CIfA Advocacy Objectives – 2026-27

Introduction

CIfA invests extensively in advocacy and policy work. We proactively build networks and establish trust with politicians, civil servants, and bodies within and beyond the sector; we also work reactively, using those networks, in response to threats or opportunities arising from political initiatives and consultations.

CIfA acts as an authoritative voice for the archaeology sector. It is one of the only UK-based archaeological bodies with sufficient resources, remit and record to provide effective archaeological advocacy. We are one of the leading opinion formers and independent advisors to government, heritage sector partners and other decision-makers.

CIfA has a remit that enables us to represent all aspects of archaeological practice. To do this effectively we draw on the expertise of our professional membership and work with our Registered Organisations, as well as sharing and collaborating with other organisations that serve more specific interests in the sector.

At present our advocacy objectives are predominantly focused within the UK, because that's where most of our members' and staff's expertise lies. As CIfA's non-UK membership grows, its non-UK advocacy is expected to grow proportionately, and we hope that CIfA Deutschland and CIfA Australia will advise the Board on German and Australian objectives when they have the resources to do so.

Our principal advocacy objectives are

- to maintain or improve the protection and management of the historic environment –an objective we share with many others
- to maintain or advance, in the interests of the public and clients, the quality of archaeological practice, particularly where occasioned though planning or other processes managing change to the historic environment –an objective we share with some others but increasingly lead on
- to ensure that work is done by competent professionals and to professional standards – we lead on this

Through its advocacy work CIfA aims to

- influence government policy and regulation, along with thinking and practice in government, the historic environment sector and wider sectors
- provide authoritative, advice to ministers, parliamentarians, government departments and agencies, and NGOs
- work with partners across sectors to achieve positive changes for archaeology
- be proactive in promoting our agenda
- be pragmatic in seeking opportunities to influence
- be strategic in how we prioritise our objectives

CIfA's Board sets the Institute's advocacy objectives following guidance from the Advisory Council. There is potentially far more work than the Institute can expect to achieve, so we prioritise pragmatic activity on

those areas or issues which present the greatest threat or opportunity, often according to initiatives and other timetables outside our control. Advocacy work may be undertaken independently or in collaboration with other bodies. There is a formal partnership with CBA covering our advocacy work, recognising that CBA and CIfA have complementary roles and are the two most active archaeological bodies engaged in UK advocacy. CIfA is also committed to collaboration on sector-agreed advocacy objectives and leads on several issues, alongside other bodies, through The Archaeology Forum (TAF).

Objectives have been ranked:

1. Key objective requiring significant proactive and reactive action in the short term
2. Important objective requiring some proactive action in the short term
3. Important objective requiring largely reactive action or support for other organisations in the short or medium term
4. Aspirational objective that may be supported by proactive research and long-term goal of influencing policy

England

Objective	***Priority***
Strong and sustainable local authority historic environment services, underpinned by a statutory duty for planning authorities to have access to a professionally supported and maintained HER service. Services are subject to a Government investment programme to allow positive contribution to the evolving planning system, and respond to any wider pressures on, or reform to, local government.	1
Risks to the archaeological resource are not increased – preferably reduced – by changes to the planning system, especially deregulatory initiatives and weakening of safeguards.	1
Commercial and sensitive work is restricted to Registered Organisations or professionally accredited individuals working to CIfA Standards, and client sector organisations exhibit a strong demand for professionally accredited archaeologists.	1
The archaeology sector is working towards strategic actions set out in a new phase of 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology Programme work packages.	1
Maintenance / improvement of management and protection of historic environment is achieved through land use and management processes (e.g. agriculture, forestry, and peatland restoration). Specifically, that there is appropriate engagement from DEFRA on the historic environment and that the Environmental Land Management Scheme includes provision for heritage which improves on previous schemes and that heritage is seen as an integrated part of the environment.	2
There is a sufficient, high quality, provision through higher education, further education, apprenticeships, or other training programmes, of diverse candidates who are suitably prepared to enter the profession and on a pathway to CIfA accreditation, and university departments, colleges and other training providers are sufficiently supported to deliver this provision.	2
Apprenticeships, and other government training initiatives, are accessible to, and flexible enough to support, archaeological SMEs, and the archaeological profession is benefiting from this model.	2
Systems for marine licensing and the management and protection of marine heritage assets are effective and equal weight is given to terrestrial & marine heritage in policy & guidance.	2
The historic environment is given due consideration and presented in a positive light in major infrastructure projects and good practice (including the use of CIfA Standards and guidance) is promoted, along with the need for a clearly identified curatorial role (and a body or bodies to fulfil that role).	2
Government's efforts to build economic valuation tools for cultural heritage capital are inclusive of archaeological services and effectively applied.	2
Reformed Class Consent regime for scheduled monuments.	3
The Treasure Act places more emphasis on significance and less to financial value, and encourages responsible metal detecting.	3

