Colwyn Bay’s Victoria Pier heads for a renaissance

24/05/2013

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has given Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) the green light to progress plans for the Victoria Pier Renaissance as part of the wider £56million regeneration of Colwyn Bay, with the award of a first-round pass and a £594,900 development grant*.

The pier, which is one of the last pier building projects of the Victoria era, has been closed to the public since 2008 and is in a critical condition. The pavilion has hosted performances from artists as diverse as Morecambe and Wise, Harry Secombe and Elvis Costello.

CCBC will use the development grant to develop their plans further in consultation with local people. As well as structural repairs, the proposals include the creation of a Bay Discovery Centre. Ideas range from telling the history of Colwyn Bay through an interactive exhibition and a community-led oral history project to apps, costumed tours and walks. Proposals also include the restoration of murals by the artists Eric Ravilious and Mary Adshead, both nationally important figures in the history of 20th century British art.

If CCBC is successful in its bid for a firm award at the second round of the HLF application process it plans to hand over the management of the restored pier to Colwyn Bay Shore Thing Ltd, a community company, to run it as a social enterprise. It is hoped the project will attract a team of 100 volunteers to take part in the management of the pier.

Plans include the use of funding to support the employment of a Learning and Outreach Manager and Volunteer Coordinator to develop a full programme of learning and skills training opportunities. CCBC has also outlined that two apprentices would be employed by the main contractors appointed to carry out the proposed restoration work, with a commitment to provide work placements for Coleg Llandrillo students undertaking NVQ Level 2/3 Building and Heritage Skills.

Manon Williams, Chair of HLF in Wales, said: “The pier not only sits in the heart of Colwyn Bay but also holds a prominent position in the resort’s history and that of Welsh seaside architecture. The project, which is integral to the regeneration of Colwyn Bay, has strong support from the community with significant opportunities for job creation, training and volunteering and would provide a significant boost for the local economy. This was an important consideration for the HLF Board of Trustees.

“We have awarded a first-round pass and a development grant of £594,500 in recognition of the potential this project could bring to the local area and Wales as a whole. There is huge competition for our grants so CCBC now needs to develop up its plans in order to compete for the full award to deliver this project of £4,379,600. HLF is keen to see more funding applications from Conwy and we hope that this project will act as a catalyst for other new and exciting heritage projects.”

Cllr Mike Priestley, Chair of the Pier Project Board, said: “We’re very grateful that the Heritage Lottery Fund can see the potential of this project. The support of the HLF is a major step forward for the future of the pier and the potential it has to contribute to the regeneration of Colwyn Bay waterfront and the wider community. We will be working closely with Shore Thing to make the most of this opportunity.”

Notes to editors

*The HLF first-round pass means that CCBC is able to move to the second round of the HLF application process. It has up to two years to submit more detailed plans and apply for the remainder of the £4,974,500 HLF support that it is seeking for the project.

Further information

Equinox Communications: Kate Sullivan or Helen Newton on 02920 764 100 or hlf@equinoxcommunications.co.uk