

DR PAUL BELFORD

Dr Paul Belford is the founder and Chief Executive of Heritage Innovation. He has more than 30 years' experience managing cultural heritage and archaeology projects and organisations – for governments, NGOs and private sector bodies in several countries. Paul is passionate about using the past in the present to create social and environmental benefits for the future. He believes that well-being is enhanced by the widest possible engagement with heritage.

Current roles

Founder and CEO, Heritage Innovation. Paul established Heritage Innovation in 2022 with the purpose of creating closer practical engagement between cultural heritage professions and public policy-making. International cultural heritage consultancy work includes conservation management plans, business plans, museum management plans and heritage impact assessments, and supports the ongoing development of AR/XR data management and visualisation solutions for businesses and the public.

Member of the Historic Environment Advisory Group, National Trust (since 2024). The National Trust is the UK's oldest conservation organisation – a non-government charity which owns over 500 places of historic interest and natural beauty. It has over 24 million visitors to sites every year, and an income of more than GBP 680 million. Paul's advisory role involves working with architects, cultural heritage and landscape expert colleagues to support Trustees and senior management in developing high-level policy and strategy.

Previous professional roles

CEO, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (2013-2023). CPAT was an archaeology and heritage charity providing services to commercial clients, national and local government, and third-sector bodies in Wales and England. It was one of four similar Trusts with around 80 staff and a combined turnover of around GBP 3.5 million. Paul's role was to lead the organisation, build links with stakeholders and partners, and develop new sources of income; latterly leading organisational transformation to full merger with the other three Trusts.

Principal Consultant, Nexus Heritage (2010-2013). Nexus was a UK-based for-profit consultancy working internationally, focussing on Europe, west Africa and east Asia. Paul's role was to manage cultural heritage and archaeology projects, including major infrastructure projects and renewable energy schemes; mainly Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Conservation Management Plans (CMP).

Head of Archaeology and Monuments, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (2000-2010). One of the UK's leading independent museums, with an annual turnover of around GBP 9 million. Paul's role was to lead archaeology, conservation and regeneration projects in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site: managing archaeological sites, historic buildings, landscapes and collections. He also grew a GBP 2 million commercial project portfolio focussed on urban regeneration and industrial archaeology, and at the same time developed a range of international university-partnered research projects.

Project Officer, ARCUS (1995-2000). Commercial archaeology consultancy at the University of Sheffield. Management and delivery of development-driven archaeology projects, specialising in complex urban regeneration schemes involving industrial archaeology and historic buildings.

Archaeologist, various employers (1991-1995). Technician, supervisor and site director on a wide range of commercial developer-driven and research-led projects in UK, Germany and France; latterly specialising in complex medieval urban archaeology and industrial archaeology.

Other relevant experience

Chair, Black Country Living Museum (2020-2025). BCLM is an award-winning independent open-air museum, educational charity and heritage attraction. With over 380,000 visitors every year, and 300 staff, the museum's annual turnover is around GBP 20 million. During Paul's period as Chair the Museum completed a five-year GBP 30 million

development project, with funding from public and private donors. Paul's role was to lead the Trustees in developing long-term strategic vision, and to support the CEO and leadership team.

Co-founder and Chair, EAA Urban Archaeology Community (since 2017). Pan-European forum for managing urban archaeology and cultural heritage. The group published a book in 2020, with another in preparation for 2026, and has delivered seminars on urban heritage management practice.

Chair of the Historic Environment Partnership, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (2021-2023). Multi-agency partnership to develop and deliver an historic environment action plan (launched in October 2023) as part of the National Park's overall Management Plan.

Board Member / Director, Size of Wales (2020-2023). Environmental charity working to protect tropical forests by empowering indigenous communities in South America, Asia and Africa, and at the same time educating people in the UK about biodiversity and climate change.

Collections and Learning Committee, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (2019-2026). Reporting to the Board, this committee supports senior Museum staff in the strategic development of conservation and educational programming in the World Heritage Site.

Board Member and Director, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2009-2012; 2014-2020). ClfA is a leading professional institute for the UK historic environment sector. Paul also served on validation committees, and supported the creation and development of an international branch in Germany.

Chair, and Board Member / Director, Historical Metallurgy Society (2003-2015). The Historical Metallurgy Society was established in 1962 as a forum for the discussion of archaeometallurgy and related subjects. Paul served in various capacities, including Chair during the Society's 50th anniversary year.

Visiting lecturer for University of Birmingham (Honorary Research Fellow), University of Chester, Birmingham City University, University of York and University of Bristol

Editorial Board member for *The Historic Environment: Policy and Practice* journal (since 2010)

Assistant Editor of the academic journal *Post-Medieval Archaeology* (2009-2011)

Publications

Authored, editor and co-editor of seven books and over 70 articles and book chapters, including both peer-reviewed academic papers and popular publications. Published work includes analyses of policy and practice as well as studies of specific landscapes and sites. Paul's most recent major publication is *Ethics in Archaeological Practice*, co-authored with Dr Gerry Wait, and published by Routledge in 2025.

Education

PhD Archaeology, University of York

MA Historical Archaeology, University of Sheffield

BSc Archaeological Science, University of Sheffield

Professional accreditations

FSA. Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London (elected 2008)

MCIfA. Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (since 2007)

ISEP. Associate of the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (since 2024)

CAA. Civil Aviation Authority A2 Open Category Remote Pilot Certificate of Competence (2023)



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