-thirds see their outdoor space as an opportunity, more than a third see noteworthy challenges to developing and maintaining their outdoor space. Around one-in-eight see major challenges.

More challenge than opportunity



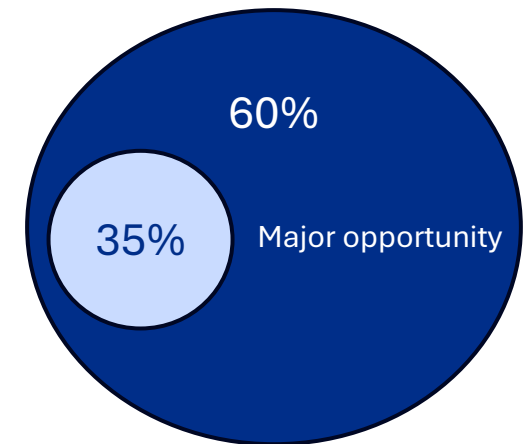
More likely to see challenges than opportunities:

- Independent Museums – 52%
- Long-term lease (25 years +) – 58%
- 100-200 Acres land managed – 60%
- Between half an acre and acre managed – 63%

More likely to see opportunities than challenge:

- Historic Properties – 83%
- Enclosed garden / kitchen garden – 74%
- Urban land / concrete managed – 73%
- Woodland managed – 69%

More opportunity than challenge



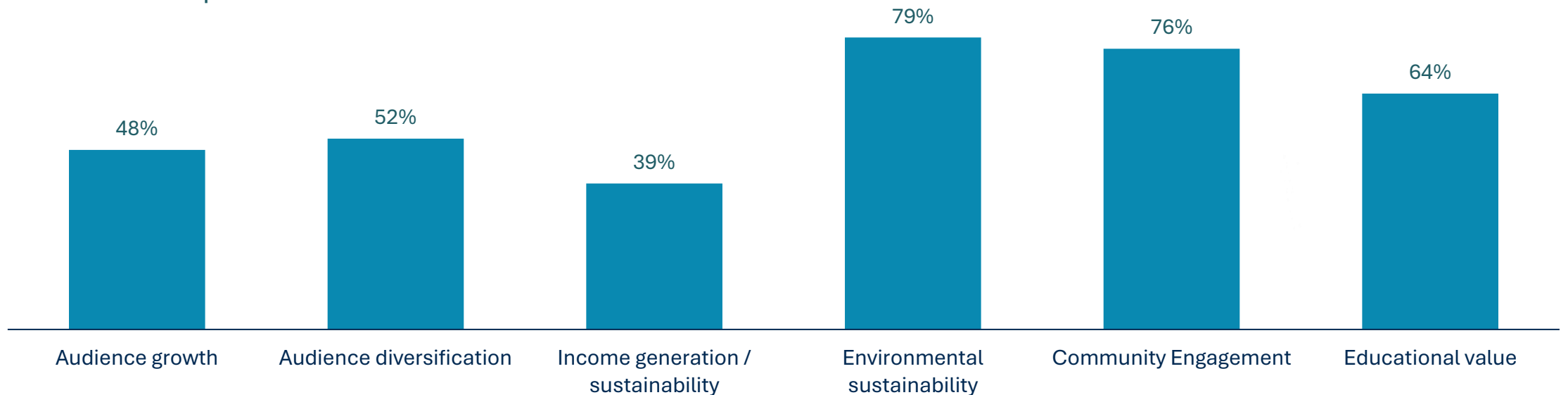
“The gardens are part of our Grade II* listed status [and] now drive footfall. **It presents a brilliant opportunity to create a space with communities**, to introduce children to historic houses and estates, to tell stories, do pop-up catering.... you have to do the emergency work yourself and hope you can afford it.”

Chawton House [Library]

A lack of direction leads to mixed outcomes and impact

Those without a clear, long-term strategy are experiencing a range of outcomes of their interventions with the most frequently recognised outcomes being those that are more easily associated with outdoor space e.g. environmental sustainability.

Outcomes experienced



Measuring outcomes in outdoor spaces is more difficult due to environmental factors, with extended timeframes often required

Development of outdoor space is often a long-term process, and it is likely that as a result of climatic and socio-cultural changes that land management strategies will need to be dynamic and responsive.

This iterative approach can impact final outcomes vs. those originally intended.

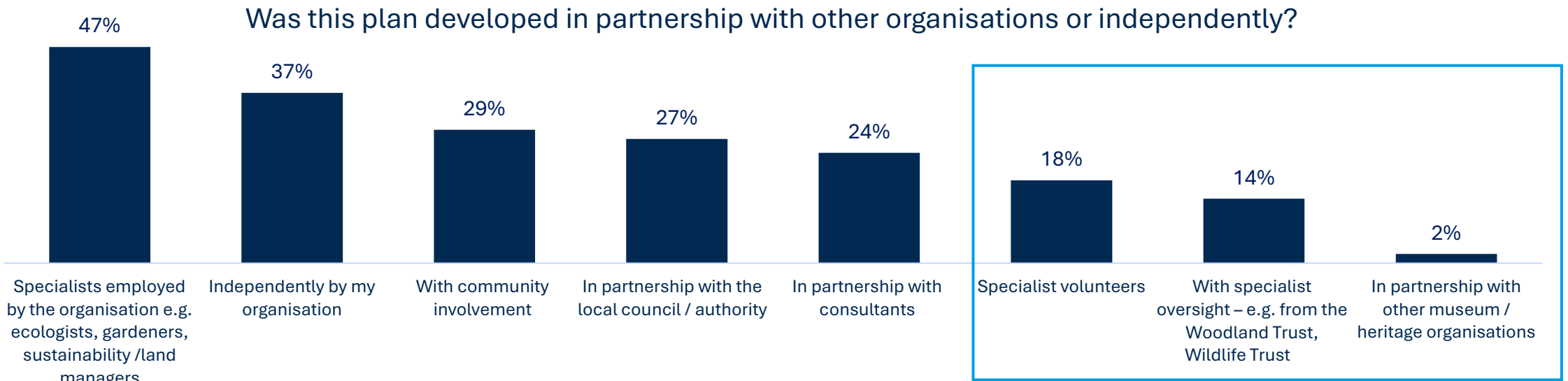
"I think we're all going through a learning process with climate change ... What do we do...we're going to have to plan sort of low maintenance, highly resilient planting. But actually, **what we're experiencing is that flux we're having.**"

