

The project aims to improve career prospects in dry stone walling by providing five training bursaries throughout the North West and offering support for established dry stone wallers to enhance their skills.

Development funding of £8,300 has also been awarded to help the Dry Stone Walling Association progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date. The provision of training bursary opportunities in the North West will enable individuals to learn heritage skills that will ultimately provide an income whilst also helping to maintain the landscape for future generations to enjoy.

The project will also deliver an educational programme for schools and colleges providing access to online teaching resources and offer students the opportunity to engage with the age-old craft of dry stone walling. Local communities in the North West will be encouraged to get involved in local restoration projects and help address the decline of traditional boundaries which affects both their practical and aesthetic value.

The craft of dry stone walling is vital to the preservation of our landscape heritage. Dry stone walling is an ancient craft, with the earliest form known in the UK built some five thousand years ago on Orkney. However, it is the field walls, mostly of the 18th and 19th centuries, that have made the greatest impression on the present day landscape. Dry stone walls are often seen as unifying features of the landscapes where they are found. The network of stone walls often provides the skeleton to the landscape, giving it form, coherence, structure, perspective and distinction. Throughout the UK you can see areas where the patchwork of field boundaries stretches up from the valley floors towards the poorer ground on the slopes. The uplands of North West England are particularly rich in dry stone walls.

Ray Stockall, Chairman of the Dry Stone Walling Association, said: “We’re delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. Traditional dry stone walling skills are being lost at an alarming rate and it is vital that these skills are passed from the experts of today to future generations to secure our landscape heritage.”

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Sara Hilton, said: “The heritage sector is in need of people who have specific conservation skills and many of the projects that we fund require special skills such as dry stone walling to make them happen. We at HLF are passionate about looking after our historic environment and equally about giving people, especially younger generations, the chance to gain new skills and training opportunities that will help them in later life. We’re looking forward to seeing these plans progress over the coming months.”

Notes to editors

A first-round pass/initial support means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and HLF believes the project has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award. On occasion, an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

Further information

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