



APM Project Management Awards

WINNER'S

CASE STUDY



Dame Helen Ghosh, Director General

Category **Project Management Company of the Year 2015**

Winner **National Trust**

Sponsor **20|20™**
business
insight

Overview

"Looking after special places for ever, for everyone" is the core purpose of the National Trust. The charity was founded in 1895 to care for our nation's heritage and open spaces. Today that means meeting the needs of an environment under pressure, along with the challenges and expectations of a fast-moving world.

The National Trust looks after a diverse range of places and spaces. It must deliver conservation work that

responds to current threats and opportunities while maintaining the highest standards of care for the legacy it looks after. It wants the public to see it as relevant and necessary in their lives, and its people to have the resources to do their jobs with confidence and feel proud of their work.

The National Trust has set out its plans for achieving all this in its ambitious ten-year strategy, "Playing our part."

Objectives

The Trust invests over £180 million a year in delivering more than 2,000 projects and programmes to support its ambitions. Covering conservation, visitor engagement, supporting services and more, these range from the smallest cyclical building maintenance activities to landscape-scale conservation partnerships, renewable energy initiatives, national IT infrastructure development and multi-million pound works such as sensitively replacing a roof the size of two football pitches at Castle Drogo in Devon.

As a charity with real passion for its purpose, it must ensure that every one of them is carefully managed to deliver benefits which help it do more to look after special places.

In 2010, following an internal change programme and two external reviews, the Trust identified a gap in project management capability and committed to improving this. This led to the development of a Project Management Framework which set out a consistent methodology based on APM principles, and a central Project Support Office (PSO) with three clear objectives:

- To assist the Executive Team with a planning and governance process that enables effective decision making on the priority, timing, scope and cost of change activity.
- To develop the Project Management Framework to enable realisation of sustainable benefits that support the Trust's strategic aims.
- To build a development programme which ensures the Trust has capable and confident project teams demonstrating a professional and consistent approach.

Challenges

The National Trust is an organisation full of passionate, creative people who perform diverse roles, from rangers to curators, with intense specialisms in areas ranging from tapestries to wildlife. Most projects were being run by people whose primary skill or interest was not project management. Operations are run through seven regions and countries, each led by a regional management team. Because the places the Trust looks after are at the heart of what it does, and each has its own unique Spirit of Place, there is a strong emphasis on distinctiveness, devolution, and local empowerment and initiative.

The first challenge was to overcome the perception that process and structure equated to dull and bureaucratic. This was addressed by framing all communications in a way which connected the process with the purpose of the Trust and presented it in a way that could be understood by everyone across the organisation.

Resources

The Project Management Framework is based on APM principles and is backed by tools, templates, guidance and the Project Management Handbook – known as the "Pink Book" – all written in plain English.

The Trust invests significantly in developing skills and capability and a full suite of training has been developed across all project roles, based on the APM Body of Knowledge 6th edition. A range of in-flight support is available to projects, including assurance from the PSO and the commission of external reviews and ongoing evaluation. Organisational skills and capability are kept under review and the PSO works closely with the People Development team to respond to the changing needs of the organisation.



Sharon Street, Head of Profession Project Management

Considerable effort has been put in to ensure that the whole organisation understands the value that project management can provide and their individual roles within that. Project sponsors and leadership teams have an important role to play as advocates for project management and in leading for the values and behaviours that result in successful projects. The PSO also works directly with project boards and governance teams to develop their understanding of the project lifecycle and the impact of their decisions and communications.

Results

The Project Management Framework is now fully accepted as 'the way we do things around here', with advocates at all levels and a broader influence on the way the organisation plans and operates. The Trust is focused on continuous improvement, and recently appointed its first Head of Profession for Project Management, with responsibility for developing the growing project management community.

Project outcomes are directly linked to business results and the metrics inform ongoing decision-making, at an operational level and in the scoping of future projects. Benefits analysis has identified the common factors of successful projects which support the virtuous circle of the strategy: by improving conservation and better engaging supporters in what it does, the Trust will develop the resources and skills to better look after what it's got. Great project management has established itself as a vital part of "looking after special places for ever, for everyone."

The National Trust in numbers



257,000 acres of land and
775 miles of coastline

350 historic houses, gardens
and parks

83,000 collections

61 pubs & inns

59 villages

9 lighthouses

More than **4.2** million members

20 million paid for entry visits
a year

200 million estimated visits to
outdoor places

60,000 volunteers

10,000 staff



The APM Project Management Awards have been celebrating project management excellence since 1993 and the broad range of categories is designed to make entry possible for projects and companies of all sizes and complexity.

The awards reflect the invaluable contribution project managers make in all sectors of society and the event provides an opportunity for industry professionals to meet with colleagues and entertain guests as well as celebrate at one of the year's most exciting events.

Highly regarded in the project management industry, the awards reflect the dedication and talent that helps to shape the project management community and the world around us. The finalists, winners and sponsors of the awards attract national publicity for their achievement and involvement. Winning an award provides invaluable recognition and kudos to the careers of winners.

For more details on the awards and how to enter or attend, visit apm.org.uk/awards or email awards@apm.org.uk

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