Chedworth Roman Villa

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A £3 million scheme to conserve and improve one of the National Trust's oldest properties is set to go ahead thanks to a £700,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Chedworth Roman Villa is one of the most significant domestic Roman Sites in the UK thanks in part to an internationally important collection of 4th-century mosaics. Although, Chedworth receives 50,000 visitors a year, facilities for the public are in need of improvement and many of the key remains are not accessible.

This scheme will create a new conservation shelter over the remains of the villa, allowing the visitors to walk above the mosaics on suspended walkways. This will mean that the public will be able to see them properly for the first time and be there to watch as previously unseen areas are uncovered. A new learning centre will also be built, allowing Chedworth to improve and develop its education and community work.

Janet Gough, the National Trust's General Manager for Gloucestershire, said: "We're absolutely delighted that HLF have decided to back this project. This investment will really bring a sense of excitement to the Villa giving our visitors the chance to see what life was like in late Roman Britain. In the next few months we will begin working with university students to uncover the mosaics and visitors are very welcome to come along and see the excavation and conservation work and take part in special workshops which we will publicise very soon."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "This project will ensure that Chedworth Roman Villa will provide the facilities that current visitors expect of a 21st century visitor attraction, whilst ensuring that the site is properly conserved and preserved for future generations. This, combined with the new education centre, will mean that many more people will be able to learn about and enjoy one of the most important Roman sites in Britain."

Alongside the preservation works, information across the site will also be improved and made more interactive. Domestic life in late Roman-Britain will be recreated with figures projected onto walls and simulated sounds and smells of Roman pursuits including dining and bathing. The small museum on the site will also be improved into an interactive Centre for Victorian Discovery.

As part of a separate project the Trust also has plans to improve the visitor reception area and introduce a café at the villa.

Some small-scale excavation work will take place in the Summer but the main work will begin after the visitor season, in November 2010. It will continue throughout the 2011 season, but there are no plans to close Chedworth. Instead visitors will be encouraged to come along and see what is happening with temporary exhibitions, and guided tours, explaining the work in progress.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms our heritage. Through their grant making, HLF aims to conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy; help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about their heritage; and help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage. HLF has supported more

than 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK, including £404.7 million of grants to 3,015 projects in the South West.

Further information

Menna Davies, The National Trust Wessex, Communications Officer on 01985 843 592 / menna.davies@nationaltrust.org.uk

Janet Gough, National Trust, Gloucestershire General Manager on 01451 843 028.

Roland Smith, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6047 or rolands@hlf.org.uk

Clarissa Price, The National Trust Wessex, Marketing and Communications Administrator on 01985 843 614 clarissa.price@nationaltrust.org.uk