Engine of industrial revolution to be restored

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The two-year project will share the stories of the surrounding Elsecar village, a conservation area with ironworks, collieries, workshops, canal, railway, workers' cottages, church, steam-mill and much more.

Representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), English Heritage (EH), Barnsley Council and community organisations gathered at the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Elsecar to launch formally the £500,000 project.

Over 300,000 people visit Elsecar each year and this project is expected to realise its immense potential. When announcing the restoration project, Dr Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "The importance of its unique industrial heritage is not as widely understood or as accessible to the public as it could be." She added: "In addition to saving the Newcomen engine for future generations, it will see greatly improved interpretation at the site and activities for visitors in addition to training and volunteer opportunities for people so they can get involved in protecting this wonderful place."

Residents and schools who took part in consultation on the restoration project attended the event along with Barnsley's Mayor Elect Cllr Ken Richardson, Mayoress Elect Mrs Nadia Richardson, Dr Ann Gosse, Executive Director, Development, Environment and Culture, and Keith Miller of English Heritage.

Managed by Barnsley Museums, the project will see the beam engine, shaft and engine house restored and conserved within the Elsecar village conservation area to create a premier tourist attraction.

The engine pumped water out of the Elsecar New Colliery between 1795 and 1923 and is one of the top ten key industrial sites on EH's Heritage At Risk Register due to its 'outstanding importance to England's industrial past'.

Elsecar was the industrial powerhouse of the Earls Fitzwilliam from nearby Wentworth Woodhouse. Today, ironworks, workshops, a canal, collieries and the Fitzwilliam's family railway station remain around the Newcomen Engine, making this among the most important heritage sites in the world.

Further information

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