

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced earmarked funding worth £72million for six major sites in England:

- Canterbury Cathedral, Mother Church of the Anglican Communion and a World Heritage Site
- Nottingham Castle, backdrop to some of England's most powerful folk stories
- Bath Abbey, one of the UK's most remarkable parish churches
- Beamish: The North of England's Open Air Museum, a showcase for the very best of North-East heritage
- Blackpool Museum, a new venue at the Winter Gardens designed to celebrate the story of the world's first working-class seaside resort
- Plymouth's History Centre, a new one-stop shop uniting a number of archives and collections into one building in the heart of Britain's 'Ocean City'

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "These projects will enhance and re-energise some of England's best-loved places. They will build on the stories of the past and offer new opportunities for the future.

"Every year the Heritage Lottery Fund looks at a number of applications for major projects requesting £5m or more of our money. Demand for 2014 was higher than ever. We'll be working closely with all six of our successful applicants as they develop their plans."

The successful projects are:

Canterbury Cathedral – earmarked funding for a £11.9m HLF bid, including a £930,400 development grant

Canterbury Cathedral, a Grade I listed feat of architectural genius, is a global focus for Anglican worshippers and attracts over a million visitors each year. Proposals for the conservation of the site will ensure a much more resilient future and act as a catalyst for wider community involvement. A new visitor centre will transform how the cathedral welcomes people across the faith spectrum and will tell the story of a religious site which has stood the test of time over an extraordinary millennium's worth of history. Four stonemasonry apprenticeships will additionally enable craftspeople to pass on their expertise and a range of workshops will help engage young people, particularly those who are currently not in training or employment.

Nottingham Castle – earmarked funding for a £12.9m HLF bid, including a £599,500 development grant

Medieval Nottingham Castle initially conjures up images of Robin Hood and his Merry Men in people's imaginations. However, from 1068 the city's history has been much more than just stories of dare-doing in Sherwood Forest and includes dissent, rebellion and the birth of democracy. HLF's investment will help ensure the Castle's heritage is brought to life as well as opening up a unique set of caves beneath the site. The Castle Museum and Art Gallery will be redeveloped to better tell the multi-layered story of Nottingham – from lawlessness to lace-making. This project is part of exciting and ambitious plans to regenerate the city as a whole and put it firmly back on the tourist map.

Bath Abbey – earmarked funding for a £10.4m HLF bid, including a £389,000 development grant

Bath is one of the UK's most historic cities and home to 15th-century Bath Abbey, a beautiful parish church which annually opens its doors to 500,000 visitors. Proposals include urgent conservation work to the abbey's floor and improved entrances. New underground facilities for visitors such as learning spaces and a refectory / training kitchen will enhance the site and enable the abbey to broaden its programme of activities. Education will play a strong role in this project with a proposed target of reaching 10,000 school children and creating a number of trails and tours. 400 volunteers (a combination of existing and new ones) will learn skills involving conservation and traditional crafts to customer service and catering.

Beamish: The North of England's Open Air Museum – earmarked funding for a £10.7m HLF bid, including a £603,800 development grant

Beamish is a wonderful open air museum which celebrates everyday working life in the North East. Plans will be implemented over a number of years, transforming the site and ensuring the museum can tell the story of time periods in living memory, whilst also creating new jobs and opportunities for skills training. A range of immersive exhibits looking specifically at the 1820s and 1950s will be built, including a 1950s town and farm and a Georgian coaching inn, which will offer overnight stays. There will be 50 four- year apprenticeships and a pioneering, dedicated activities space for people with living with dementia – 'Homes for Memory' - the first of its kind in a museum within the UK.

Blackpool Museum – earmarked funding for a £13.6m HLF bid, including a £1,240,200 development grant

Blackpool has played a vital contribution to Britain's cultural traditions and welcomes 13m visitors each year. This famous seaside resort has never before had the opportunity to tell the story of its rise to prominence from the 1870s onwards; the creation of Blackpool Museum is therefore an exciting prospect for both businesses and residents. Located in the Pavilion Theatre of the Winter Gardens in the heart of the town, the museum will be designed as a flagship visitor attraction enabling the people of Blackpool to reconnect with their heritage. Key to proposals is that the Museum will be an important catalyst for increased investment in order to give a real boost to the economy.

Plymouth History Centre – earmarked funding for a £12.8m HLF bid, including a £940,300 development grant

HLF's investment will enable the first steps to be made on a journey towards developing a new History Centre in Plymouth. Bringing under one roof an amazing collection of archives, film and artefacts, the Centre will tell the extraordinary story of the city's role in maritime history from Drake's 16th-century circumnavigation of the world and the departure of the Mayflower to Massachusetts' shores in the 17th century to the life of Lady Nancy Astor, the first female MP to take a seat in the House of Commons in 1919 as MP for Plymouth. The council's proposals will open up these precious assets in a 'one stop shop' enabling visitors to explore both their own personal heritage as well as Plymouth's.

Further information

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