



# Cultural Strategy

For wanderers and wonderers...  
a pathway for our cultural future



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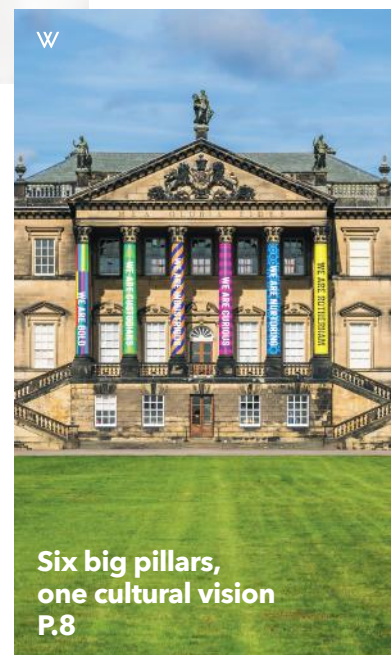
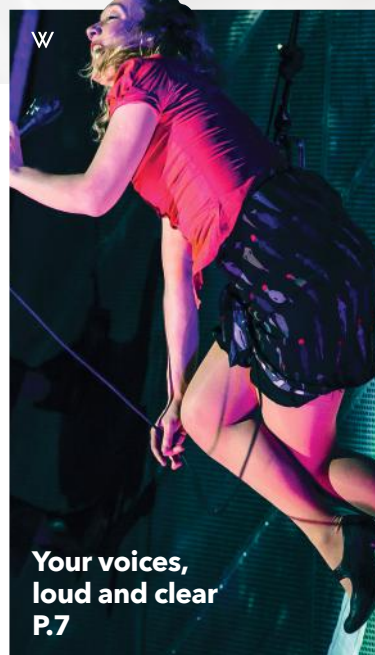
# Cultural Strategy 2023

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# Wentworth Woodhouse is back

With more than a few surprises

**In the heart of South Yorkshire, six huge, blackened pillars are supporting an emerging giant of the cultural world.**

Over centuries, we proudly stood centre stage as a thriving social, economic and political powerhouse, across Europe and beyond.

**And now we're back.**

Our industrious South Yorkshire heritage stands proud; the grit, loyalty and determination of yesterday deep in our DNA and ingrained in our coal-washed walls. It's shaping who we are and what we do today, tomorrow and for generations to come, as custodians of this treasured site.

A site of straight talk and hard work, where forgotten histories and voices from days-gone-by are heard through innovative and imaginative mediums.

**We're shining a spotlight on Rotherham and welcoming visitors from near and far.**

We're a place for all, where wanderers and wonderers are gathering to discover, celebrate and evolve our mesmerising stories - past, present, and future.

We're a bold, ever-changing, dynamic space where the unexpected delights us and imaginations run wild.

Where we dare to believe the impossible and step fearlessly into the unknown.

Where we discover more than we could have imagined about ourselves, our community, our place in history.

**We're a space to be playful and curious, expressing our creativity in its many forms.**

A space where we nurture and celebrate our unique and diverse contributions and their value.

A space for connection and collaboration, exchange and debate. Where we trade stories, ideas, artforms, cultures. And are all richer for it.

**We are yours, we are Wentworth Woodhouse, and we are back.**





# Culture at Wentworth Woodhouse

What's the big deal?

1.0

**You may know Wentworth Woodhouse as the huge historic building surrounded by gardens, woodland and farmland, hidden away on the hillside above Rotherham.**

You might have learned a little about its social and industrial history, and the people who have made it what it is today.

You may even have heard about our ambitious new plans or been part of some of our ground-breaking events and initiatives.

Wentworth Woodhouse is back in action! And this time, it belongs to us all, smashing stereotypes of stately homes - as a welcoming world-class destination, packed with surprises.





# This is the Wentworth Woodhouse Cultural Strategy – why do we need one?

Culture – however you define or experience it – has the power to bring about happiness, meaning and wellbeing. It connects and unites us and is a key ingredient for community vibrancy in towns, cities, and rural places across the UK.

A well thought-through Cultural Strategy leads to improved education, skills development, job creation and opportunities of all kinds, fostering innovation and creativity, and building community identity.

## Pre-COVID, the UK's culture and creative industries were the fastest growing sector of the economy.

Culture, music and the arts are needed now more than ever to revitalise and regenerate as we dust ourselves down after the hard-felt social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Culture is also a key thread in the government's Levelling Up agenda to boost living standards, investing in education and restoring local pride and opportunities right across the UK - giving everyone the opportunity to flourish.

Meanwhile, Arts Council England is on a quest to see 'a country transformed by culture', and closer to home our northern friends in Bradford are celebrating 'a cultural renaissance', making a 'sustainable contribution to the prosperity and happiness of everyone'.

## Wentworth Woodhouse has a vital role to play in local and national ambitions for culture, and the role it plays for communities and the economy.

As a creative, contemporary, cultural hub for the North, our influence and impact is expanding throughout the UK, across Europe and all over the world.



Every day we celebrate culture of all kinds, from history to performance, gardening to film, and from the multi-cultural, multi-talented community of Rotherham right on our doorstep.

We're uniquely equipped to help our local communities to engage in culture and discover powerful ways to tell their stories, for local artists to thrive, local talent to be elevated onto a world stage, and to reflect the diversity of our sector.

## At Wentworth Woodhouse, culture is our glue.

It focuses our mind and our resources, disciplining our energy and attention away from all the things we could do, onto those things we must do.

It brings together all that we stand for - all our big plans for buildings and landscapes, for people and partnerships, for community outreach and co-curation - and binds them together. Culture is also (let's not forget) fun! Our creativity is boundless and we have big plans to share our history, host your ideas and present local and international stories side by side, in hugely imaginative new ways that will make you want to come back and see us time and again.

Soon enough Wentworth Woodhouse will be as powerful as it once was, filled with major cultural moments from inspirational partners the world over. And this time our glory will be shared with the people who bring it to life.



**Culture is what helps us stick together, understand one another, and enjoy our world; and this strategy will guide us to realise this with you.**



# We're on an ambitious new journey

Will you join us?

2.0

In 2014 the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust was born.

With no time to waste, we rolled up our sleeves and got stuck in with the huge task of turning this grand, historic stately home and grounds into a new space that belongs to all - with culture at its core.

## **Our ambitions aren't for the faint-hearted.**

We're trail-blazing, re-setting expectations as we turn a magnificent site into a world-class destination - a contemporary, creative, cultural asset for the North and a hub for skills development and job creation.

We will be known for our exceptional quality and our radically inclusive welcome, throughout Yorkshire, across the UK and around the world.

We're sustainably reusing, repurposing and reinventing our indoor and outdoor spaces - from awe-inspiring state rooms and stables, to expansive gardens and woodland - to hold never-seen-before artistic expressions.

In a few short years, we've rapidly mobilised teams to deliver new, innovative events programmes and offers, bringing arts, culture and heritage centre-stage.

We've tested new ideas and bold concepts. We've collaborated and co-produced with local and internationally-renowned artists.

We've partnered in new initiatives like the spectacular WE Wonder series. But there's still much more to do to develop and expand our cultural offer, as we seek to welcome new audiences, and reach those who don't yet call Wentworth Woodhouse home.

## **With big ambitions and plenty of learning under our belt, it's time to clarify and focus our purpose and priorities.**

It's time to discipline our energy and resources. And it's time to set the pace and direction of travel for Wentworth Woodhouse over the next five years.