York Museums Trust



In addition, many are 'going it alone' - with siloed development and reliance on internal knowledge

Despite the overall collaborative nature of the sector, there is clear evidence that land management is being approached in much more individualistic ways. Where land management strategies are more long-term and focused this tends to stem from collaborative approaches with specialists.



Generally more siloed / inward looking

Generally more collaborative / outward looking

Collaboration varies by size / type of museum

Historic properties, those with less land or a short-term lease / strategy are more inward focused, whereas national museums and those with a long-term strategy are more likely to employ specialists. Partnerships are less common and concentrated among heritage sites and those with more land.

'Independently by my organisation' higher amongst:

- Owners of between half an acre and an acre – 50%
- Historic Properties – 60%
- Organisations with short-term leases – 67%
- Strategy spanning less than 5 years – 67%

'Specialists employed by my organisation' higher amongst:

- National Museums – 100%
- Managed Farmland – 88%
- Strategy spanning more than 20 years – 67%
- Strategy 10-15 years – 50%

'In partnership with other museums' higher amongst:

- Heritage Sites – 13%
- Owners of between 1 -10 acres – 13%
- Organisations with long-term leases – 8%
- Those with an informal plan, with no plan for a formal strategy – 6%

Generally more
siloed / inward
looking



Generally more collaborative
/ outward looking

Dependence on internal resources can limit strategic improvements

This challenge is more acute in museums that do not have in-house subject specialists, where the absence of dedicated expertise can restrict both ambition and capacity for development.

Several interviewees reflected that this reluctance to move beyond established domains is acting as a barrier to wider knowledge exchange and innovation. In particular, it is preventing valuable cross-sector collaboration.

The findings suggest a need to break down these silos, not only to encourage shared learning but also to ensure museums can evolve in response to changing societal contexts and expectations.

"It's a huge asset, but we don't have enough people or money to do what we'd like to do with it."

Food Museum

"...However, we have no land specialists on the staff team and cannot expand without significant investment / grants / long term building and land expansion plans"

Burton at Bideford Art Gallery and Museum

"We lack resources for development and management of the land."

Coldharbour Mill Museum

The value of collaboration

As seen earlier, only 2% of the museums in our survey have developed a plan as part of a partnership with other museums and heritage organisations.

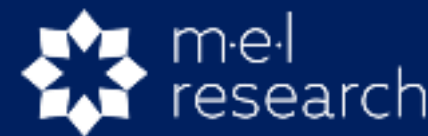
This points to a lack of knowledge sharing within the sector, with museums limited to their internal knowledge and working in silos, which is not seen in other aspects of the heritage space –normally a collaborative group.

This sharing of experience may help with the development of a strategy as museums can learn from others what processes look like, what to expect and dos and don'ts from museums with more experience. This would be especially valuable where museums don't have the resource to hire specialist staff.

Where a strategy has been developed in partnership with consultants, specialist oversight, the local authority or the community, the proportion of organisations applying for external funding is increased - suggesting that collaboration can also help to address financial resource pressures.

"I think it would be really good if they [museums] could look at Botanic Gardens as a potential resource, because we're kind of watching what they're doing and thinking well, you know, this is interesting, but we've been doing this for a long time. I think that sort of partnership and collaboration doesn't necessarily come easy to museums."

