

Lord Lieutenant of Essex opening Finchingfield Guildhall

With a significant contribution of more than £1.3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the opening took place in front of a guest list of over 100, including Sir Roger and Lady Singleton, Sir Timothy and Lady Ruggles-Brise, Geoffrey Van Orden MEP, and the current and immediate past Chairs of Essex County Council, Norman Hume and Kay Twitchen OBE, who will be joined by representatives from the project's major funders, including HLF, English Heritage, Viridor Credits and the Essex Heritage Trust, Guildhall trustees and local supporters, and children and teachers from the village's primary school.

Stuart Hobley, Development Manager, Heritage Lottery Fund, East of England, commented: "This project is an excellent example of community-led engagement in action. Thanks to the people of Finchingfield and Heritage Lottery Fund support this remarkable historic guildhall has been restored and returned to the heart of the community. Through the Museum and library within, we can all discover this village's rich history and celebrate the building's new lease of life."

Notes to editors

Jeremy Toynbee is a trustee and responsible for marketing and participation, on behalf of the Guildhall Trust, and can be contacted on 01371 811 608 / 07791 653 484, email: participation@finchingfieldguildhall.org.uk.

Finchingfield Guildhall – For hundreds of years the Guildhall was the centre of village life. This Grade I building has immense historical significance, a significance not limited to the physical structure itself but one that encompasses the

social roles it has played over time. With the social structure of rural communities breaking down, the focus shifting away from a cohesive agricultural community to individuals and family units, the preservation and study of this building and what it stood for not only remembers a past, different way of living but also offers a wonderful opportunity to provide the modern village community with a vibrant, social focal point. Built around 1470, the building has undergone considerable repair and restoration and reopened to the public on 26 August 2013.

Finchingfield Guildhall Trust is a registered charity (no. 205016), responsible for maintaining and managing the Guildhall property. The trust has its roots in charitable foundations dating from the 1500s and the Guildhall has always been an essential part of meeting charitable obligations.

English Heritage is the Government's statutory adviser on the historic environment. Officially known as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, English Heritage is an Executive Non-departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Their powers and responsibilities are set out in the *National Heritage Act (1983)* and report to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. More information can be found at the English Heritage website.