This Cultural Strategy will help us do just that. It's a living and constantly evolving guiding light - an agile tool for decision making.

In an ever changing cultural, social and economic landscape, it will help us anticipate and respond proactively to unexpected opportunities and challenges locally, nationally and globally. With so many opportunities to explore, our six cultural pillars - with their action plans and guiding principles - will be our point of focus, quality control and challenge.

With the Cultural Strategy as our guide and catalyst, over the next few years Wentworth Woodhouse will experiment with even more art forms including outdoor, in town and digital. As we seek to understand and respond to our audiences, we'll deliver bold, imaginative, and positive opportunities for those who don't normally engage with culture. All this, whilst holding the tension between responding to the needs and interests of new and existing visitors - locally, nationally, and internationally.

## **It's a big task, and we're up for the challenge. Will you join us?**





# Your voices, loud and clear

Crafted by you

3.0

Our Cultural Strategy has been crafted and shaped by the voices that matter - your voices, past and present. These voices have come from the heart of our local community - our neighbours in Wentworth, Rotherham and in neighbouring areas throughout South Yorkshire - and across the country.

We have listened, asked questions, gathered opinions, and sifted ideas from across a variety of one-to-one conversations, group workshops, surveys, written testimonials and feedback including representatives from:

- + Local neighbours
- + Visitors and supporters
- + 80+ voices previously consulted for the Camellia House Activity Plan
- + Staff, volunteers and consultants
- + Our Board of Trustees
- + Cultural organisations
- + Arts Council England
- + National Lottery Heritage Fund
- + Paul Mellon Centre
- + Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- + Flux CPP Rotherham
- + Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance
- + South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

These voices are many, broad and diverse; and yet they share a common pride in Wentworth Woodhouse.

And a passion and determination to see a cultural vision brought to life for the benefit of Wentworth, Rotherham, South Yorkshire and beyond.

**A big thank you to everyone who has added their voice to shape our Cultural Strategy.**

**Do continue to speak up and have your say as our plans evolve.**

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# Six big pillars, one cultural vision

Our cultural pathway

4.0



Our vision sets out a cultural pathway for Wentworth Woodhouse. Our six big cultural pillars mirror the six huge, coal-blackened pillars that stand

proudly at the centre of the 606-foot-long façade, dominating the landscape on the East Front of Wentworth Woodhouse.

Together they form our cultural vision – our direction of travel today, tomorrow and over the next ten years, ever evolving, ambitious but always central to our community.

## We are bold

We interrupt the everyday, sparking moments of unexpected wonder with playful and spectacular experiences.

## We are curious

We welcome and represent the diverse and dynamic community around us; a hub for people. We are always listening and learning, co-curating and collaborating to enrich one another, exchanging experiences, values and ideas; founding deep trust and a sense of belonging.

## We are custodians

We care about our history. As we restore and care for our monumental buildings and landscape, we are unearthing forgotten voices and stories that are impatient to be heard; for people here and now, and for future generations.

## We are nurturing

We believe in the people around us and will use all our resources and energy to develop their skills and potential so that more people can participate in life-enhancing creativity and culture.

## We are industrious

We are an economic driver for Rotherham and beyond, forging a new identity for the area founded on our hard-working past, promoting new possibilities and acting as a magnet for visitors and opportunity.

## We are Rotherham

We are unapologetically proud of Rotherham, our home. We are fuelled by the vibrant people, places and history around us, where our warm Yorkshire welcome and our industrial, hard-working past are core to who we are.



# We do the hard graft

## Our action plan

5.0

**Our six big cultural pillars underpin big ambitions for Wentworth Woodhouse.**

But how will we know we're making progress? And how will we know when we have arrived?

Our action plan sets out what we intend to achieve - now, next and later - to make our ambitions a reality.





# We are bold

## Pillar 1.0

We interrupt the everyday, sparking moments of unexpected wonder with playful and spectacular experiences.

- + We dare to be different: big, brave, ambitious, imaginative, super-sized.
- + We are driven by unusual and inspiring contrasts and twists.
- + We are open to experimentation and using different and dynamic formats and media.
- + We make use of Wentworth Woodhouse's scale, size and impact.
- + Our programming is distinctive to Wentworth Woodhouse.
- + We invite artists and curators to respond to the place, commissioning new work.
- + We have a local, national and global context and relevance.
- + We don't shy away from programming more serious, challenging or emotive work.

## How will we know when we have arrived?

### NOW

- + We shall develop a dedicated cultural department within the organisation, and engage external creative producers as needed to help us realise our ambitions.
- + Within the cultural department will be the in-house creative events team who will deliver large-scale festivals and outdoor programming, building upon the established 'WE Wonder'. These events will feature a mix of local, national and international talent and present a range of artforms and creative techniques, responding to our themes and stories.
- + We will optimise our collaboration with Flux CPP to commission artists.
- + We will deliver a core community events programme, as outlined in the Camellia House Activity Plan.
- + We will deliver new public tours in different areas of the house and gardens, from which we will develop further.

### NEXT

- + We will develop and deliver a series of temporary exhibitions tailored to our audiences.
- + We will work with guest curators and partners to experiment with new art forms and genres, commission new work and ensure that everything we do has a contemporary twist on our historic tales and backdrop.
- + We will collaborate with UK national partners, bringing experiences to Rotherham that haven't been seen here before; uniting tech and art to bring our historic collection back to the site in innovative new ways.
- + A series of recognisable annual events will have their home at Wentworth Woodhouse.
- + We will play a key role in Rotherham's Children's Capital of Culture.

### LATER

- + We will collaborate with international partners, making Wentworth Woodhouse a stage for newly commissioned and iconic work from across the globe.
- + We will start to tour our commissions and work inspired by our stories, connecting with other people and places thematically.
- + We will take risks with our programming, but will be trusted by our audiences enough that both new and existing visitors come back to us time and again.



# We are custodians

## Pillar 2.0

We care about our history. As we restore our monumental buildings and landscape, we are unearthing forgotten voices and stories that are impatient to be heard; for people here and now, and for the future.

- + We are custodians across history, architecture, landscape and (future) collections - all the assets of Wentworth Woodhouse. Our architectural heritage is reimagined.
- + We are celebrating Wentworth Woodhouse's role as an expert conservator and regenerator.
- + We discover, translate and share unheard/forgotten Wentworth Woodhouse and Rotherham/Elsecar stories in meaningful ways for our audiences.
- + We celebrate and champion the authenticity of voices.
- + We are a place for discovery and debate.
- + We connect with similar themes and stories outside of the area, nationally and internationally.



## How will we know when we have arrived?

### NOW



- + We will recruit a Collections Researcher to research authentic Wentworth Woodhouse stories, who can collaborate with the cultural programming team to tell these in a way that means something to our target audiences.
- + We'll dig deep to uncover authentic stories of mystery and intrigue from our archives to create new, meaningful and impactful exhibitions in the house (now) and elsewhere (later).
- + We will protect and take our inspiration from both our house and gardens, making the most of our entire landscape and spaces.
- + We will continue to deliver our popular lecture series.

### NEXT



- + We shall deliver the 1st phase of the State Room project and start to display some original pieces from the house's past, complemented with modern commissioning.
- + We will work with partners to connect our stories to similar themes elsewhere, creating larger moments and awareness together, nationally and internationally.
- + We will develop a fun, interactive, inclusive learning programme, telling Wentworth Woodhouse stories for all ages (education) including those who are disengaged from their heritage.
- + We will work with RMBC to support its community curators, co-producing programmes with them, to further democratise our shared heritage.

