Twelve town centres to benefit from £15.9m HLF boost

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HLF's investment will come through its Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)² programme which fosters effective partnerships between local organisations, enabling repairs and other essential works in historic but often run-down areas. This latest funding, integral to wider conservation and regeneration strategies, will also help provide employment and training opportunities.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "The next time you walk down your local high street, remember to look up and admire the fantastic heritage all around you. Our town centres deserve to be at the heart of community life and the Heritage Lottery Fund believes that even small changes, such as improving shop fronts or restoring a building's historic features, can make a difference. By working closely with local authorities and their respective communities, our substantial investment will help bring vacant properties back into use as well as create new business and training opportunities that will be of benefit to many."

Areas set to benefit include:

Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent – first-round pass of £1.6m, including £50,000 development funding
Tredegar was one of the first planned industrial towns in Britain and an early centre for the industrial revolution in South Wales. At the heart of Tredegar lies the 'Circle', the town's historic core, which forms the main focus for Blaenau Gwent Council's regeneration plans. A number of historic buildings will be restored including the building which housed the Tredegar Medical Aid Society, established in 1890 - which Nye Bevan used as a model to establish the NHS. The project will also offer traditional skills training through innovative partnerships such as with the locally based British Gas green skills training centre, Centrica. The Tredegar townscape scheme, once completed, will complement other HLF funded projects in the area including the restored Bedwellty House and Park.

Peckham, London – first-round pass of £1.7m, including £50,000 development funding
Located in the heart of South London, Peckham is a vibrant town centre and busy retail area, with buildings dating from the 18th to the late 20th century. The scheme, run by Southwark Council and part of a wider regeneration project for Peckham, will repair and restore historic buildings on Rye Lane, Peckham High Street and contribute to the opening up of the historic public square at the Grade II listed Peckham Rye Station as a new community space. An impressive range of community-led complementary initiatives will be implemented, including traditional skills training and community events encouraging local people to research and celebrate the area's history.

The 10 further places that have received earmarked HLF support are as follows:

- Dewsbury Town Centre, Huddersfield – first-round pass of £2m, including £33,500 development funding
  For more information please contact: Sarah Cheffins, Kirklees Council press office, on 01484 221 835
- Derby Town Centre, Derbyshire – first-round pass of £736,500, including £36,500 development funding
  For more information please contact: Chloe Oswald, Derby City Council, on 01332 641 634
- Whitehaven Old Town, Cumbria – first-round pass of £707,300, including £48,000
  For more information please contact: Ian Curwen, Copeland Borough Council press office, on 01946 598 504

- Bacup Town Centre, Lancashire – first-round pass of £1.5m, including £37,500 development funding
  For more information please contact: David Presto, Rossendale Borough Council, on 01706 252 477
- Donaghadee, County Down – first-round pass of £1.043m, including £48,000 development funding
  For more information please contact: David Birch, Ards Borough Council, on 07867 787 218
- Folkestone Old Town, Kent – first-round pass of £1.3m, including £50,000 development funding
  For more information please contact: Peter Bettley, Creative Foundation, on 01303 245 838
- Southgate Street, Gloucestershire – first-round pass of £926,700, including £28,400 development funding
  For more information please contact: Marcus Grodentz, Gloucester City Council press office, on 01452 396 133
- Burslem Town Centre, Staffordshire – first-round pass of £1.013m, including £15,200 development funding
  For more information please contact: Andrew Brunt, City of Stoke on Trent, on 01782 232 671
- Falkirk Town Centre, Stirlingshire – first-round pass of £2m, including £50,000 development funding
  For more information please contact: David Grindlay, Falkirk Council, on 01324 506 029 / 07803 898 008
- Haverfordwest Town Centre, Pembrokeshire – first-round pass of £1.2m, including £40,000 development funding
  For more information please contact: David Davies, Pembrokeshire County Council, on 01437 775 054/5

Notes to editors

• [1] A Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while it does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support. The applicants can then progress to the second round and submit a further, fully-developed application to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that THIs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided their final proposals develop well.

• [2] HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) encourages partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces. Grants range from £500,000 to £2m. To date, HLF has invested over £214m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline. The deadline for first-round applications is 31 October and decisions will be made in March 2013.

Further information

Please contact Laura Bates or Katie Owen, HLF Press Office, on 020 7591 6027 / 6036. Out of office hours mobile: 07973 613 820.