Chelsea Physic Garden

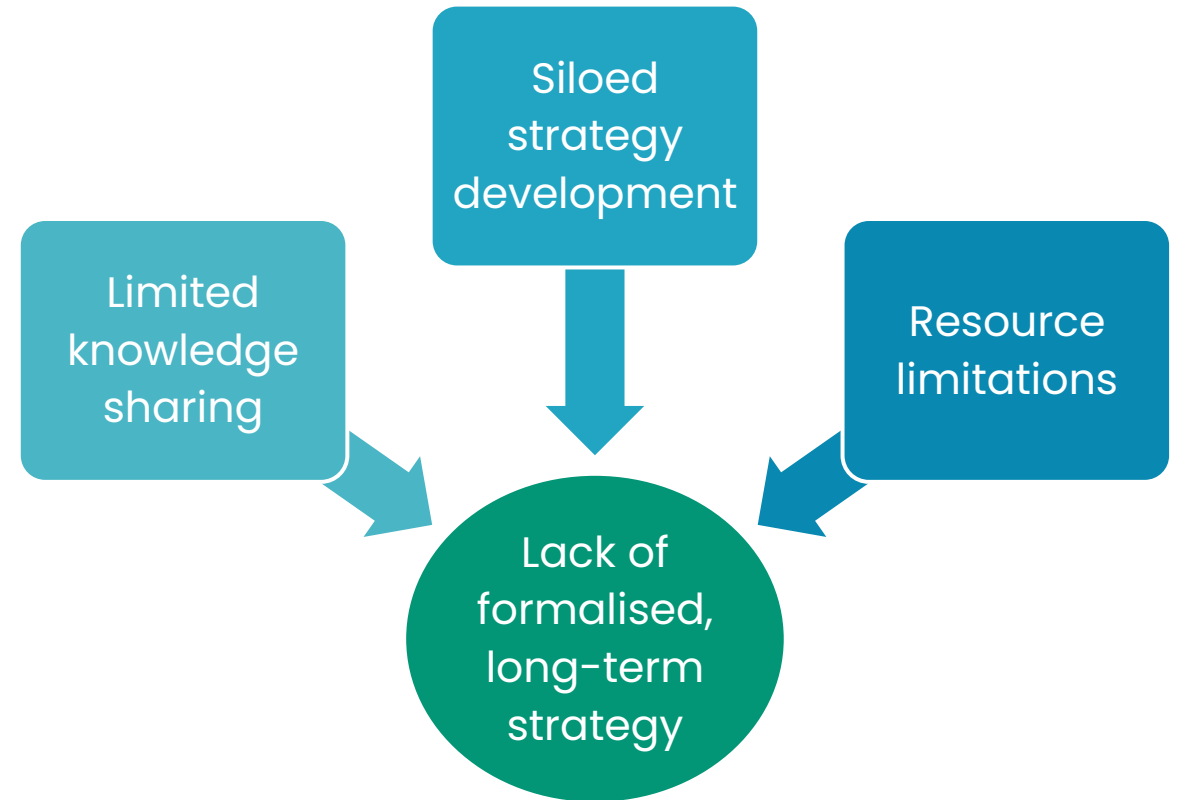


In summary: a lack of evidence and example successes, siloed strategy development and resource limitations are key barriers to long-term strategic development

Across the organisations we engaged we identified...

- A lack of comprehensive examples which limits knowledge sharing and inspiration
- Siloed development of strategies as a result of 'uniqueness' of individual sites
- Resource limitations, both financial and human.

These limiting factors contribute to the short-termism of many land management strategies in the sector, preventing the full potential of land-owning organisations being reached.



Good practice



Optimising the opportunity

Whilst there are challenges relating to the development and use of outdoor space, there are indications that there are organisations within the sector who are leading the way and making progress in developing their outdoor space.

Amongst the organisations making strides in developing their outdoor space, there are common themes from across our study.

These include:

- A willingness to ‘take a chance’
- Collaboration with those outside the organisation – be it partners or communities
- Leadership and long-term vision, with an acceptance of tactical iteration.





Ulster Folk Museum: forging a way forward

Ulster Folk Museum provides a good example of working towards sustainability as a primary goal

This is being facilitated by:

- **Clear organisational alignment**, with leadership using ‘staff walk and talks’ to encourage buy-in
- **Drawing on outside knowledge** – CEDaR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording) is based at the museum –a partnership between National Museums NI, NI Environment Agency and the recording community. They are specialists in collecting, aggregating, managing and sharing records of species for Northern Ireland, with the partnership allowing Ulster Folk Museum to be at the forefront of environmentally sustainable and pioneering interventions.
- **Effective partnership:** Conservation Volunteers (TCV) use Ulster Folk museum land to grow native trees that are then sold on. This is an effective solution to TCV’s need for a nursery site and UFM for a horticultural specialist and manpower.

When organisations 'go beyond' their traditional network they unlock new learnings and opportunities



By consulting with the community, subject specialists, or other heritage organisations, museums can access knowledge, perspectives, and expertise that may not exist within their own teams. This can help challenge internal assumptions, spark new ideas, and ensure that outdoor initiatives are both relevant and inclusive.



For example, environmental specialists might advise on biodiversity and sustainable planting, while local community groups could offer insight into how outdoor spaces are currently used - and what might encourage wider participation.



Other museums may also have valuable lessons to share from their own experimentation, whether that's what worked well, what didn't, or what unexpected outcomes emerged. This also helps build stronger partnerships and a sense of shared ownership over new approaches.



"The work that we've done with Durham County Council prior to that really helped in that whole discussion and they also helped us in the engagement with those organisations [Forestry Commission, Natural England] because when you're not used to talking to those organisations that's quite daunting."

Ushaw Historic House, Chapel and Gardens



Ushaw Historic House, Chapel and Gardens: expanding your circle

At Ushaw, they have engaged with and sought knowledge from:

- Land agents
- The local community
- Tenant farmers
- Durham County Council
- The Forestry Commission
- Visitors
- Durham University.

“So, we had a local land agent that offered that opportunity to come out and consult with us and look at sort of the opportunities for the estate in terms of potential income through government streams that were known about at that time.”

These consultations have led to the establishing of working relationships that will contribute to future soil quality schemes, advice about carbon credit schemes, assistance with funding applications and exploration of further opportunities.



Consider outdoor spaces as platforms for experimentation, sustainability, and community wellbeing

Outdoor spaces can offer a valuable platform for experimentation - through piloting new types of events, hosting temporary outdoor exhibitions, or testing participatory activities that bring collections and stories to life in unexpected ways.

Museums can also take the lead in embedding environmental responsibility into the design and use of these areas, for example through planting schemes that support biodiversity, or infrastructure that reflects climate-conscious thinking. Outdoor spaces also lend themselves naturally to health and wellbeing programming – park run, walking tours, yoga sessions, or sensory activities – which can help broaden the museum’s role in community life.

