Long-Term Future of Historic Island Railway Vehicles Secured

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A project to ensure the long-term preservation and display of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's historic collection of locomotives, carriages and other rolling stock has been given the green light from The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Isle of Wight Railway Company Ltd has been awarded a £35,000 development grant to progress the plans for its 'Changing Trains' Project.

This first-round pass* means that they can now progress to the second stage of the HLF application process and they have up to two years to submit more detailed plans and apply for a full grant of £929,600 from HLF for the project.

'Changing Trains' aims to ensure that the Railway's historic steam locomotives, Victorian and Edwardian carriages, and other heritage rolling stock, is kept under cover when not in service, away from the harmful effects of sun, wind and rain, and in so doing are placed on display for the public to enjoy. The project focuses on providing a Rolling Stock Storage and Display Building adjacent to Havenstreet Station which will provide covered space for most of the Railway's restored locomotives, carriages and wagons, including items scheduled for completion during the next 10 years under the HLF-assisted Carriage & Wagon restoration programme.

"This first-round pass and development grant is excellent news and takes us closer to making 'Changing Trains' a reality", said IW Steam Railway Lottery Application Director, Chris Tagart.

Chris added: "The award will assist us with preparation of detailed plans and specifications for the project, and assist us in preparing our second-round grant application. It is also reassuring to note that this initial approval means that the 'Changing Trains' project has met HLF criteria for funding, and in their view has the potential to deliver the high-quality benefits and value-for-money necessary for the award of Lottery money."

In total the 'Changing Trains' project will cost £1.1m and to meet part of the criteria for securing HLF funding the Steam Railway has already raised £140,000 of 'match-funding'. This has been raised through the generosity of IW Steam Railway members and supporters across the country and through donations from visitors to the Railway.

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for South East England, said: "We're extremely pleased to give initial support to the Isle of Wight Railway Co. Ltd for 'Changing Trains' and we look forward to receiving their application for a full grant in the future."

Expressing delight at the initial HLF grant, IW Steam Railway Chairman, Steve Oates, said: "This is a tremendous boost to us in our 40th anniversary year. Our railway is unique in only operating Victorian and Edwardian carriages, which are hauled by equally historic tank locomotives, three of which date from the Victorian era. Having this precious rolling stock under cover will halve the time currently spent on maintenance, which in turn means far more time can be spent on restoring and preserving yet more historic railway vehicles - and very importantly, as 'Changing trains' will have public access, we will also be able to further our educational objectives by giving visitors the opportunity to view historic railway vehicles at close quarters and discover how they were once so much a part of life on the island."

This project is the Isle of Wight Steam Railway's largest since the three mile long extension to Smallbrook Junction was opened in 1991 and will be a major step forward for the preservation and display of a unique and nationally important collection of historic Railway vehicles.

2011 is the IW Steam Railway's 40th anniversary year, since the establishment of the Railway at Havenstreet in 1971.

Notes to editors

The Isle of Wight Steam Railway is located at Havenstreet Station (PO33 4DS) – 3 miles from Ryde and 3 miles from Newport – and operates a preserved 5-mile section of the former Ryde to Newport Railway. www.iwsteamrailway.co.uk

*A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it 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.

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 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK, including £428million in the South East alone. To date, HLF has made 172 awards in the Isle of Wight amounting to just over £12million.

Further information

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For further information on the IW Steam Railway.