

Funding for learning and growing Delapré Abbey

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The funding will provide for a paid qualified professional to help promote participation and implement a range of education and volunteering activities at the abbey. It is hoped the move will capitalise on the already growing community interest in the heritage of the site, which is linked to the on-going work of Northampton Borough Council, Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) and other partners who are developing detailed plans for a £3.5million round two application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the abbey.

A spokesperson for FoDA said: "Having someone who is dedicated to promoting Delapre Abbey will mean we can have more community events and volunteer opportunities and also improve our links with local schools and others to promote the value of this historically significant heritage site.

"The learning and growing project is part of the work FoDA is doing to protect, preserve, restore and renovate the abbey. As we progress further down the process of restoration we are continuing to work in partnership with the borough council and DAPT to halt the abbey's decline and preserve its historical and architectural significance. Together we aim to establish Delapre Abbey and its beautiful surroundings as a nationally important and inspiring heritage asset."

Note to editors

Northampton Borough Council has been successful in the first stage of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for funding to restore the abbey and was awarded £250,000 to develop detailed plans for the work needed to restore and secure the abbey. The plans will be complete in autumn 2013 and will then go forward as a bid for around £3.5million in the second stage.

Delapré Abbey is one of the town's most important historic buildings and the abbey, surrounding grounds and parklands are a key part in Northampton's heritage. Northampton Borough Council owns the Abbey and is committed to working with the FoDA and the Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust to restore it, bringing the building and its grounds into greater public use and protecting it for the future. The aim of the Learning and Growing at Delapré Abbey Project and the wider programme is to engage with more people and to bring the abbey back into the life of the town.

Friends of Delapré Abbey (FoDA) is a small charity which has recently become a limited company. The charity has been in existence since 2001, with a membership base of approximately 200 people. FoDA currently has on average 20 volunteers, mostly based in the tea room with four volunteers covering tours, historical events and presentations. Currently FoDA hosts small community events such as music evenings, children's art workshops and craft fairs. The charity has recently started to provide guided tours of the outside of the abbey and occasional inside tours.

Further information

Nicola Hedge, Chair, Friends of Delapré Abbey, Tel: 01604 708 675, Mobile: 07982 690 970 or email: nicola.hedges2@tesco.net.