Expanding and diversifying income

If you're looking to boost funding for your organisation, here are 10 ways heritage organisations can grow income, reduce reliance on any single source and create a more stable platform for long-term planning. Some are focussed around voluntary donations, others are more commercial. Not all may be right for you, but a mixed model is always a stronger one.

Philanthropy tools

1. Boost Visitor & On-Site Giving

Make it easy for visitors to give during and after their visit.

- Use contactless donation points at entrances, exits, cafés and tour endpoints or use QR codes linking to a simple donation page.
- Ensure your website has a clear "Support Us" button for single, regular and project-specific gifts.

2. Maximise Gift Aid

Gift Aid boosts income without asking donors for more.

- Train staff and volunteers to capture Gift Aid consistently and use digital declarations where possible.
- Review eligibility for Gift Aid on Entry if applicable.

3. Major Gifts & High-Value Support

Even smaller heritage sites can attract significant donors with the right approach.

- Identify prospective donors among members, long-standing supporters, trustees, local philanthropists and heritage enthusiasts.

- Build relationships through tailored cultivation such as exclusive events and consider establishing a Patrons Circle with clear benefits and strong stewardship.

4. Campaign-Based Fundraising

Campaigns and appeals give supporters something tangible to fund and play an important role in engaging the wider community.

- Run targeted campaigns for conservation, restoration or education projects using strong storytelling and visuals to show impact.
- Provide regular updates to maintain momentum and donor confidence.

5. Legacy Giving

Legacies can be transformational for heritage organisations and is often the greatest untapped form of philanthropy.

- Include legacy messaging in visitor materials, membership communications and your website.
- Provide simple guidance on how to leave a gift and share stories of past bequests to demonstrate impact.

6. Grant funders

Grant funding can feel complex at first, but with the right approach can be a vital part of the income mix for heritage organisations

- Target funders whose priorities align with your organisation or who have a local or regional remit.
- Read the criteria closely and tailor every application rather than sending generic bids.

Commercial opportunities

7. Events

Events often deliver benefits beyond income, strengthening local support and building community and visibility.

- Seasonal fairs and markets often attract new visitors to generate both income and goodwill.
- Behind-the-scenes tours create memorable experiences, deepen connection and showcase the organisation’s heritage assets.

8. Space and Venue Hire

Make the most of your buildings and grounds for supplementary income.

- Hire out galleries, rooms and event spaces for performances, talks, workshops and community events
- Offer short-term hires for school-holiday clubs, rehearsals, meetings and local groups

9. Community Trading and Activities

Small-scale trading can generate a modest but meaningful surplus.

- Run a small café, pop-up or lunch club that enhances visitor experience.
- Offer activity hires, craft workshops and seasonal events that appeal to local audiences.

10. Long-Term Leases

Longer term arrangements can help boost finances.

- Rent out unused or ancillary buildings for predictable income.
- Lease offices, studios, car parking or weekday-only spaces to compatible organisations.

Philanthropy Company is a fundraising consultancy dedicated to providing strategic advice, practical support and expert training for charitable organisations, philanthropists and corporate donors seeking to improve lives and transform futures. Our work spans the heritage, arts, education and charitable sectors: please do see our website for more information.