

Delapre Abbey secures Lottery investment

08/10/2013

The project aims to preserve and restore much of the main abbey buildings.

The project involves refurbishing parts of the main abbey building, including rebuilding the conservatory and opening the south wing for events and public access, restoring the 18th-century stable block into a new visitor and education centre, shop and exhibition space and restoring the Billiard Room and converting it into a restaurant and café for use by the general public and for special events.

Northampton Borough Council will provide match funding with an investment of £1.34m, the balance coming from trusts, donations, a public appeal and volunteer time.

Delapre Abbey has seen over 800 years of events in Northampton, and the restoration of the abbey is one of the council's key heritage projects. Over the centuries the abbey has been a hub of activity in Northampton, among many significant events the building has hosted royalty and witnessed the Battle of Northampton.

Councillor David Mackintosh, Leader of Northampton Borough Council said: "Every year thousands of people visit Delapre Abbey and explore the grounds. The building is unique and part of our town's rich heritage so it is important we invest in protecting and developing this asset for future generations to enjoy.

"Our successful bid has secured the funding to transform the abbey and its surroundings, improving this key heritage site for Northampton and the wider community."

Commenting on the award, Vanessa Harbar, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, said: "Delapre Abbey is one of the most important and iconic heritage assets in Northampton and its popularity goes without saying. We are delighted that Northampton Borough Council's plans are now set to transform the future of the site, restoring and finally opening up the building and its unique history to the wider public."

Bill Wright, chair of the Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust said: "This is fantastic news, and is a real boost to the work being done to bring more and more of this important building back into use. Over a number of years many people have been working hard to preserve and restore the Abbey, and the progress we have made so far has been thanks to their efforts.

"The abbey is a much loved part of Northampton, and when refurbished will become an important regional attraction."

Nicola Hedges, chair of the Friends of Delapre Abbey said: "This year has been great for Delapre Abbey, we have seen so many projects progressing and the events we have organised have brought many more visitors into the park and grounds. Today's news means we can continue to build on our successes and help more people discover what a wonderful historical asset the abbey is."

Further information

Northampton Borough Council: Deborah Denton on 01604 837393 or email: ddenton@northampton.gov.uk.