

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is announcing funding of £30m towards 10 projects that reflect the diversity of the UK's heritage. They include a far-reaching project to help protect the future of our seriously dwindling bee population, two projects which showcase Bristol as one of the major players in our nation's maritime story and plans to revitalise St Albans Cathedral in Hertfordshire.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "Heritage has huge potential to excite and inspire and this funding will definitely deliver both in spades. It's great news that HLF is able to support such a wide breadth of heritage projects, from protecting our vital insect life to transforming much-loved historic buildings and passing on heritage boatbuilding skills for future generations."

The following projects have received HLF investment today:

Polli:Nation, UK-wide biodiversity project – initial support of £1.3m, including a development grant of £26,000
'Free' pollination by bees and other insects is worth over £400m to UK agriculture each year but their numbers are in severe decline. This innovative project will engage 260 schools to help transform their grounds into pollinator-friendly habitats. Data recording will monitor any changes in species diversity and numbers. A key driver is to increase awareness of nature and particularly insects. A network of young enthusiasts will help by spreading knowledge and creating green 'stepping stones' such as bug hotels and bee houses to enable insects to move with ease between different areas.

Lucy Rothstein, CEO at the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, commented: “It’s vital that our next generation of conservationists understand the threats to bumblebees and other pollinating insects and have the knowledge, skills and resources to protect them. A project of this nature has the potential to equip a generation to protect our precious pollinator species, ensuring their long-term future.”

St Albans Cathedral, Hertfordshire – initial support of £4.2m, including a development grant of £391,800
St Albans Cathedral has been a site of continuous worship and pilgrimage for over 1700 years and sits on the site of the execution and burial of Alban, Britain’s first Christian Saint. It is an outstanding historic building which has played a pivotal role in the city’s history. Much-needed conservation work will take place on the shrine of St Amphibalus, the priest who converted Alban to Christianity and a comprehensive education and events programme is also planned. The project will create new learning spaces for both children and adults and a new welcome centre to ensure better facilities for all visitors.

HLF has invested more than £70m in cathedrals across the UK over the past 20 years.

Being Brunel: the national Brunel Project, Bristol – initial support of £4.9m, including a development grant of £176,000
The ss Great Britain Trust is working on a major new museum development within the historic Great Western Steamship Company dockyard. This new space will give public access to Brunel’s collections for the first time and bring Brunel’s worldwide reputation as a ‘hero engineer’ to life. These visionary plans will see the restoration and completion of the authentic dockyard setting at Brunel’s ss Great Britain, an HLF-funded, award-winning visitor attraction.

The Underfall Yard Project, Bristol – grant of £3m
HLF’s grant will enable the Underfall Yard Trust to create a Maritime Centre of Excellence within Bristol Harbour. Dating from the early 1800s, the site, known as the city’s ‘Floating Harbour’, is home to Victorian hydraulic systems for controlling water levels and lock gates and workshops that have changed little over the past two centuries. Plans include new opportunities for maritime businesses and training to flourish, much improved access for the public and the conversion of the former boiler room into ’The Power House’ learning centre.

Since 1994, HLF has invested nearly £60m in over 550 projects in Bristol.

The six other projects are:

- HMS Warrior, the Royal Navy’s first iron-hulled warship, will receive essential repairs at its home in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.
- Screen South’s Accentuate History of Place will involve large numbers of volunteers, including disabled people, to tell the hidden history of disability in the UK in relation to sites of historic importance.
- Highcliffe Castle, one of the most important surviving houses of the Romantic and Picturesque style of architecture in Christchurch, Dorset, is set to receive some urgent conservation work.
- Brackley Town Hall, a historic building in the centre of a Northamptonshire market town, will be restored and put back to use as a community facility.
- Newcastle University’s Grade II listed Hatton Gallery is on a journey to become a major cultural and education resource for the North East.
- The Former North British Rubber Company HQ in Edinburgh, birthplace of the Wellington boot, is set to be transformed into a site where small businesses can thrive in an historic setting.

Notes to editors

- Initial support plus development funding means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so this is an endorsement of outline proposals. The project will submit fully developed proposals to secure a firm award at a later date.
  UK National Ecosystem Assessment Technical Report published in 2011.
- Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. HLF has supported 36,000 projects with £6bn across the UK.

Further information

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Birthplace of the ‘welly’ to kickstart regeneration thanks to HLF