£10m investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund for

View from the east of Stonehenge at sunrise

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: “Stonehenge is one of the archaeological wonders of the world. It demonstrates the vital role heritage plays within the UK’s tourism industry as well as being a great example of our fascinating history. This Heritage Lottery Fund investment will help transform this site and give people a much greater understanding of why it is so significant.”

Stonehenge, described as ‘the most architecturally sophisticated pre-historic stone circle in the world’**, was constructed and in use between 3,000BC to 1,600BC. It is thought to have been used for a variety of religious ceremonies and the surrounding landscape – a World Heritage Site -contains over 700 known archaeological features. Stonehenge attracts 900,000 visitors every year from across the globe.

Neil Oliver, archaeologist, historian and broadcaster, said: "Stonehenge is one of the most famous and important archaeological sites in the world - right up there with the Pyramids of Egypt and the Colosseum in Rome. Just the sound of the word makes us wonder about our ancient past and our ancestors."

"It's therefore fantastic news that thanks to this grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, visitors will have an even better experience than before. Perhaps more importantly, the money will help ensure the magic of that special place will be retained, and looked after into the future. Stonehenge has always been a mind- blowing experience. With this kind of

support, it hopefully always will be."

Dr Alice Roberts, said: "Stonehenge is an icon, and an archaeological treasure that deserves to be treated with more care than it has been in recent history. It's brilliant that the Heritage Lottery Fund is now supporting improvements to the landscape setting of Stonehenge, but more funding is needed. These are hard times indeed, but we should not lose sight of our heritage as we strive for the future."

Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said: "We are tremendously grateful for this generous grant. Not only does it help to narrow the funding gap for the project considerably, it also sends out a message of confidence about the transformational benefits that the project will bring - to tourism, local economy, and the conservation and public enjoyment of Stonehenge and its landscape."

HLF's grant will support work to remove the existing visitor facilities allowing the experience of the stones to be more naturally integrated with its ancient processional approach and the surrounding landscape. These much-needed wider improvements will give people the chance to explore what the site would have been like thousands of years ago. The project aims to improve the visitor experience, including the creation of a new carefully designed visitor centre which will include education and exhibition spaces to help people learn more about Stonehenge's history. The project will also support training opportunities and a new volunteering programme.

Fiona Reynolds, Director-General of the National Trust, said: "The grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund gives this important project a major boost. Stonehenge is one of the nation's most precious ancient monuments but the current facilities for visitors are woefully lacking. We're delighted by HLF's support and will continue working with English Heritage and other partners in delivering the much-needed improvements to the site."

Notes to editors

* A confirmed award means that money had already been earmarked by HLF for the project in question and that the full amount has now been secured.

** The World Heritage Committee described Stonehenge as 'the most architecturally sophisticated pre-historic stone circle in the world.'

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 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

Laura Bates, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6027 /
lbates@hlf.org.uk or Katie Owen on 020 7591 6036 katieo@hlf.org.uk Out of hours mobile: 07973 613 820

Renee Fok, English Heritage Communications on 020 7973 3297 or renee.fok@english-heritage.org.uk