### LATER



- + We shall deliver the major State Room development scheme (including educational rooms) and create a major international Gallery Space.
- + We will stage one significant exhibition per year, working with partners to find innovative solutions to storytelling and interpretation, adopting cutting-edge techniques for a 21st century audience.
- + We will build on partnerships with renowned institutions, to have a national and international presence.





# We are industrious

## Pillar 3.0

We are an economic driver for Rotherham and beyond, forging a new identity for the area founded on our hard-working past, promoting new possibilities and acting as a magnet for visitors.

- + We are bringing people to the area; they are staying longer and returning more often.
- + We are putting Rotherham (and Yorkshire) on the map; to the nation, to partners, and for international tourism.
- + We are committed to being deliberate and useful for the area - fill gaps, lead progressive, long-lasting change, and be a catalyst for enterprise.
- + We are demonstrating that industry and hard-work are part of the area's identity, and as relevant now as they have ever-been.

## How will we know when we have arrived?

### NOW

- + Our audience development plan (The Activity Plan) will be delivered, with primary audiences clearly defined. We will understand the most effective communication channels to reach them effectively.
- + We will refresh our website to better represent our cultural pillars.
- + We will develop a marketing strategy that steadily increases public awareness and (repeat) visitors from Wentworth, Rotherham, Sheffield, Yorkshire and beyond, with both Rotherham and Wentworth Woodhouse seen as must-see visitor destinations.
- + We will stay involved in community planning groups (political, social and artistic) to be aware of provision, understand how we can contribute effectively, and lead on ambition for the area.

### NEXT

- + We will work in partnership with other key destinations in the local M1 corridor via joint promotions and cross-marketing to increase impact, drive footfall and increase dwell-time in the area (stay longer, see more).
- + We will increase awareness, recall and loyalty via the relaunch of the Wentworth Woodhouse brand, with welcoming, accessible marketing language, tone and offers.
- + We will track and share the economic and social impact of our work, demonstrating a positive contribution and holding ourselves accountable in delivering this.
- + We will strive to become one of the most accessible and environmentally-sustainable country house in the UK, progressing towards this goal by implementing our organisation-wide Accessibility and Environmental Sustainability policies.

### LATER

- + We will work with local and national businesses (within the creative industries and beyond) to explore collaborations, creating career opportunities for people and generating revenue for our partners.
- + The progression of our marketing strategy will expand nationally and internationally, developing both reach and reputation.
- + Wentworth Woodhouse will become known as the home for enterprise and pioneering ideas, tracked through audience feedback, stakeholder engagement, media coverage and other sources as appropriate.

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# We are curious

## Pillar 4.⊙

We welcome and represent the diverse and dynamic community around us, a hub for people. We are always listening and co-curating to enrich one another, founding deep trust and a sense of belonging.

- + We create new memories, from creating new festivals and performances together, to being a place where locals spend time socially with friends and family.
- + We listen and respond to different and changing perspectives and priorities.
- + We celebrate other people's stories.
- + We facilitate connections and compatibility.
- + We invest in the community, so they can see themselves at Wentworth Woodhouse, investing time, budget and opportunity.
- + We seek out the least engaged who could benefit from and contribute to what we offer.
- + We create ways for the community to easily get involved via public votes, advisory committees and multi-platform engagement.
- + We remember that representation needs to be everywhere - our programmes, staff, volunteers, audiences, language, decision-makers.

## ● How will we know when we have arrived?

### NOW

- + We will continue to actively listen to Rotherham's voices (including our young people), through existing and new forums, ensuring that robust idea generation, consultation and feedback mechanisms are live and effecting change.
- + We will develop our local advisory panels (including the Community Inclusion Group and the Youth Forum) to allow for democratic decision making and to host listening exercises, to ensure under-represented and under-served communities have a voice and we understand their needs and priorities over time.

### NEXT

- + We will employ a dedicated Community Engagement and Inclusion Officer who will have a remit to support delivery of the Cultural Strategy.
- + We will establish public voting for short-listed ideas - using multiple platforms to promote and facilitate this - to involve the general public in deciding what we do.
- + For all recruitment (of volunteers and staff) we will use positive action to target those from Rotherham and to address any under-representation in our workforce overall, to allow us to represent the true diversity of the community around Wentworth Woodhouse.
- + For each large-scale project, we will link an engagement programme with Flux CPP in Rotherham in our target communities.
- + We will develop horticultural projects - including community growing gardens and creative natural play areas.

- + We will ensure our marketing is more truly representative of Wentworth Woodhouse and our community, including those that have been under-represented, including reaching communities through the communication channels they use and via community influencers/leaders.

### LATER

- + We will further develop our Outreach Team, promoting creative opportunities in the local community to people at all stages of their lives so that everyone feels welcome, represented, and engaged.





# We are nurturing

## Pillar 5.0

We believe in the people around us and will use all our resources and energy to develop their skills and potential so that more people can participate in life-enhancing creativity and culture.

- + We create opportunities through skills development and educational experiences related to culture, heritage, hospitality, digital, nature and leisure.
- + We act as a launch-pad for people in the area, adding to their knowledge and skills and connecting them with new people, possibilities, funding, jobs, experiences and ideas.
- + We drive participation by making initiatives as accessible and attractive as possible.



## ♡ How will we know when we have arrived?

### NOW



- + We will expand and develop the new Young Producers Digital Skills Programme to better serve the next generation of culture leaders and improve our own digital literacy.
- + We will employ a Learning and Skills Officer who will have a remit to support delivery of the Cultural Strategy.
- + We will continue our collaboration with ArtWorks, supporting adults with learning difficulties as artists and curators. Following their first ever national art competition for disabled artists curated at Wentworth Woodhouse, we will commission them to create work and develop new initiatives to spotlight disabled artists and makers, including collaborating on one temporary exhibition.
- + We will seek knowledge and education opportunities throughout the cultural programme of activities, connecting all visitors with a learning experience.

### NEXT



- + We will work with local educational partners to implement Creative Academy curriculums into schools.
- + We will build on the outcomes achieved by the UK CRF funding programme, via inclusion of our projects in Shared Prosperity Fund applications.



### LATER



- + We will establish a dedicated education facility at Wentworth Woodhouse with creative learning at its heart.
- + We will ensure that each collaboration (whether local, regional, national or international) includes a requirement to feed into and/or offer access to skills development.
- + We will develop a permanent digital training hub as part of our ambitious apprenticeship and creative skills development goals for Rotherham, incubating talent and increasing diversity in the creative industries sector.



# We are Rotherham

## Pillar 6.0

We are unapologetically proud of Rotherham. We are fuelled by the people, places and history, where our warm Yorkshire welcome and our industrial past are core to who we are today and tomorrow.

- + We make sure all activities make sense as to why they are in Rotherham/at Wentworth Woodhouse.
- + We work constructively and supportively with other Rotherham partners.
- + We let the Yorkshire voice come through in our programming and communications.
- + We champion Rotherham in our programming.
- + We are true to the Wentworth Woodhouse identity in everything we do.



## ✗ How will we know when we have arrived?

### NOW



- + We will ensure Rotherham is present in all our marketing materials, using a local voice and tone in our language.