By seeing outdoor spaces as active, flexible assets, museums can better respond to the evolving needs of their audiences and the communities they serve.

“...we are rethinking the land as an integral part of the visitor experience, as an opportunity to promote biodiversity and habitat creation, a wonderful space for health and wellbeing, for heritage interpretation, skills and learning.”

**Kidwelly Industrial
Museum (Carmarthenshir
e County Council)**

Forming secure partnerships with local communities can further ensure longevity

By working collaboratively with local groups, schools, cultural organisations, and residents, museums can ensure that outdoor spaces feel welcoming, relevant, and reflective of the locality.

These partnerships can lead to co-created events, shared use of space, and a sense of collective ownership that deepens engagement and strengthens long-term connections.

A key element of building these relationships lies in reminding the community of the continued relevance and importance of local history - showing how the past connects with present-day issues, identities, and experiences.

A community that sees its heritage reflected and valued is more likely to support and sustain it, both through active participation and through ongoing financial and reputational investment.

Involving the community and local stakeholders in the development of outdoor strategies through co-production and participatory design can help with buy in and overcome some challenges and resistance to changes, by giving people a 'seat at the table'.

"There's a new town being built over on the eastern section of the battlefield...within the development of that new community, there's an understanding of the role that the battle played, in the sense of place and to what that place represents."

Prestonpans Battlefield

Prestonpans Battlefield: community relevance

Prestonpans face the unique challenge of not owning the battlefield that comprises a core element of their offer. As such, to ensure maintenance of the site they are involved in frequent communication with the local authority and existing and emerging local communities to ensure relevance and upkeep.

By successfully engaging with local stakeholders, in this case property developers, Prestonpans have been able to ensure the continued relevance of the site by lobbying to have historically relevant names used in the recent housing development built in close proximity to the site. By doing so, the charity are cementing the value of the site and its history within the local community; ensuring future interest in the role the battle played in shaping the area, along with continuing to play a role in shaping the identity of the area.

"[The] understanding of the landscape is built into the design [the new development]. So that it's not about stopping development or preventing anybody ever being able to live or work or enjoy the battlefield. It's quite the reverse. It's about saying that [the battlefield] is part of the community that we are today, and it has been for 280 years."



Willingness to act as ‘leaders’ of diversification

Strong leadership is essential to realising the full potential of outdoor spaces in museums. Pushing beyond traditional models and experimenting with new approaches - whether environmental, participatory, wellbeing or other focusses - requires a clear vision and someone willing to champion that vision. It requires leaders who can navigate uncertainty, advocate for change, and bring others along on the journey.

Whilst this does not necessarily need to be a Director or Chair, say, this kind of leadership needs the support of internal stakeholders.

“...with my background in local government and strategy, I took the lead on preparing a strategy for our next 10 years, which I should say is pretty much a rolling 10 years... And we use that to take us forward ... our structure is a 10-year ambition and objectives and then three-year rolling plan underlaid by a one-year action plan which fulfils our management agreement relationship with Flintshire County Council to have a one year business plan.”

Greenfield Valley Heritage Park

Aligning an outdoor strategy to a wider organisational one

Without cross-organisational buy-in, even the most compelling initiatives can lose momentum. Leaders must build a strong case for change, communicating how outdoor spaces can contribute to strategic goals such as audience development, environmental responsibility, or community relevance.

By aligning these ambitions with the broader mission of the museum – for example through alignment to a wider set of goals or future looking strategy – organisations can increase the likelihood of everyone being bought in.

“.....that our desire in our 10-year strategy is to become one of the top 10 destinations in North Wales. I think the nuts and bolts that deliver that is the strategy we've developed in the last two years, which is commissioning consultants to come in and actually give us a master plan, a very robust framework that maps out how we want to develop the valley over the 10 year.”

Greenfield Valley Heritage Park

Greenfield Heritage Park: taking the lead

Greenfield Heritage Park in Flintshire, Wales, is owned by Flintshire County Council and managed in partnership with the Greenfield Valley Trust. After the development of a new management agreement between the Council and the Trust, the decision was made to develop a 10-year strategy, which was prepared during the Covid lockdown.

As part of the strategy, trustees are using their areas of expertise to branch into new income streams and change the charitable structure. By having trustees from more diverse backgrounds who are willing to challenge how things have been done in the past, Greenfield has been able to expand its operations in the pursuit of financial sustainability.

“...at the moment we have a new trustee whose skill is PR and communications, but he's very well connected with, let's call it the social infrastructure of North Wales...We have another of our trustees who's a head teacher... She's thinking, how can we engage school age children?... That's their skill set, but it's their vision that would help us as a board of trustees realise the environmental development aspects of the Valley.”



Wider sector recommendations

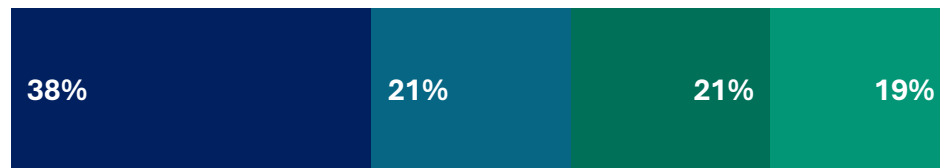
Funders need to be cognisant of the long-term nature and challenges inherent in land management

An ability to invest presents more of a challenge than an opportunity to three fifths of our survey respondents and a major challenge to two in five.

Funders are thus integral in supporting museums to maximise the potential of their land and outdoor spaces.

