£5.6million for three ambitious heritage projects

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he projects are:

- restoring Newark's 16th-century Old Magnus Buildings to create the first National Centre for Civil War Learning
- conserving Hexham Abbey's medieval monastery buildings, giving them a new lease of life as a community education and heritage space
- inspiring people across England to conserve, enjoy and learn about their natural heritage through the prestigious John Muir Award

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of HLF, said: "We know that projects like the ones benefiting from this Heritage Lottery Fund support are often the driving force for wider heritage-led regeneration schemes and can in turn help attract further investment. We are proud to fund these sorts of informative and multi-faceted projects which get to the very heart of our nation's uniquely complex history and unlock stories of historic turning points that have shaped the world we live in today."

The Old Magnus Buildings, Newark, Nottinghamshire – confirmed grant of £3.4m

Dating from 1529, the Old Magnus Buildings are a complex collection of Grade II-listed* buildings that were formerly home to the Thomas Magnus School[2]. HLF's grant will enable Newark and Sherwood District Council to repair and conserve the historic buildings on site and transform them into a state-of-the-art National Centre for Civil War Learning and a cultural/heritage hub for the local community, feeding into wider regeneration plans in the area. Learning is at the heart of this project with an impressive range of activities and events on offer, including the Object Theatre, a sensory exhibition depicting the Civil War story.

Newark is the ideal place for telling the complex story of the English Civil Wars in the 17th century. The town was besieged three times due to its strategic location and Charles I raised his standard in Nottingham, eventually surrendering to the Parliamentarians at nearby Southwell. The collections which will be on display in the restored buildings are extensive, comprising 70,000 items of local, national and international significance such as the 1646 Newark Civil War Siege Plan, weaponry, siege coinage and the Iron Age Newark Torc[3].

Hexham Abbey, Hexham, Northumberland – confirmed grant of £1.8m

For over 1300 years Hexham Abbey has been a special place of learning, worship and refuge. HLF's grant will focus on acquiring and conserving the Grade I listed Carnaby building - a former monastic building that sits within the Abbey grounds – and giving it a new long-term use. This site will enable the Hexham Abbey Heritage Group to put on a varied programme of community and visitor activities including a series of talks, guided tours, new exhibitions and open days helping to shed light on the Abbey's long and intriguing history.

The Abbey's collections will be able to be fully interpreted for the first time and include: an Anglo-Saxon chalice; Roman carvings; and early Christian crosses. Hexham Abbey is at the heart of the local community and this project will give people the chance to get involved through a range of volunteering activities and workshops. Whilst taking in the impressive history of the site, visitors will also benefit from a new state-of-the-art visitor centre and improved facilities.

John Muir Award in England – confirmed grant of £364,000

HLF support will help develop the John Muir Award across England, building on its previous success in Scotland and Wales. Run by the John Muir Trust, one of the UK's leading wild land conservation charities, the John Muir Award is an innovative educational initiative that encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places. To receive an award, participants must complete four challenges: discover a wild place; explore it; do something to conserve it; and share their experiences.

People will have the chance to make their own choices about which area they would like to focus on and these could range from woodlands, mountains and heath land to designated landscapes, parks, school grounds and urban wild spaces. The five-year project will deliver 90,000 awards across England and will help to protect a significant amount of the UK's wild landscapes. Up to 90% of participants will be under-25-years providing the Trust with a special chance to inspire young people - along with parents, teachers and volunteers - to care for their local natural heritage.

Initial support4 has also been awarded to the following projects:

Initial support plus £1.6m development funding has been awarded to eight projects which can now progress plans in order to apply for a full HLF grant.

Pontefract Castle, Wakefield – initial support for a £3m HLF bid, including £65,100 development funding

Located in the heart of Pontefract, the Castle has played an important role in local and national history since the 11th century. HLF's support will help Wakefield Council to progress plans to restore the castle's historic fabric and that of the nearby Arts and Crafts building to create new learning and exhibition spaces and visitor facilities.

The Garden Museum, Lambeth, London – initial support for a £3.4m HLF bid, including £273,300 development funding

The Garden Museum holds the UK's first collection dedicated to garden heritage which charts the development of garden design and horticulture throughout history. This support will help develop the museum's plans to expand and improve their exhibition and education spaces, exhibit the majority of their collection for the first time and develop new and innovative learning programmes.

Hornsey Town Hall, Crouch End, London – initial support for a £3.7m HLF bid, including £482,600 development funding

An impressive example of 1930s British Modernism, Hornsey Town Hall which has been out of regular use for the last nine years. The green light from HLF will mean plans to conserve the hall can be progressed. Once restored, the hall

will be used as an arts, performance and cultural heritage centre for Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and the wider community.

Walthamstow Wetlands, London – initial support for a £3.7m HLF bid, including £288,900 development funding

This hidden wetland in the heart of North East London forms part of a chain of reservoirs along the Lee River Valley and supports a huge range of biodiversity and habitats. HLF's initial support means plans for major improvements to wildlife habitats, creating new visitor facilities and implementing a long-term conservation plan, can go ahead allowing greater public access.

The Bridgewater Canal, Salford – initial support for a £3.5m HLF bid, including £75,900 development funding

The Bridgewater Canal is of immense international importance due to its pivotal role at the start of the industrial revolution. Restoration plans include conserving and revealing the canals heritage features, including Worsley Delph and Barton Aqueduct, and improving the surrounding paths and walking routes. The local community, who have been a key part of the project so far, will be heavily involved through an exciting range of volunteering and learning activities.

Everton Library, Liverpool – initial support for a £3.8m HLF bid, including £284,400 development funding

Located at one of the highest points of the city, Everton Library has views stretching to the coast and is an important local landmark in the heart of Everton. Plans for the currently vacant site include major conservation work to refurbish the building's historic features and creating an exciting range of learning, community and volunteering activities such as youth theatre workshops and photography and archiving sessions.

The Lister Project, Edinburgh – initial support for a £2.8m HLF bid, including £167,500 development funding

Initial HLF support will enable the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh to develop exciting plans for their existing museum and internationally important collections. The college will transform the site from a specialist surgical museum into a broader museum of medical history providing visitors from across the UK with a vastly improved experience. Proposals include new learning spaces, activities, and improved exhibitions.

Tate St Ives, Cornwall – initial support for a £2.6m HLF bid, including £30,000 development funding

Opened in 1993, Tate St Ives is a hive of cultural and artistic activity on the picturesque Cornish coast and is home to works by acclaimed artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Bernard Leach and Ben Nicholson. Initial HLF support will enable Tate St Ives and Cornwall Council to develop their plans for a major refurbishment project that, once completed, will boast improved permanent exhibitions, new learning spaces and valuable training opportunities for the local community and visitors.

Notes to Editors

- [1]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.
- [2] Prominent resident Thomas Magnus built the Tudor Hall in 1529 as a free school which signalled the beginning of broader access to education for commoners, a movement that would drive social change and ultimately help create a democratic society.
- [3]The Newark Torc is a complete Iron Age gold alloy torc found by a metal detectorist on the outskirts of Newark-on-Trent. The torc has been dated to between 250 and 50 BC,[3] and is thought to have been buried in around 75 BC
- 4 A first-round pass/initial support 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.
- Images available on request.

Further information

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