### NEXT



- + In everything we do, we will ensure our output reflects the diverse cultures of Rotherham, acting as the catalyst for culture-led regeneration that celebrates people and place.
- + We will embed co-designing approaches with local communities to share stories of Wentworth Woodhouse in meaningful ways, and we'll find a shared language across traditional curatorship and contemporary programming that inspires ownership and connection for local audiences.
- + We will play a key role in delivering the Children's Capital of Culture in Rotherham in 2025, helping to change perceptions of Rotherham.

### LATER



- + We will continue to forge meaningful and generous partnerships to ensure the Rotherham borough becomes known for its culture, creativity and quality of life.





# We are fearless

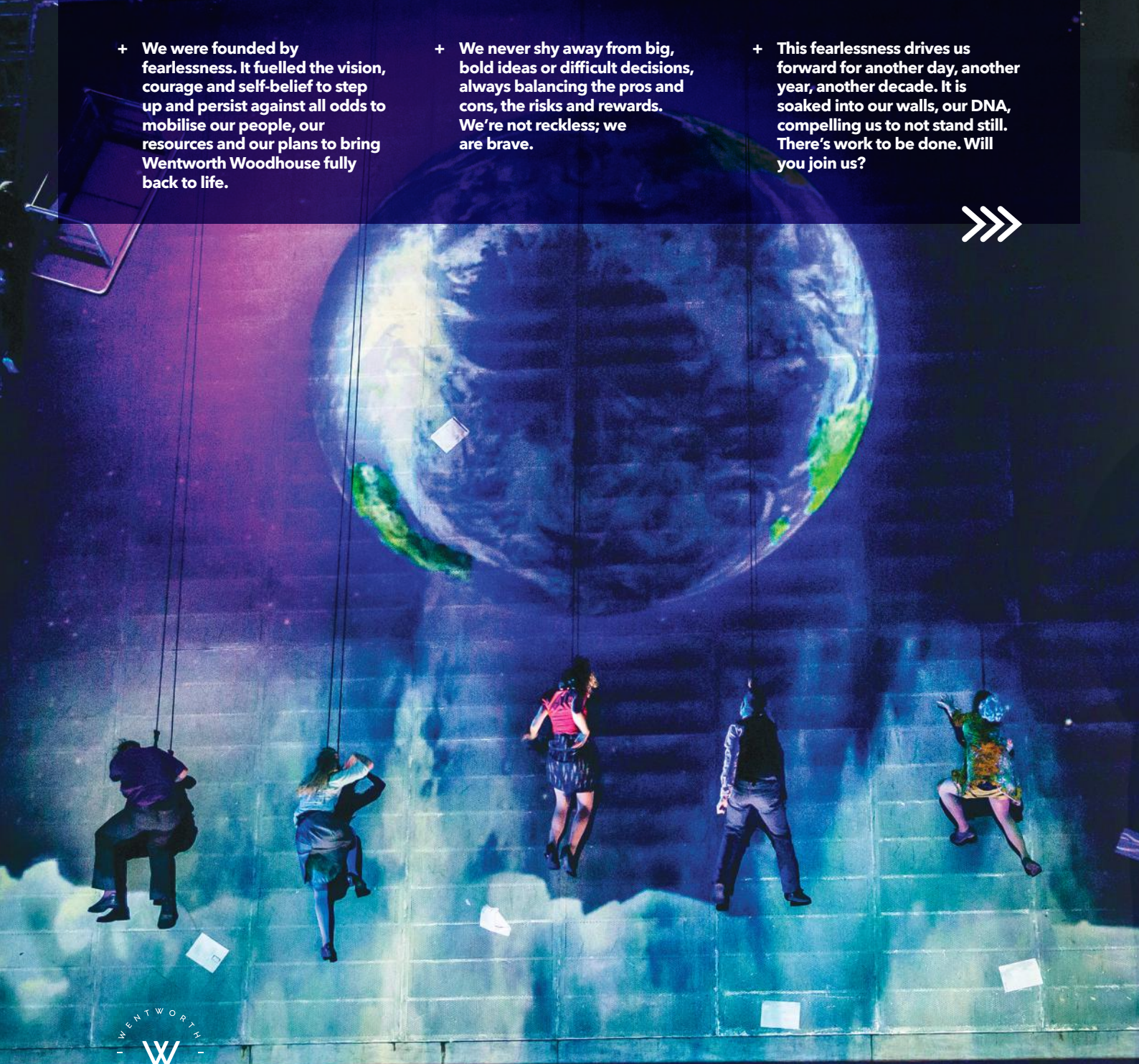
## All pillars

With all six pillars standing strong together, we are fearless.

+ We were founded by fearlessness. It fuelled the vision, courage and self-belief to step up and persist against all odds to mobilise our people, our resources and our plans to bring Wentworth Woodhouse fully back to life.

+ We never shy away from big, bold ideas or difficult decisions, always balancing the pros and cons, the risks and rewards. We're not reckless; we are brave.

+ This fearlessness drives us forward for another day, another year, another decade. It is soaked into our walls, our DNA, compelling us to not stand still. There's work to be done. Will you join us?









# Our guiding principles

## Our checklist

6.0

**Our guiding principles are designed to help staff to navigate the ambitions and opportunities set out by our cultural pillars, steering their decisions and actions when deciding what should (and should not) be part of Wentworth Woodhouse's activity.**

When approaching the question of 'go/no go' for any opportunity or idea, it is important that the concept fits in with at least half of the cultural pillars, and ideally all where possible.

For example - a bold idea for a new performance festival might tell a story from Wentworth Woodhouse's past, and be curated in partnership with the community and delivered by local skilled people, covering Bold, Curious, Nurturing and Custodians all at once, so if it doesn't meet the Industrious pillar too then the idea could still go ahead.

We Are Rotherham is a pillar that should, however, never be left out in the context of any event or idea, and everything that happens at Wentworth Woodhouse should at its core be Fearless.

The detailed checklist helps to further define whether an idea should proceed, or how it might be tailored to better fit our ambitions and goals.

The 'reality check' section of this strategy should also be addressed to keep our dreams aligned with our reality, which is especially important for commitments to environmental sustainability, representation, accessibility, supporting our partners and keeping the venue ticking with the right balance of resource and revenue.

This checklist will often be used for programming events and curating cultural experiences, but should also be used for decisions about training, collections, revenue-generating activities, education and other initiatives at Wentworth Woodhouse.

We cannot do everything, so this checklist should help us hone down our activities to those which are most useful and impactful.

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## We are bold

- + Could no one else do this in Yorkshire (is this only possible at Wentworth Woodhouse)?
- + Is it world-class quality, suitable for Wentworth Woodhouse, and relevant to our audiences?
- + Have local artists and/or community members been invited to be involved in some way?
- + Is this likely to engender an emotional, empowered and/or inspired reaction in people?
- + Is there something 'new' about this idea (e.g. use of tech/digital, new stories/discoveries, first in the area, different to what has gone before)?
- + Whatever the scale, does the end result of this feel 'full' in the space that Wentworth Woodhouse is using (considering that the space could be digital, big or small, indoors or outdoors)?
- + Is there a clear contemporary twist to the idea (especially if working with historic content)?
- + Is there a balance between new and risky, and ongoing and familiar?
- + Is there a national and/or international opportunity that can be developed for this (e.g. via partnerships, commissions)?



## We are custodians

- + Has a Wentworth Woodhouse story been told, ideally in a new way and in a way that will resonate with target audiences?
- + Are there similar/linked stories out in the world that this could link to, to create a partnership opportunity and/or to reach new audiences further afield?
- + Can this be run safely at Wentworth Woodhouse, considering our heritage status and the impact on the physical and natural environment?
- + Does this help bring the state rooms, or other underused spaces, to life (both inside and outside)?
- + Could an interesting debate spring out of this that audiences and stakeholders could respond to?