We are unable to invest in further development or our outdoor space ~60%

We are able to invest in the development of our outdoor space ~40%



Major challenge

More challenge than opportunity

More opportunity than challenge

Major Opportunity

- **Openness to iterative applications:** Given the developing nature of land management strategies, funders need to be aware that funding applications may be less precise or prescriptive, there needs to be room to iterate.
- **More diverse funding options:** Funding streams will need to be diversified to move beyond the focus on buildings and infrastructure to open up funding opportunities for land-first developments.
- **Evidence and evaluation:** For some museums, demonstrating things like increased footfall in outdoor spaces is difficult due to their porous nature and size; be open to qualitative assessments of impact.

Sector support organisations need to be facilitators and publicists for the sector

Encourage cross-sector learning: By establishing a centralised resource of examples and facilitating knowledge sharing.

Supporting organisations to engage with new partners: Including helping organisations to understand the different requirements when working with new partners or on new schemes.

Encourage and advocate for further funding: In recognition that funding is a barrier to developing long-term strategies, SSOs need to be at the forefront of campaigning for further funding to be available for land interventions.

“...but it's **a whole different language** and a whole different sort of new world that I personally haven't had experience of prior to that. But again, the Environment Agency have been really, really positive and I've just been honest with them and said I am new to this. Better understanding of Government grants – although we have taken active steps to ensure we understand this, but the outlook is short term and there is a lack of clarity around certain areas of grant making. Agreed, and consistent, guidance around carbon units and biodiversity units, for example.”

Ushaw Historic House, Chapel and Gardens

Developing a toolkit

Using the successes outlined as a journey
to a successful land management strategy



Putting it into practice

| Recommendation | Why it matters? | In practice – small organisation | In practice – large organisation |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Determine your goals clearly – Define a clear ‘North Star’ that remains consistent even if the means of reaching this goal may change.</p> | <p>Having a clearly defined long-term (circa 10 year) goal and ambition helps to set out and determine the more short- and medium-term goals. This helps provide focus and allows for more deliberate allocation of resource.</p> | <p>Bring together key stakeholders – this may be trustees, board members, volunteers and the local community – to get a sense of aspirations and hesitations, to balance these with feasibility to draw up a strategy / plan.</p> | <p>Bring together core stakeholders – this may be the community, local landowners, tenant farmers, employees, volunteers, board members, trustees and other interest groups. Using feedback and similar organisations experiences, consider resources to draw up a 10 year, 5 year and 1 year plan.</p> |
| <p>Take the time to understand what you have</p> | <p>Outdoor space can provide unlimited potential, knowing what space and features or characteristics can be utilised and what resources are available is important to determining a strategic direction or focus. Identifying the features of outdoor space will also help when looking for inspiration or advice from other sites.</p> | <p>Consideration of the outdoor space you have, any limitations on usage, current uses but also the skills and interests of staff and volunteers. This could be a consultation with staff and / or volunteers and discussing ideas and things they may have seen elsewhere.</p> | <p>Commissioning land surveys, examining the historical record, and consulting with tenant farmers / neighbours to understand current land uses and how land may have been used in the past, along with any features that may not be immediately visible.</p> |
| <p>Consult with people beyond your own organisation</p> | <p>This opens up new avenues of development that may be unconsidered or unknown. Others may have more experience in interacting with different organisations or regulatory bodies and may be able to assist with funding applications for example. Furthermore, this could connect museums with specialists who may be open to offering advice and guidance. This also presents an opportunity for upskilling for internal volunteers and staff.</p> | <p>This could include consulting other similar organisations, volunteer groups, the local community or support organisations for inspiration or advice.</p> | <p>Partnership with specialist organisations (e.g. CEDaR at Ulster Folk Museum), consulting external specialists (e.g. land managers), or individuals with experience in sectors that the museum would like to diversify into. Upskilling and knowledge sharing with experts can take place through walk and talks and training courses run by specialists and encouraging longevity as internal capabilities are developed.</p> |

| Recommendation | Why it matters? | In practice – small organisation | In practice – large organisation |
|---|---|--|---|
| Be open to experimenting and testing | Land interventions take time to implement and see results, alongside this sites are likely different and not everything is going to work, being prepared for this and having a number of approaches to test allows for some flexibility. This flexibility means that there are alternative options if funding is not received or if a planned development turns out to be unsuccessful. | Start with small, pilot projects to test different ideas. This could include temporary installations, pop-up events, or small-scale gardening projects. Using knowledge from the local community or local community groups could help keep input costs low. This could also involve partnering with larger organisations to test an intervention on a smaller scale. | This can involve multiple ongoing interventions that provide different directions and focusing e.g. rewilding a meadow, whilst also restoring a pond, this ensures there are options if funding does / doesn't come through and that there is flexibility to test and pivot when needed. Having more resource and willingness to test also offers the opportunity for increased diverse partnerships. |
| Invest in strong leadership to guide vision | Leadership that is onboard with a land strategy is key to outlining a long-term strategy, ensuring the interventions are properly resourced, bought into by the broader organisation and that land strategies are given adequate attention. Leadership is also key to networking, which can facilitate connections to further knowledge sources | Ensure a shared vision across volunteers and leadership / trustees. Communicate within the organisation the steps that will be taken and ensure updates are shared. | Strategic hiring and onboarding of trustees with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, to enable a flow of new and different ideas; encourage involvement by individuals from more diverse employment backgrounds who may bring different perspectives and connections. |

