Have your say

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What matters to you about the heritage of Cardiff and the Valleys? The castles and historic landmarks? Perhaps it's the parks? Or maybe it's the area's rich industrial and multi-cultural history?

With a massive £300million annual awards budget to allocate from 2013 to 2019, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is asking people across the UK about the funding priorities for the future. As part of this conversation HLF wants to hear from the people living in Cardiff and the Valleys about what is important locally and how and on what HLF money should be invested on in the future.

During the past 16 years, HLF in Wales has supported more than 130 projects in Cardiff and the South Wales Valleys, investing over £27.4million in the area. The city has recently seen the launch of the Cardiff Museum project, The Cardiff Story, which will share the city's history and be used as an education venue for lifelong learning.

Other projects that have received grants range from the creation of the Museum of Welsh Cricket, which was awarded £566,000 in 2007, to £92,700 invested in Pontypridd to restore the town's museum, and other projects supporting the Welsh language, such as Treftadaeth Ddigidol which recorded local histories in Welsh-language in Caerphilly, thanks to a grant of £49,900.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: "The money the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested so far in Cardiff and The Valleys has helped make a real difference to the area. In addition to helping people to celebrate and get involved in their heritage, it has helped create jobs, contributed to economic regeneration and, in turn, has attracted more visitors to the area.

"What's more these projects have given local people the chance to develop a range of new skills and train as volunteers, which is both fun and rewarding.

"People are at the heart of HLF projects and we value their view which is why, as well as consulting with heritage experts at a meeting in Cardiff this week, we are asking for views from local people on what's important about their local heritage and how HLF money should be spent. This is your chance to tell us what you think our priorities should be, what we should continue to, and what we should do differently."

Heritage is everything that we've inherited from the past that we want to pass on, for future generations to enjoy. It can include archaeology, archives, cultures and memories, languages and dialects, historic buildings and monuments, industrial heritage, landscapes, museums, historic parks, places of worship, wildlife and nature conservation

Public responses from Cardiff and The Valleys will feed into HLF's new five year plan from 2013 which is currently being prepared for launch in 2012, shaping the future funding priorities across the UK.

HLF projects that have made a difference in Cardiff and the Valleys by the people behind the projects:

Museum of Welsh Cricket
The Museum of Welsh Cricket in Sophia Gardens, Cardiff is just one example of the range of projects supported by HLF in the capital city. Awarded £566,000 in 2007, the Club opened its Heritage Gallery, the first phase of the project, in

2008, to offer cricket-keen visitors the chance to get a glimpse of artefacts and rare records of sporting history including clothing, film and other memorabilia.

The museum celebrates Wales' true first sport which has been played in Wales since 1783 - longer than rugby and football. Other sporting clubs, including Cardiff City F.C. were created as offshoots from cricket clubs. It is information like this that is celebrated in the museum.

Dr. Andrew Hignell, Glamorgan County Cricket Club's archivist, said: "Wales is famous for being a sporting nation and projects like this make sure the nation's sporting heritage is kept alive. The museum brings sporting history alive with a modern approach.

"Since receiving the HLF grant, we have collected personal items donated by former Glamorgan-cricketers including Hugh Morris and Colin Metson and Matthew Maynard. But as well as traditional artefacts, we are using a range of online and interactive ideas to encourage young people to find out more about the history of the sport, which increases their IT skills with games and quizzes.

"History isn't just about looking at things hanging on a wall. We encourage people to learn about the history of the sport through having a go themselves. We're developing a simulated game at the moment, Batio, to give people the chance to try out the sport in the museum."

The HLF grant also supported CricEd Cymru, a successful interactive learning programme that will provide material for 240 primary and secondary schools in Wales.

Andrew continued: "Schools in Cardiff have signed up to be partner schools with the club, and hundreds of children took part in activities throughout June 2009, when the Ashes Test Match came to the city. Some pupils were also given the opportunity to play on the pitch during the lunch interval, and gasp at the tiny size of the replica Ashes urn on display in the exhibition. Our efforts resulted in the ECB awarding us with their prize for the best community scheme of the year.

"Sport has an incredible power to bring people together, and through CricEd children from across Wales will have access to an online museum and learning tool where they can find out more about sport and history. With the India and Pakistan teams both visiting us this year, we are looking forward to working globally with other communities, to give school children the chance to find out more about other countries, through the common language of cricket.

"Sport is just one element of Wales' heritage so we work with other heritage projects such as Cardiff Castle and the Cardiff Story Museum to offer visitors and city residents the opportunity to find out more about what makes Wales great."

Preserving Pontypridd's Heritage

In October (2010), HLF awarded Pontypridd Museum £92,700 to carry out repair work on the Grade II listed building. As well as restoring the roof and ceiling, the funding will give local residents the opportunity to learn about the building and the town's local architecture through various workshops and guided tours.