## We are industrious

- + Will this bring new people to Wentworth Woodhouse, and will they then likely stay on to explore the area?
- + Can you explain the idea clearly so that people will understand it and want to get involved?
- + Is there a gap for this kind of thing in the area (i.e. you are filling a gap and not creating unnecessary competition)?
- + Will new, local groups/organisations benefit from this opportunity (socially, economically, educationally, environmentally)?
- + Has transport to the site been made affordable and accessible, with digital options made available for people to experience it remotely if they cannot travel to the site.
- + Does this present an opportunity for Wentworth Woodhouse to invest in people (e.g. artist commission, creating a platform for sales for a local business, creating a job)?





## We are curious

- + Does this respond to/engage with current societal priorities and needs?
- + Has a local story been told (historic or current)?
- + Have you listened to your audiences in making your decisions?
- + Will this bring new people to Wentworth Woodhouse and the area, especially those who do not typically engage with cultural or historic experiences?
- + Has appropriate representation been considered, in terms of planning, delivery, people, content?
- + Is the language you are using to promote this accessible and meaningful to the target audiences?
- + Does this help move visitors/audiences along in their affinity with Wentworth Woodhouse?



## We are nurturing

- + Does this present an opportunity for someone local to learn something new that will lead to social, financial or educational benefit for them?
- + Is there an education partner who could be involved?
- + Can local people be involved in delivery of this (on a volunteer or paid-for basis, as appropriate)?
- + Does this celebrate a journey that someone/ some people have taken with Wentworth Woodhouse to develop themselves?



## We are Rotherham

- + Does something about this have a clear Rotherham voice?
- + Is it clear that this is happening in Rotherham in all promotional activity?
- + Is this ambitious enough to help Rotherham stand out on the map as a cultural destination?
- + Is this fearless?





# A reality check

Our recipe for success

7.0

No matter the ambition, reality must be acknowledged. We need to ask ourselves - what resources, investment, commitments and considerations do we need to realise our vision and get us where we need to go.

**This is the reality we need to respond to in order to make this Cultural Strategy happen, and to be a responsible and inspiring leader to others.**







## Resource

- + Pace all delivery to ensure that each activity or initiative can be delivered to a high-standard and reach the intended audience effectively, as well as maximising all related opportunities; avoid rushing and over-loading budgets and teams.
- + Ensure that the resource is secured to deliver the Cultural Strategy in-house (i.e. a cultural programming team/team member with skills in both content development and operational delivery).
- + Ensure that the resource is secured to deliver the curatorial responsibilities of Wentworth Woodhouse who can inform and collaborate on the delivery of the Cultural Strategy.
- + Train all staff in key areas: the Cultural Strategy; inclusive visitor engagement; active listening; supplier/partner/content suitability assessment; environmental targets, etc.
- + Monitor staff to ensure sufficient resource is in place to deliver the scale of activities year on year; work with freelance support as required until permanent resource can be justified.
- + Make sure that the Board includes members who can advise and support on the delivery of the Cultural Strategy, ideally with skills in curation, commissioning, events delivery, audience engagement, and responsible resource and financial management.

## Funding & finances

- + Ensure that the amount of funding being sought matches the scale of the ambition every year, and consider all sources of funding (public, corporate, crowd and commercial).
- + Be responsible with all spending to reassure current and future funders, but do not overlook the need to invest in new ideas in order to test them fully.
- + Track the financial return of all activities, and compare to audience engagement and brand goals, as well as to external benefits (e.g. contribution to the local economy) to ensure the return-on-investment is worthwhile and optimised. Consider time as well as money.
- + Where events have a clear market, ensure an appropriate ticket price is charged; this may mean introducing a ticket fee once a particular activity becomes more popular. Introduce subsidised or complimentary tickets for audiences who we specifically want to engage who wouldn't otherwise attend, and make use of dynamic pricing to charge the right price for the right time.
- + Make sure all ticket options and offers are clear and consistent, and keep a range of recognisable events and activities on sale/available at all times to build familiarity.
- + Introduce commercial add-ons wherever possible and suitable, to maximise the return of any one activity.