| Recommendation | Why it matters? | In practice – small organisation | In practice – large organisation |
|--|--|--|--|
| Ensure clear communication | Clear internal and external communication encourages positive responses to the management of outdoor space – by reassuring visitors that there is a strategy and reason for changes and explaining the reasoning to internal staff | Include a notice or poster about what is happening / going to happen, communicate to any internal stakeholders in advance and provide frequent updates. | Regularly sharing updates on what is being done, in internal meetings, mailings or newsletters. Having signs or information boards describing what is being done – e.g. No Mow May and sharing on social media about the interventions taking place. |
| Involve the local community as far as possible | <p>This helps encourage longevity of a site and the interventions, particularly if the community takes ownership of the land management scheme. Embedding the value of a museum or heritage organisation in the local community reinforces the importance of the past in the future.</p> <p>Community involvement can also assist with volunteer recruitment, knowledge sharing and word of mouth advertising of the development of outdoor space.</p> | Engage with the community by raising awareness of what is being done, this could be via social media or notices. If feasible offer a range of voluntary positions that the community can be involved in and clearly lay out responsibility for actions and management. | <p>Consult with the community before developing interventions, gauge interest in different opportunities for volunteering, consult with local community groups to see whether there is an interest in collaboration with the land management plans.</p> <p>Collaborate or reach out to local businesses to see about partnering or sponsorship. Take time to understand community stakeholders including local councils or leaders, whose buy-in may be needed for larger interventions.</p> |

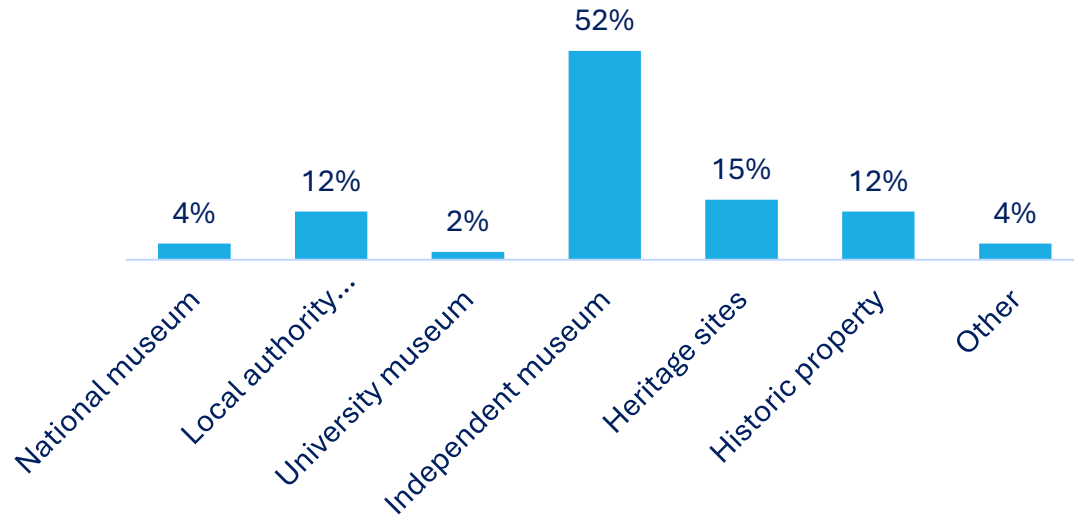
| Recommendation | Why it matters? | In practice – small organisation | In practice – large organisation |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Align overall strategy and land management strategy – and bring internal stakeholders along the journey</p> | <p>Interweaving an overall strategy and land management strategy, aligning behind a united goal, encourages company buy-in and concentration of resources as well as ease of communication as to the reason for particular choices and / or investments.</p> | <p>Clearly indicate how land management plans tie into overall strategy and how resources used will contribute to overall goals, so that the land management strategy is not seen as a reallocation of limited time and resources.</p> | <p>Embed a land management strategy within the overall organisational strategy, creating a museum with a garden rather than a garden and museum. Draw links between both indoor and outdoor to continue a narrative inside and out, to create an immersive complete experience.</p> |
| <p>Think long-term, but also consider short-term milestones</p> | <p>Land changes are long-term investments and results will take time to become apparent, therefore, strategies need to be long term to account for this. However, for funding applications, progress monitoring, potential for flexibility and organisational buy-in, having shorter term milestones are also necessary.</p> | <p>Short term interventions can be quick wins, and small scale. A long-term goal may be shorter term than a larger organisation, depending on the scale of the site and land type managed.</p> | <p>Execute the interventions in phases, allowing for continuous monitoring and adaptation based on feedback and results. This ensures that the projects remain aligned with the organisation’s goals and can be adjusted as needed. Along with providing incremental milestones, demonstrating progress in the short-term.</p> |

