



Statement on Open Science

Meeting on 14 June, the Board of the National Heritage Science Forum has welcomed the commitment by Science Ministers of European governments to ensure that by 2020 all scientific research which enjoys public funding must be publicly accessible. The unanimous agreement, reached on 27 May, is a significant step for science and public engagement.

Announcing the new requirement, Netherlands State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science Mr Sander Dekker said: *'Research and innovation provide the solutions to the social and economic challenges of the future. Open access breaks down the walls surrounding science and makes sure that society benefits as much as possible from all scientific insights. In that way, we maximise the impact of universities and knowledge institutions.'*

Forum Chair Alastair McCapra commented: *'The potential benefits of this announcement to heritage science are significant. Compared to some other areas of research, heritage science is cross-disciplinary, relying on limited funding. It draws on an unusually wide base of published papers from different fields, so the absence of free access to these papers has a disproportionate impact in our field. This very welcome announcement promises transformational change for heritage science.* The obstacles to achieving the ministers' vision remain formidable and we do not underestimate the practical difficulties of realising it, but we urge the UK government to redouble its efforts to drive forward the Open Science agenda both in the UK and with other governments.'

The National Heritage Science Forum will play its part too in taking forward this agenda, and we expect to make a major announcement about a new programme during our seminar on Open Science at Knole, Kent, on 8 September. Anyone interested in attending please contact administrator@heritagescienceforum.org.uk for details.

24 June 2016