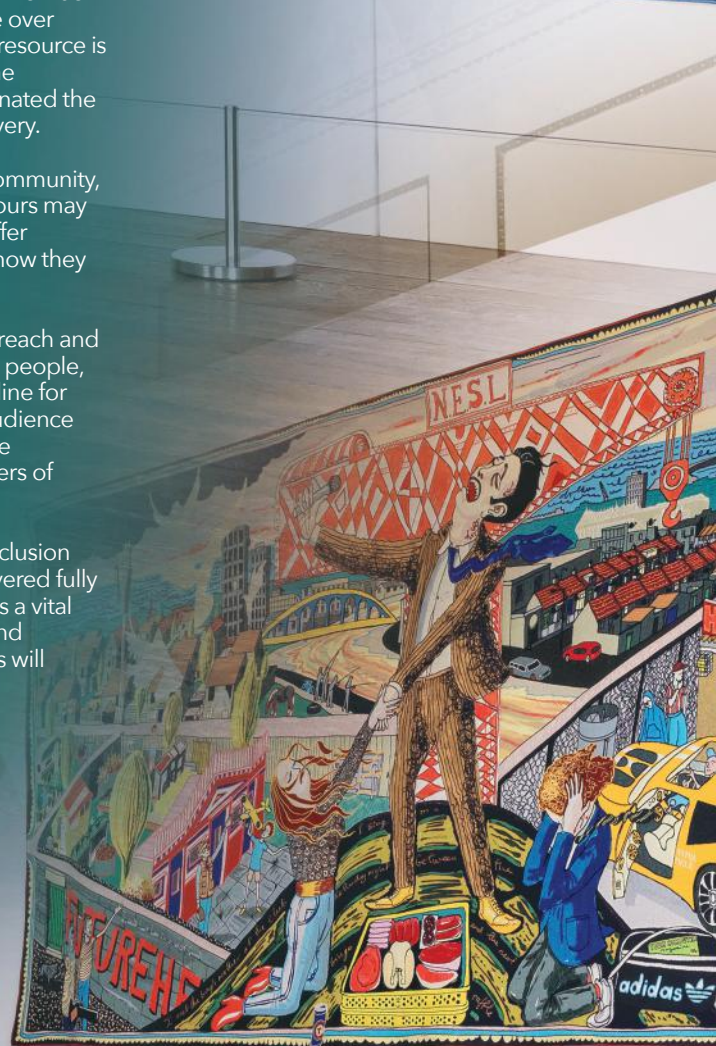


## Artist engagement

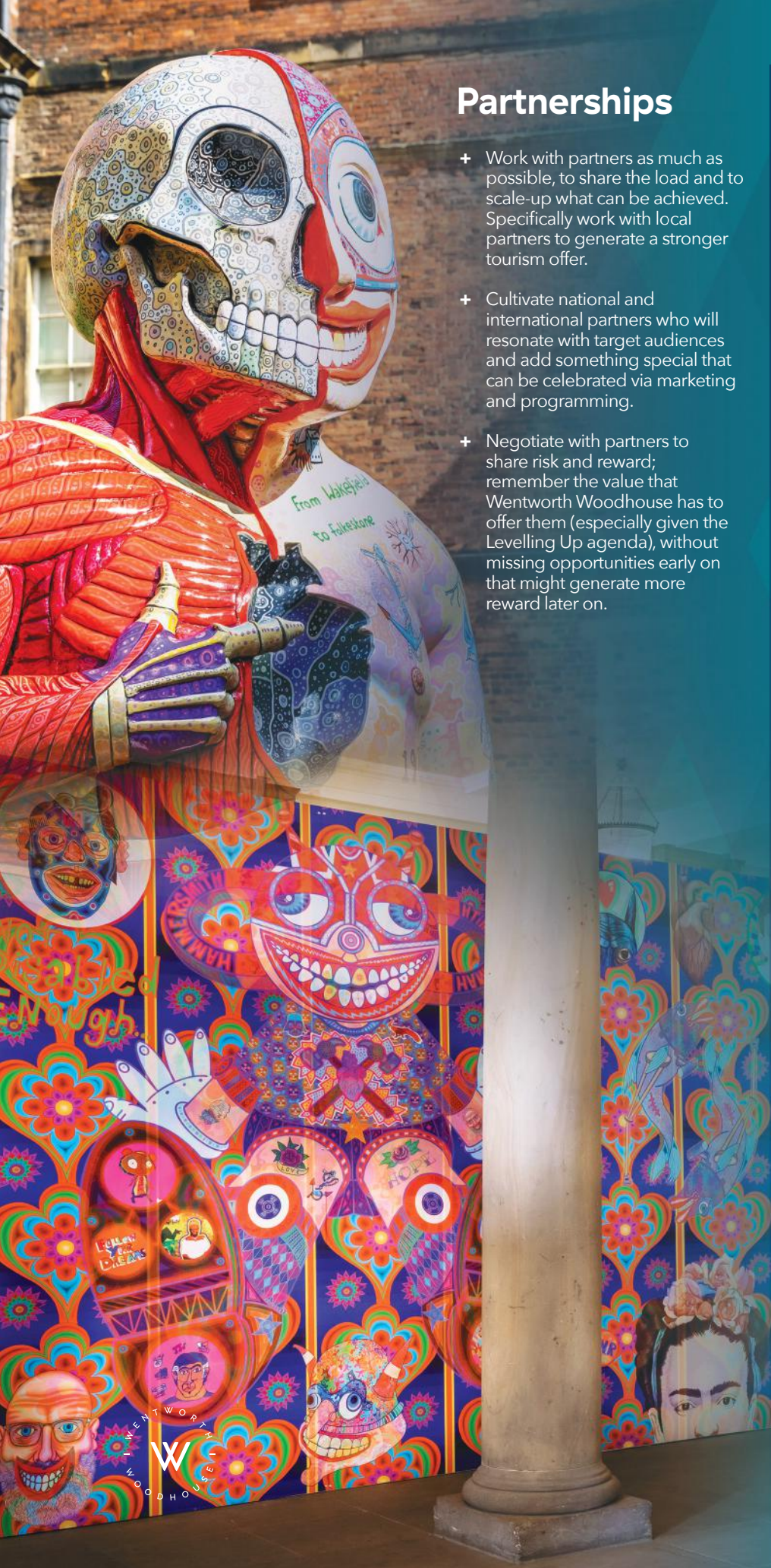
- + Use highly visible call-outs to find and commission artists. Take time on the brief to ensure the process is fair, clear and targeted, as well as a manageable process to respond to (i.e. it will not take them hours to apply, with enough time allowed for applicants to respond). A video trailer for all briefs is key: it can be shared online, globally and builds marketing/tourism/interest from the outset.
- + Access funding should be available to support under-represented artists in applying, or for those who have specific needs/face barriers to applying.
- + Make a pledge to commission a certain number of (for example) international artists, under-represented artists, emerging artists and local artists.
- + Be fair in how we assess applications, making use of an expert and/or community panel/vote (ideally with a panel shortlisting, and the community voting on that shortlist). Either way, ensure fair representation from those making the decision.
- + Consider asking all artists to propose a community engagement aspect to their work, to maintain our commitment to delivering for and with the community.
- + Allow time and budget to support an artist in developing their work, especially for local artists.
- + Ensure sufficient resource is maintained within Wentworth Woodhouse to manage artistic projects from a logistics, engagement and promotional aspect, working with the artist to align their vision with our reality.

## Community engagement

- + Be clear on who we are targeting - avoid being something for everyone all the time.
- + Monitor and share data on staff, volunteer, artist and audience representation across all Wentworth Woodhouse activity, including all protected characteristics and related considerations (e.g. socio-economic status).
- + Offer various ways for the community to interact with and contribute to Wentworth Woodhouse (e.g. an advisory panel, via democratic voting, as audiences and participants, etc.) but avoid over-burdening them with decision-making and content-generation. Remember that co-curation can be over romanticised and that resource is always needed from the organisation who originated the project to lead on delivery.
- + When engaging the community, remember that their hours may not be office hours - offer options for when and how they can be consulted.
- + Connect up all our outreach and engagement to young people, so there is a clear pipeline for connecting with this audience long-term - they are the audience and influencers of the future.
- + Ensure diversity and inclusion commitments are delivered fully and consistently - this is a vital and long-term issue, and tokenistic contributions will be called out.







## Partnerships

- + Work with partners as much as possible, to share the load and to scale-up what can be achieved. Specifically work with local partners to generate a stronger tourism offer.
- + Cultivate national and international partners who will resonate with target audiences and add something special that can be celebrated via marketing and programming.
- + Negotiate with partners to share risk and reward; remember the value that Wentworth Woodhouse has to offer them (especially given the Levelling Up agenda), without missing opportunities early on that might generate more reward later on.

## Marketing & communications

- + Avoid forgetting the needs of current audiences; maintain them through familiar programming and a transition period in terms of the language and offer - take them with us.
- + Ensure all language matches the Cultural Strategy and wider Wentworth Woodhouse brand, from marketing campaigns and social media, to how staff greet visitors and how we speak to funders and influencers.
- + Make sure all audiences understand the offer, especially for more abstract or new ideas - build trust and engagement through transparency and shared language.
- + Optimise social media to reach target audiences, and take time to engage community groups and representatives as ambassadors.
- + Make use of all cross-over opportunities, for example promoting the fact that Wentworth Woodhouse is used as a filming location to public audiences, for whom this would be a route to engage them in the Cultural Strategy with film as the hook to inspire them.
- + Up and cross-sell between activities, to maximise exposure and the success of each activity.





## Data & evaluation

- + Set out a clear evaluation plan to monitor the success of this strategy year-on-year.
- + The Wentworth Woodhouse Evaluation Group will monitor and review the Cultural Strategy on a bi-monthly basis.
- + Collect audience data at every opportunity, with a consistent and cross-organisational approach to logging and analysing this.
- + Consider establishing an impact assessment, to better communicate the value Wentworth Woodhouse offers socially, economically, environmentally, etc.

## Access

- + We will work with the local authority and transport organisations to seek solutions to transport challenges.
- + Clear and consistent signage to and around the site.
- + Accessibility ensured for all people, for every activity (considering physical and neurological requirements).
- + Provide digital options for all activities where possible.



## The environment

- + Monitor environmental targets across all areas of activity based on the organisation-wide Wentworth Woodhouse Environmental Sustainability Policy, and commit to a thorough and transparent approach to having a positive environmental impact at all times and throughout the whole supply chain.
- + Ensure environmental commitments are delivered fully and consistently - this is a vital and long-term issue, and tokenistic contributions will be called out.