Respondent profile

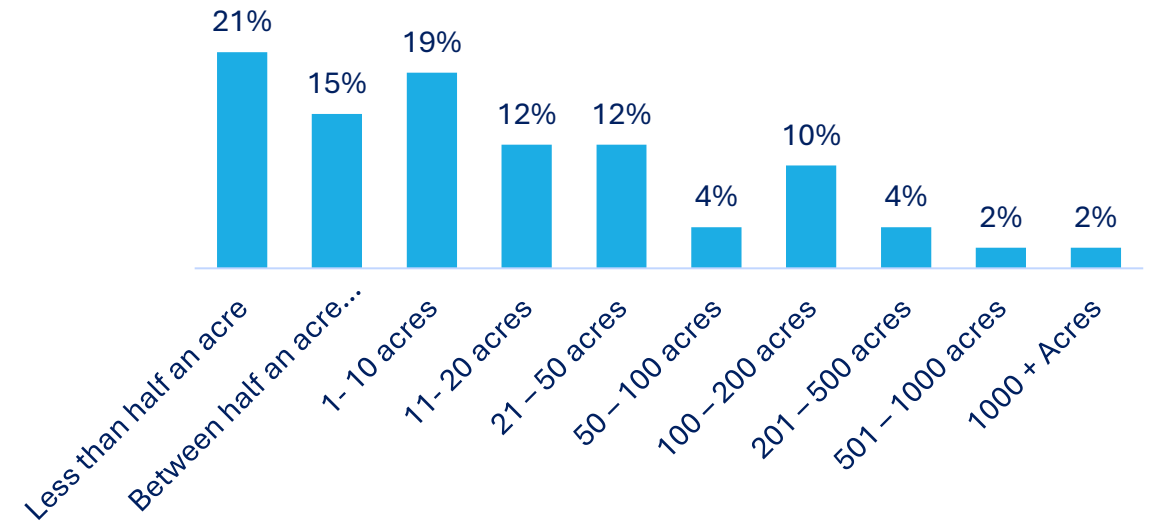


Profile of survey respondents (1)

Museum type (n=52)

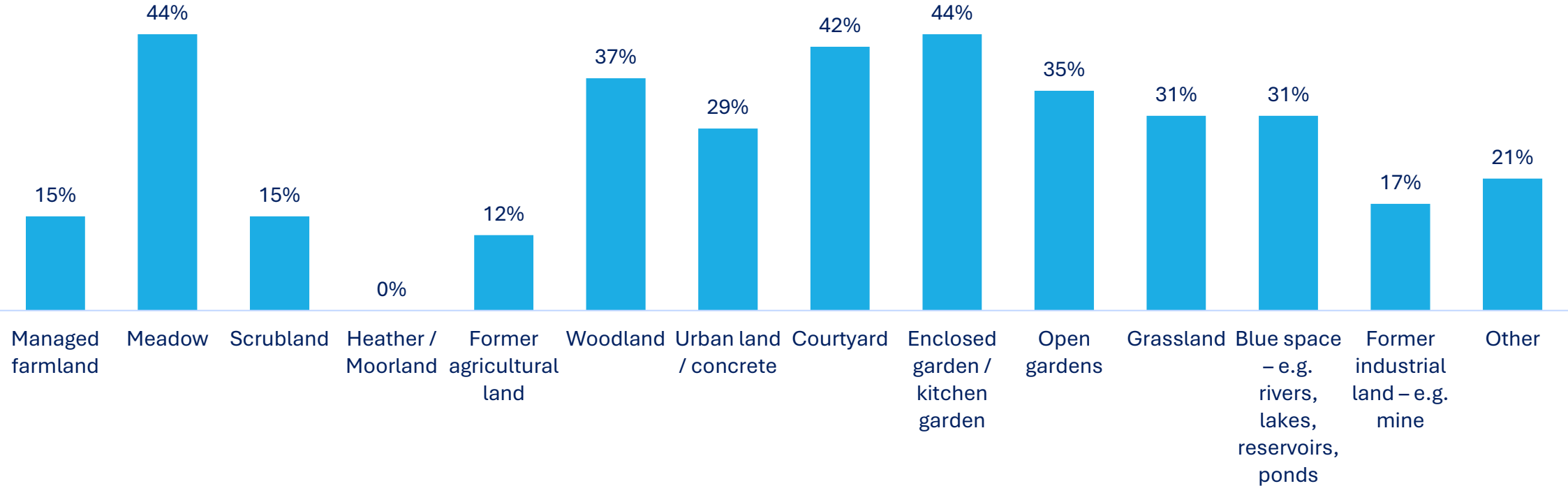


Land Managed (n=52)

