Bridport Museum

The project is a large capital redevelopment which aims to completely re-imagine the interior of the museum and all its displays.

Development funding of £97,000 has also been awarded to help Bridport Museum progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The catalyst for the project was the recent acquisition of the Sanctuary Rope and Net Collection. Formed over many years by Anthony and Frances Sanctuary in Uploders, the collection forms a nationally important record of Bridport's unique 800 year old rope and netting industry. Included in the collection are pieces of machinery which it is hoped, can be put back to working order. They will then form the centrepiece of the main gallery, including a small working ropewalk which can be used to show visitors how rope was made.

There will be new displays throughout the building showcasing Bridport's huge variety of collections which also include Jurassic Coast fossils, archaeology, fine art, social history and natural history. Downstairs will be an exciting and multi-functional learning space. It will include activities such as dressing up, objects to handle, and interactive games. It will have touch screens with photographs and more information on Bridport's history and the museum's collections.

Alongside the capital redevelopments will be a busy activities programme which has community participation at its heart. It will include activities for schools to get involved, will be asking groups to comment on the new proposals, and

will create new volunteering opportunities.

As well as new displays, there will be many improvements to the beautiful museum building. The museum has been housed at 25 South Street since 1932, the second oldest building in the town, and is Grade II* Listed but of mysterious origin! Part of the project involves carrying out essential conservation and repair work to preserve windows, stonework and combat growing damp problems. New central heating will allow year-round opening, a fully accessible public toilet with baby changing facilities and a lift will greatly improve access for everyone.

Emily Hicks, Curator of Bridport Museum said: "We're so excited that Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this initial support. For a long time now the trust has been wanting to redevelop the museum, but we have never had the funds. The acquisition of this new collection has been the perfect catalyst for creating a wonderful new museum. The vision is for a museum which is fun, friendly and engaging, and something that Bridport can really be proud of."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West England, said: "This project aims to transform Bridport Museum with new displays and educational opportunities. We look forward to working with the museum further, and receiving the detailed plans in due course."

Notes to editors

About Bridport Museum Trust
Bridport Museum Trust runs a professionally staffed and fully Accredited Museum and Local History Centre. The Trust is an independent charity, set up in 2002. The Museum opens between April and October, six days a week. In 2008 the Trust instituted a free entry policy, which saw visitor numbers rise from around 6000 to a current average of around 18000 per year. The Local History Centre opens three days per week, all year round. It provides resources and support for people undertaking local or family history research. The museum organises a regular programme of temporary exhibitions, family activities, fundraising events, talks for local groups and other outreach events. There is also an education programme which supports local schools.

Further information

Emily Hicks, Curator on 01308 458703 or email: curator@bridportmuseum.co.uk.