## What if we don't do any of this?

### The risks that Wentworth Woodhouse face by overlooking these reality checks are:

- + A lack of trust being developed between Wentworth Woodhouse and our target audiences, as the time wasn't invested in them in a timely manner to bring them with us on our journey.
- + Overstretched budgets meaning we can't deliver everything we wanted to, in the timeframe intended.
- + Lack of support from funders and partners if the offer is not comprehensive, ambitious and inviting.
- + Lack of clarity on the brand and the programme, with audiences being unclear about, unaware of or alienated from our offer, or when or how to engage with us.
- + Staff who can't deliver their full potential by having too much to do or not being clear on the bigger picture priorities.
- + A limited artistic output, with familiar and/or homogeneous faces behind the artwork.
- + Missed opportunities by not being efficiently connected internally and externally.
- + Having a neutral or negative impact on the world outside our walls, be that artistically, socially, environmentally or economically.
- + No evidence to base our decisions on, which means staff, partners and funders lose confidence in Wentworth Woodhouse.
- + A delay or prevention in realising our national and international potential, especially if artistic and audience development is not progressed at a steady pace and in a transparent, well-evidenced and engaging way.



# Keep in touch with us

Follow our journey

8.0

Wentworth Woodhouse is on a constantly evolving, dynamic journey of radical change.

Over the next five years our Cultural Strategy will be honed and evolved to ensure it remains relevant, delivering what we've promised.

It's vital that we keep listening and learning, consulting and conversing - influenced and guided by you. We'll keep you updated - through our regular annual reviews and with a progress report 2-3 years in, as we pause and regroup and check that we're still on track.

We'll share our success stories and celebrate together as we see Wentworth Woodhouse grow its impact locally, nationally and across the world.

## Contact us

### Email us

[info@wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk](mailto:info@wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk)






### Call us

01226 351 161

### Learn more

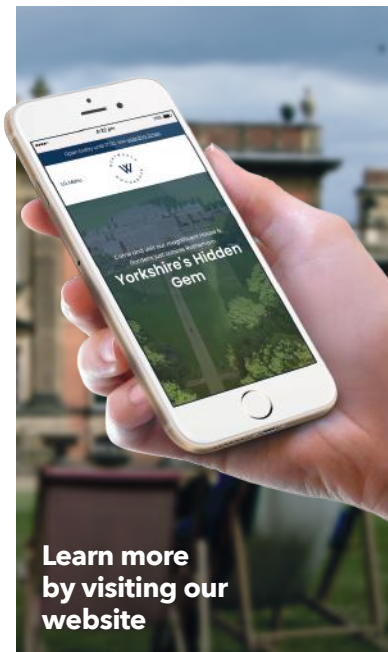
[wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk](http://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk)

## Follow us on social media

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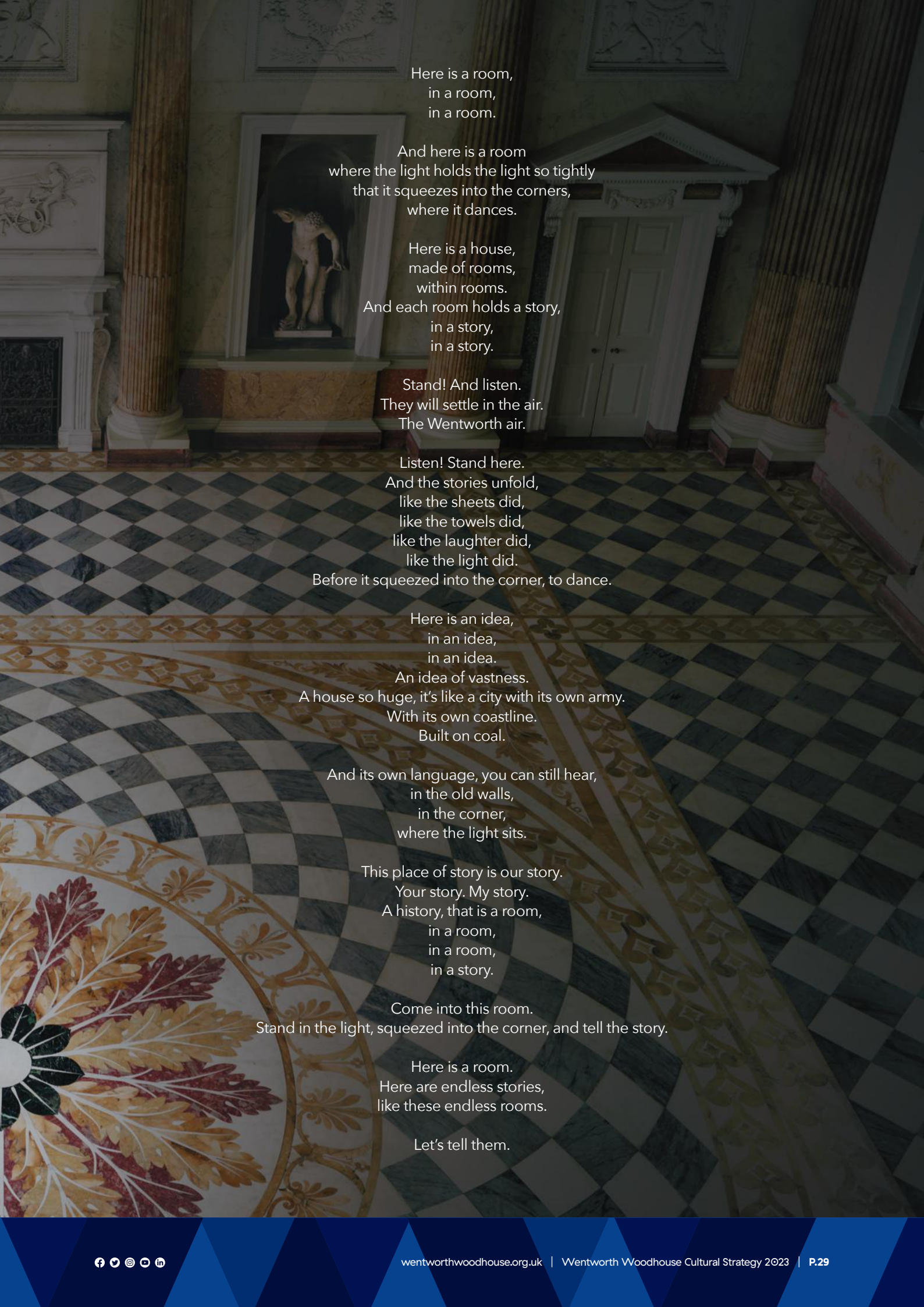
# Here is a room

Ian McMillan

9.0







Here is a room,  
in a room,  
in a room.

And here is a room  
where the light holds the light so tightly  
that it squeezes into the corners,  
where it dances.

Here is a house,  
made of rooms,  
within rooms.  
And each room holds a story,  
in a story,  
in a story.

Stand! And listen.  
They will settle in the air.  
The Wentworth air.

Listen! Stand here.  
And the stories unfold,  
like the sheets did,  
like the towels did,  
like the laughter did,  
like the light did.  
Before it squeezed into the corner, to dance.

Here is an idea,  
in an idea,  
in an idea.  
An idea of vastness.  
A house so huge, it's like a city with its own army.  
With its own coastline.  
Built on coal.

And its own language, you can still hear,  
in the old walls,  
in the corner,  
where the light sits.

This place of story is our story.  
Your story. My story.  
A history, that is a room,  
in a room,  
in a room,  
in a story.