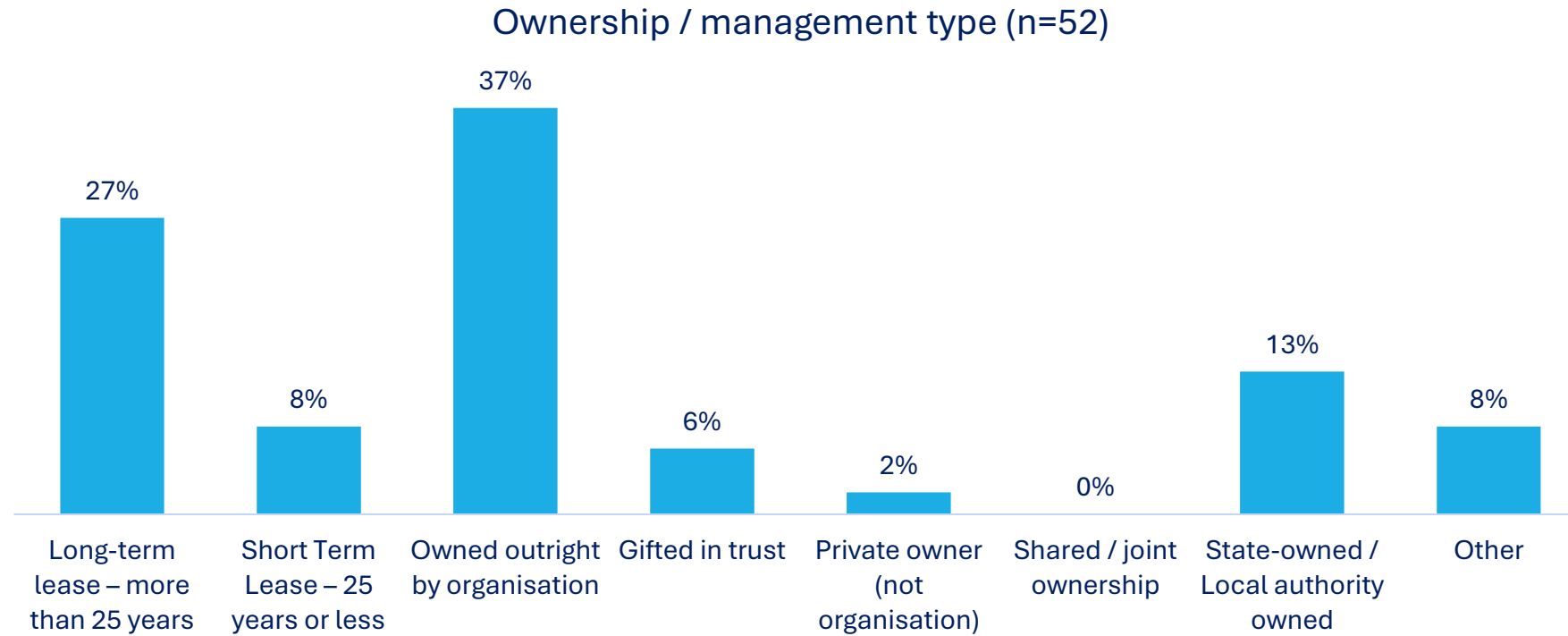


Profile of survey respondents (2)

Land type (n=52)



Profile of survey respondents (3)



Case studies



Charterhouse, London

Case studies

Greenfield Heritage Park

Greenfield Heritage Park exemplifies a number of our core recommendations: they are recruiting individuals with diverse skills to **expand their knowledge base, engaging with the community** to develop the site and ensure that the longevity, along with developing a **long-term strategic plan** with incremental milestones.

For example:

- As part of the development Greenfield are currently working with a group of consultants to develop their Blue/Green Heritage Plan funded by The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).
- Trustees have laid out a new 10-year strategy which seeks to balance the often conflicting elements of visitor experience, heritage stewardship and community engagement – broken down further to cover 3-year periods and 1-year components to meet Flintshire Council requirements.
- Greenfield are using the differing backgrounds and expertise of their Trustees to explore diversification opportunities.

Ulster Folk Museum

Ulster Folk Museum are **taking the lead** and **piloting new approaches**, particularly with an eye to sustainability. The site is used as a **testing ground** for new approaches that can then be rolled out across other sites.

To ensure success they are:

- Ensuring all staff and the community feel involved in the decision-making process and sourcing ideas from across the organisation.
- Clearly communicating the changes taking place, through newsletters and lunch-time ‘walk and talks’ outlining the work being undertaken and communicating the long-term vision.
- Consulting and partnering with expert organisations to conduct surveys, increase knowledge and open up new opportunities and possibilities for development – e.g. *CEDaR* are based at the Ulster Folk Museum and they work closely with the *Conservation Volunteers* who manage the tree nursery.

Case studies

Prestonpans Battlefield

For Prestonpans, major challenges are faced as a result of the physical separation of the battlefield and the museum and the battlefield not being directly owned by the museum.

Despite this, they are successfully managing their land by **engaging with the community** and **maintaining positive relationships with the local authority** to ensure the maintenance of the outdoor space.

Key actions and outcomes have been:

- Engaging with local housing developers, to ensure the battlefield is embedded in the local community memory through street naming, cementing a role for history in the present.
- Developing a walking app to guide visitors around the battlefield – to minimise the need for volunteer tour guides and using markers to draw links between the outside space and the museum.

Ushaw Historic House and Chapel

Ushaw Historic House and Gardens have engaged with organisations and individuals **beyond their own traditional network** to bring new ideas and facilitate further communication and knowledge sharing.

This has included:

- Working with Durham University to see how the two can support each other to achieve their related goals, establishing a partnership that will bring mutual benefit.
- Engaged with land agents and local landowners to learn more about the history of the landscape and gather insight into more funding opportunities.
- Work with volunteers with diverse interests to establish a community woodland, which will be maintained via community input and ensures the future of volunteering at the site by engaging younger people and giving the community a sense of ownership.

Case studies

Natural History Museum

NHM are taking the lead, not just by declaring a climate emergency but also through **supporting other museums** and heritage organisations by collaborating on the “Fixing Our Broken Planet” programme.

Though the actions taken by NHM may not be replicable across the majority of museums, they are keen to support other organisations and share their knowledge.

At NHM they have:

- Designed and sculpted their outdoor space to create a walk-through time, walking through the garden visitors are able to see how the Earth has changed and get a sense of the scope of ‘deep time’.
- They have also created an educational garden which is more focused on engaging young people and creating a space for citizen science, contributing to and encouraging others to contribute to a global database of environmental data collection and monitoring.

Wheal Martyn

Wheal Martyn highlight the importance of having a **multi-stranded and flexible plan** for land management, that can adapt to the availability of volunteers and the weather.

Wheal Martyn describe their land management plan as a **mix of formal and informal that allows for adaptation to the natural environment** and its inherent unpredictability.

Their plan:

- Incorporates every element of their site – buildings, visitor centre, monuments, and the outdoor space.
- Comprises 19 projects that covers collections, buildings, interpretation, play areas, nature trails, habitat and species action plan and the access audit which is continually updated.
- Their plans are constantly under review and changing, these are pulled together in a relatively informal way on the day to day. The overall site strategy is an overarching document with a five-year focus, which gives a general direction and purpose, but how this is implemented in the day to day is more informal and flexible.

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