Wales

Effective implementation of Historic Environment legislative commitments, including the statutory duty to provide a professionally supported and maintained HER service for each local authority area in Wales, and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Government investment to support the sector is also sufficient, and responds to any wider pressures on, or reform to, local government and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts.	1
Risks to the archaeological resource are not increased – preferably reduced – by changes to the planning system, especially deregulatory initiatives and the weakening of safeguards.	2
Wales has a Culture Strategy that adequately represents archaeological issues.	1
Maintenance / improvement of management and protection of historic environment is achieved through land use and management processes (e.g. agriculture, forestry, and peatland restoration). Specifically, the Sustainable Farming System includes provision for cultural heritage which improves upon previous schemes, and that heritage is seen as an integrated part of the environment.	2
Commercial and sensitive work is restricted to Registered Organisations or professionally accredited individuals working to CIfA Standards and client sector organisations exhibit a strong demand for professionally accredited archaeologists.	1
There is a sufficient, high quality, provision through higher education, further education, apprenticeships, or other training programmes, of diverse candidates who are suitably prepared to enter the profession and on a pathway to CIfA accreditation, and university departments, colleges and other training providers are sufficiently supported to deliver this provision.	2
Apprenticeships, and other government training initiatives, are accessible to, and flexible enough to support, archaeological SMEs, and the archaeological profession is benefiting from this model.	2
Systems for marine licensing and the management and protection of marine heritage assets are effective and equal weight is given to terrestrial & marine heritage in policy & guidance.	2
The historic environment is given due consideration in major infrastructure projects and good practice (including the use of CIfA Standards and guidance) is promoted, along with the need for a clearly identified curatorial role (and a body or bodies to fulfil that role).	3
Reformed Class Consent regime for scheduled monuments.	4
The Treasure Act places more emphasis on significance and less to financial value, and encourages responsible metal detecting.	3

Scotland

Strong and sustainable local authority historic environment services, potentially with a statutory duty for planning authorities to have access to a professionally supported and maintained HER service. Government investment to support the sector is also sufficient, and responds to any wider pressures on, or reform to, local government.	1
Risks to the archaeological resource are not increased – preferably reduced – by changes to the planning system, especially deregulatory initiatives and the weakening of safeguards	1
The protection of the historic environment and archaeology are enhanced through policy and guidance and renewal of the Archaeology Strategy is delivered and implemented.	1
Commercial and sensitive work is restricted to Registered Organisations or professionally accredited individuals working to CIfA Standards and client sector organisations exhibit a strong demand for professionally accredited archaeologists.	1
Maintenance / improvement of management and protection of historic environment is achieved through land use and management processes (eg agriculture, forestry, and peatland restoration). Specifically with inclusion for heritage in the Agriculture Bill and the future Rural Support Plan.	1
There is a sufficient, high quality, provision through higher education, further education, apprenticeships, or other training programmes, of diverse candidates who are suitably prepared to enter the profession and on a pathway to CIfA accreditation, and university departments, colleges and other training providers are sufficiently supported to deliver this provision.	2
Apprenticeships, and other government training initiatives, are accessible to, and flexible enough to support, archaeological SMEs, and the archaeological profession is benefiting from this model.	2
Risks to the archaeological resource are not increased – preferably reduced – by incremental changes	2

to planning and other safeguards	
Systems for marine licensing and the management and protection of marine heritage assets are effective and equal weight is given to terrestrial & marine heritage in policy & guidance	2
The Treasure Trove system is resilient, maintaining or improving its emphasis on significance over financial value, and encouraging responsible metal detecting.	3
Reformed Class Consent regime for scheduled monuments	4

Northern Ireland

Ensure greater public benefit from archaeology through the application of professional standards and ethics to licensing and planning, and delivery of enhanced legislation and policy, via the Archaeology 2030 programme.	1
Commercial and sensitive work is restricted to Registered Organisations or professionally accredited individuals working to CIfA or IAI Standards and client sector organisations exhibit a strong demand for professionally accredited archaeologists.	1
Risks to the archaeological resource are not increased – preferably reduced – by incremental changes to planning and other safeguards	1
Maintenance / improvement of management and protection of historic environment is achieved through land use and management (e.g. agriculture, forestry, and peatland restoration).	1
There is a sufficient, high quality, provision through higher education, further education, apprenticeships, or other training programmes, of diverse candidates who are suitably prepared to enter the profession and on a pathway to CIfA accreditation, and university departments, colleges and other training providers are sufficiently supported to deliver this provision.	2
Apprenticeships, and other government training initiatives, are accessible to, and flexible enough to support, archaeological SMEs, and the archaeological profession is benefiting from this model.	2
Systems for marine licensing and the management and protection of marine heritage assets are effective and equal weight is given to terrestrial & marine heritage in policy & guidance.	2

United Kingdom

Immigration policies enable the archaeology sector to sustainably recruit from outside the UK, as required to supplement domestic training and skills programmes.	2
The archaeology sector is engaged with UK Governments and accelerating towards Net Zero. Governments recognise and support the sector's contribution to climate change communication.	1
Successful implementation of the 2017 Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act and implementation of the Hague Convention	3
Ratification of UNESCO Convention on Underwater Heritage or other mechanisms that achieve the same effects.	3

Europe

Professionally accredited individuals are valued by stakeholders when regulating, commissioning and undertaking commercial and sensitive archaeological work and, where appropriate, Registered Organisations or professionally accredited individuals working to CIfA Standards are undertaking a greater proportion of work.	3
The European Association of Archaeologists is supported by CIfA to deliver advocacy work around archaeological objectives for European elections, including by benchmarking EU member states' candidates.	4
The UK continues to be recognised as a world-leader in archaeological research and is enabled to take part in EU research collaborations and access funding	3

For further information about CIfA's advocacy and campaigns and for details on other priority areas, visit www.archaeologists.net/advocacy or email admin@archaeologists.net.