Come into this room.  
Stand in the light, squeezed into the corner, and tell the story.

Here is a room.  
Here are endless stories,  
like these endless rooms.

Let's tell them.



# The appendices

## A) Our core values – a common thread

10.0

At Wentworth Woodhouse, our ten core values are reflected in everything we strive to be and do.

We expect to see these values woven into our Cultural Strategy:

**1. REGENERATION:** Always attaining the very highest conservation standards to protect and restore the site, its buildings, structures and landscape.

Through balanced and appropriate re-use, finding creative solutions leading to an economically sustainable future.

**2. ENGAGEMENT:** To engage with, listen to and work with local communities and wider audiences. Engaging hearts and minds to celebrate the site as an asset to the region and the nation. Offering a positive long-term contribution to the economic and social life of local communities and acting as a driver for Rotherham and the wider tourist offer.

**3. OPPORTUNITIES:** Using Wentworth Woodhouse as a remarkable heritage asset to provide multiple year-round opportunities for the advancement of skills, education and life-long learning by way of training, work experience, volunteering and employment, whilst enhancing knowledge through scholarship and academic research.

**4. REACH NEW AUDIENCES:** Providing a world class, inspirational and enjoyable experience for all, with equality and diversity as key drivers of our audience development plan.

**5. ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT:** To operate a creative and solutions focussed business with commercial flare whilst always seeking to deliver our charitable objectives.

**6. PROFESSIONALISM:** To operate with openness and transparency, promoting best practice, behaving professionally and acting respectfully towards others at all times.

**7. CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT:** Be committed to sustainable policies and practices. Environmental concerns are essential to our decision-making. We understand the value of acting in an environmentally responsible way to minimise the impact on the environment from our operations.

**8. DIVERSITY:** To develop an exemplary mixed-use site which will be a world-class model of accessibility and inclusion as demonstrated by interventions it makes in the landscape and buildings, the diversity of its activities and services and by the way its communications strategy is implemented.

**9. INNOVATION:** To use technological and digital innovation to create imaginative visitor experiences of unfailingly high quality, effectively targeted marketing and an empowered and connected workforce.

**10. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS:** To develop appropriate partnerships with others including the Fitzwilliam Wentworth Amenity Trust and other stakeholders who share our values and subscribe to our long-term vision to ensure that Wentworth Woodhouse, comprising the house, gardens, park and monuments, is preserved as an entity, for the benefit of the local community and the nation.









# B) The bigger picture: strategies and voices that we are paying attention to



## The Wentworth Woodhouse Cultural Strategy is informed by the following strategies and ambitions locally and nationally.

As we press on with making our Cultural Strategy a reality, we must keep checking back to make sure we are aligned with and playing our part of delivering against these important strategies and frameworks.

Below, we've highlighted some of the key ambitions for each strategy that are most relevant in the Wentworth Woodhouse context:



### Flux Rotherham

Rotherham is established as a dynamic cultural democracy, ensuring that everyone has regular and frequent opportunities to experience high quality culture and to explore and express their own creative ambitions, heritage and identity.

(Workshop output):

- + Imaginatively exploring and realising our dreams
- + Permission to be noisy, bold, brave and fierce
- + Authentic voices
- + Connecting, gathering and networking
- + Inspiring old rivals
- + Cohesive, growing and diverse community
- + CPD/mentoring/coaching
- + Sustainable resources and funding
- + Green Space
- + A hub



### Rotherham Cultural Strategy

Transforming Rotherham's future via:

- + Culture
- + Leisure
- + Green space
- + Get Active, Get Creative, Get Outdoors
- + Children's Capital of Culture
- + Amazing Events
- + A Great Place (Wentworth)



### NP11 - working together for the North

Arts + Heritage + Nature = Culture Embodied in Space.

- + Amplify
- + Animate
- + Innovate
- + Create
- + Connect
- + Collaborate



### WE Great Place

- + International recognition
- + World-class artists
- + Outdoor arts
- + Local benefit



### Let's Create - Arts Council England

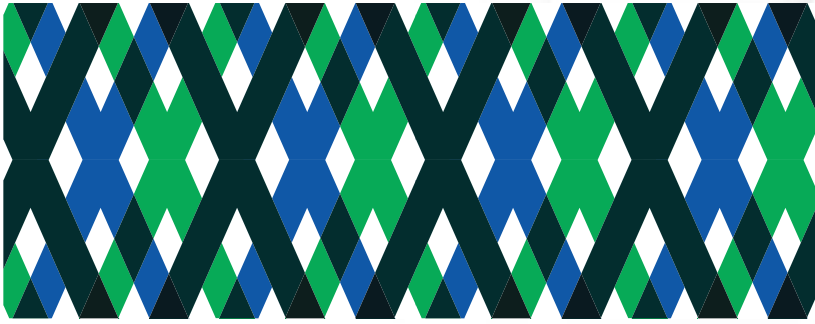
- + Each of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences
- + New work, reimagining our cultural heritage
- + Inclusivity and relevance
- + Everyone can take part - creativity of all of us is valued - creative people and opportunities
- + Diverse talent and cultural communities
- + Ambition and dynamism
- + A professional sector
- + Environmental sustainability
- + Embracing innovation and new technologies



### Wentworth Woodhouse strategies, plans and reports

- + Brand Strategy
- + Masterplan
- + Changing Lives, Supporting Communities Leaflet
- + Annual Reviews (2019 - 2021)
- + Evaluation Report
- + The Camellia House Activity Plan
- + Interpretation Strategy and Stable Block
- + The Social and Economic Impact of Wentworth Woodhouse
- + Audience feedback and analysis: events including WE Wonder
- + Case Studies





**ChamberlainWalker**

**Chamberlain Walker Report**

- + Unlocking the potential of culture, arts and heritage in South Yorkshire
- + Long-term investment and impact
- + A strong, resilient network of arts and heritage institutions

**LEVELLING UP**

**Levelling Up**

- + Increase cultural spend
- + Local culture and community
- + Volunteers, skills and training
- + Boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector
- + Spreading opportunities and improving public services
- + Restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging
- + Empowering local leaders and communities



**National Lottery Heritage Fund**

- + Conserve heritage
- + Increase participation in heritage (volunteering, decision making and new audiences)
- + Heritage helps people to thrive

**Other information sources**

- + What's on guides and local magazines
- + Steve Student Proposals for programming
- + Gallery Town
- + Arts Council England Place Partnerships
- + South Yorkshire Culture & Heritage website
- + What Culture and the Arts mean for South Yorkshire, by Kate Brindley, Project Director for arts, culture and heritage, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority



**The Wentworth Woodhouse Cultural Strategy is informed by these strategies and ambitions locally and nationally.**



**We are yours, we are  
Wentworth Woodhouse,  
and we are back.**









In the heart of South Yorkshire, six huge, blackened pillars are supporting an emerging giant of the cultural world.

Over centuries, we proudly stood centre stage as a thriving social, economic and political powerhouse, across Europe and beyond.

And now we're back.

Our industrious South Yorkshire heritage stands proud; the grit, loyalty and determination of yesterday deep in our DNA and ingrained in our coal-washed walls.

It's shaping who we are and what we do today, tomorrow and for generations to come, as custodians of this treasured site.

A site of straight talk and hard work, where forgotten histories and voices from days-gone-by are heard through innovative and imaginative mediums.

# We are yours

For wanderers  
and wonderers...  
a pathway for our  
cultural future



Supported by



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[wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk](http://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk)