Brian Davies, Pontypridd Museum's curator, said: "The HLF grant has secured the future of the museum and will allow the groups that use the building to take part in the restoration themselves.

"The museum is regularly used by ten local community groups, including the Old Bridge Photographic Society, who will be documenting the repair project, and will use the images in an exhibition and publication, which will then be used as

an educational tool for the museum. The Pontypridd Arts Society and the Cilfynydd Art Society will also be helping with this project, working with school children to research the original colours that would have been used in the building.

“This is a real community-led project, with input from a number of members from across the area. Projects funded by HLF protect not only museums, but encourage skills training in communities.”

Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili – Treftadaeth Ddigidol

The Heritage Lottery Fund supports a range of projects to preserve Welsh culture. In 2008, Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili was awarded £49,900 to support a local oral history project, recording stories from the area in the Welsh language dialect that’s unique to the area. The project was a response to the need for more Welsh-language history resources in the area.

Treftadaeth Ddigidol, or Digital Heritage, offered Welsh speakers and learners the opportunity to record local histories into a collection of digital stories that were then shown at exhibition and film nights in local museums, libraries and other locations across the county. More than 60 films have been created and shared at events in places like Senghenydd Community Centre and Heritage Room and Newbridge Memorial Hall.

The project encouraged people from across the county to use Welsh to share local history and to help Welsh-learners find out more about south east Wales’ industrial and cultural heritage from other Welsh-speakers.

Cyril Jones, a volunteer who was involved in the Digital Histories project, ran a creative writing workshop at Big Pit in Blaenavon, to bring the history of mining to life through poetry. Cyril said: “Creative writing is a clever way to think about history and what one place can mean to different people. Following the tour, most people in the group wrote about their forefathers, and the individuals that worked in the mines; however one boy, aged just 9, wrote about ghosts that lived in the mine – a great show of creativity encouraged by history.

“We recorded the poems and short stories and memoirs, and I was very proud to hear them again, when I attended the exhibition evening at the The Memo in Newbridge. Hearing the poems, watching the films and seeing all the photography that had been collected through the project was a brilliant experience, and a great opportunity for local people to comment on what makes their area so rich in history and creativity.”

Helen Price, Digital Inclusion Officer at Menter Caerffili, said: “This project allowed people to share their own histories, and what they felt was important about the area to share with others. Through working with school pupils and older members of the community, we soon found that ‘heritage’ can be seen in a number of different ways. Once we began searching for stories, we found more and more people coming forward to share their stories about the county. It’s a shame our project came to an end, I know there are a lot more stories to tell!”

Aberdare Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

In April 2009, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council secured £950,000 funding from HLF to regenerate Aberdare town centre and provide training opportunities for local people. The former coal, iron and mining town which is in the top quarter of the most deprived towns in Wales is important to the country’s national heritage for its role in the Industrial Revolution.

The partnership between HLF and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has so far helped refurbish four properties in the town, with lots more planned to continue over the length of the programme.

Andrew Forsythe, a plasterer based in the town, has been involved in renovating local business in the area: “Thanks to the grant from HLF, I was able to go on a lime-rendering course. Even though I’ve been a plasterer for more than 20

years, I don't usually work on conservation projects so I wasn't familiar with the tools and product. I've also learnt additional skills whilst working on the job, which I can use on future jobs as well as pass onto future apprentices. The number of jobs that come up in conservation areas are increasing, so it's great that I now have these skills.

"Before I became involved in the project, I wasn't aware that HLF funded projects like this – I always thought that renovations were commercial. It's a great idea to bring traditional methods, skills and styles back, these methods are much higher quality, so the work we do now really will last. I'm keen to work on other projects in the town, and we're trying to encourage more businesses to sign up. Aberdare is looking much brighter now thanks to the renovations, it really has made a difference to the look and feel of the area and I'm proud to have played my part in restoring the town's heritage."

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects allocating over £4.5 billion across the UK, including more than 2,000 projects totalling over £217 million in Wales.

General facts for Wales

- In Wales, over £217 million has been invested in projects across the country, from Newport Medieval Ship to Skomer Island; from Pontypridd Museum to Nant Gwrtheyrn.
- Every £1 million of HLF funding attracts £620,000 from partner organisations.
- 62% of HLF projects in Wales have been led by local community groups and voluntary organisations.
- 25 public parks in Wales have benefited from £25million in HLF funding, including Bute Park, Cardiff, Brynmill Park, Swansea and Ponciau Banks, Wrexham.
- More than 98% of grants awarded in the last year have created volunteering opportunities.
- 21 deprived urban conservation areas have been rejuvenated through the Townscape Heritage Initiative, which has awarded £22 million to towns such as Aberdare, Denbigh, Cardigan, Colwyn Bay, Bridgend and Cefn Mawr (Wrexham).