What?

• A programme of seven different regional projects
• Designed to inspire, enthuse and engage young people around Wales to get involved with their local heritage
• Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Cadw, and delivered via a partnership of Cadw, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) and the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts
Some facts and figures:

• 7 projects across 6 partners
• Total value – approx. £1m, with c.£760k from National Lottery Heritage Fund
• Running for 3 years
• Approved purposes including
  • Delivery of 7 regional projects
  • Creation of digital film, telling the story of our project and participants
  • Creation of a project archive
  • Creating opportunities to share learning (in the heritage sector, and more widely!)
  • Evaluating the project and using the information to bring about organisational change
Volunteering as a tool for engagement

1. Who are we trying to engage?
   • In our case – young people
   • People with specific skills?
   • Extra pairs of hands?
Volunteering as a tool for engagement

2. Why?

- Because we require help
- Because we want people to engage with us?
- Because we want people to engage with “heritage”?
- Because we want to change people’s behaviour?
- Because we want to change our own organisation?
- To fit in with wider political and social agendas....
People need people.

Volunteers can be the best advert for other volunteers . . .

Word of mouth
Social elements
Trusted intermediaries ... youth workers, community leaders

Why do they want to volunteer?
“It’s something I’ve always wanted to do – I grew up watching Time Team!”
“It was a collective experience; in a new place”
“This is such a great opportunity for these kids – and my job is to make opportunities for them”
We’re quite scary ...

The heritage world can be quite scary
“We wouldn’t be allowed to go in, and it puts us off”

Someone on our side can help us to not be scary. But we need to be very willing to adapt as well. And that means that we need to change our activities and, sometimes, our mindset.
"Traditional" volunteering
- Time-limited task
- "extra pairs of hands"
- Can be costly to administer and runs risk of being tokenistic
- BUT can be a brilliant way to achieve particular project ends
- Often beneficial to volunteer - self-esteem, new skills

"intermediary" volunteering
- Helps us to build relationships
- Volunteers to enable others to take part (especially where duties of care are complex)
- Very strong relationship between individuals which enables groups/organisations to work together
- Clear benefits to organisations
- Benefits to individual?

"specialist" volunteering
- "We can help you do *that*
- Bringing own, particular skills which the organisation is lacking
- Enables groups/projects/organisations to do things they otherwise wouldn't
- Often requires payments of expenses/good will; (which can be challenging in a formalised payment system)
- Allows the volunteer(s) to set the agenda and can open up whole new sets of activities and possibilities
“Traditional” volunteering

Llanelli group

3-day residential at National Trust property

Mixture of team-building tasks, conservation ‘volunteering’ and guided tour

- “The young people immediately engaged with the tasks they were given and asked lots of good questions”
- “Young people got stuck into the path clearance, trying to beat the amount of work done by the first group”
- “Their behaviour was vastly improved … Overall the retreat was a great experience for all involved and the group has definitely bonded. They are keen to be involved with future Unloved Heritage events”
“intermediary” volunteering

“I thought it would be easy – just put an advert up and people would arrive”

“A castle? No offence, it’s just not somewhere I would go.”

Intermediary can be (and is!):
Translator
Driver
Carer
Enabler ....

Builds strong individual relationships – but how does that translate to organisational relationships?

“We thought it would be really boring – just taking pictures of old buildings and that...”

“I’m not into history at school – but this is sick”
“Intermediary” volunteering as a process ...

Young people get involved with the programme

Take part in activities

Design and run their own activities

Run activities for other young people

“...like to say a massive thankyou for our day at Llywernog. The young people loved it and I can say they were truly inspired”
“Specialist” volunteering

Opens up whole new avenues and activities

Requires engagement in a different direction – from us to specialists who may not consider what they do “heritage” based

Requires a lot of trust – particularly around risk assessment in areas where we do not have competency …

Can drive engagement on two levels – with a project or organisation and/or with ‘heritage’ more broadly …

“The scrambling was the best bit – I really pushed myself and I’m proud of myself”

We can take ourselves, and others, out of our comfort zone …
Our Kids through the Unloved Heritage project have been published in Ascent Magazine.
Using volunteers on their own terms, and using their own skills:

• We sometimes get “less” done
• Can be unpredictable
• Can give us new ‘tools’ to engage new audiences
• Can present logistical challenges and practical difficulties

But we get different things done!
• Opens up new options
• Builds relationships between new organisations and can help with driving behaviour change
• Can show us the weaknesses in our current systems and suggest other ways of working
comfortable or in skilled area

not comfortable

"extra hands" intermediate specialist skills

not comfortable (us!)

comfortable (us?) or in skilled area
comfortable in skilled area

"Extra hands"

intermediary

not comfortable

not comfortable (us!)

specialist skills

comfortable (us)
or in skilled area

Untapped value?

Match funding
Continuity (after a project is finished)
Influencers
Capacity building
Skill sharing

Heritage workers aren't..... Youth workers, mental health professionals, carers, social workers or even miracle workers .....but we may know a man who can!
Within Unloved Heritage, many of the most memorable experiences our young people are having are facilitated by volunteers.

(nb. This doesn’t mean they’re free!)
Volunteering as a tool for engagement...

- Works on multiple levels
- Works directly and indirectly
- Needs engagement on both sides
- Can require compromise ...
  ... and trust
  ... and changing processes

One size doesn’t fit all!
Some people will volunteer for heritage projects.
Some will volunteer for youth engagement projects
Everyone loves to share what they’re good at – so figure out a way to include all manner of skills in your projects!
Be open to mad ideas.
Play more!