

Kidderminster Carpet Museum scoops £2million confirmed lottery cash

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After two years in development, the project, which will see the creation of an exciting new museum in Stour Vale Mill in the world-famous carpet making town of Kidderminster, can now go ahead.

The award will enable the Carpet Museum Trust to restore the interior of the Grade II listed 19th-century Stour Vale Mill into an exciting, interactive museum environment complete with a Carpet Archives Centre, Library and meeting rooms. This innovative project will involve the community and offer educational opportunities for people of all ages in the Kidderminster district to learn about their unique carpet making heritage and The Trust hopes to play a part to encourage the growth of tourism in the area.

The display of the museums' collection of machinery, artefacts, photographs, archives and libraries will spread over two floors in an area of 14,000 sq. feet at the mill – originally constructed for carpet making and until recently forming part of the premises of Woodward Grosvenor carpet manufacturers. The museum's displays will be complimented by a working power loom which will form the centrepiece of the museum as part of a partnership with modern-day commercial carpet weaving business Grosvenor Wilton Ltd.

To date, WM Morrison Supermarkets plc have invested over £500,000 in refurbishing the exterior of the Stour Vale Mill, as part of the development of their new store in Kidderminster. Acting as a springboard for conservation of the towns industrial and architectural heritage, it is expected that the HLF funded museum works to the interior of the mill will take up to two years to complete.

Anne Jenkins, Head of HLF in the West Midlands, said: "We are delighted to be able to confirm the grant for this long awaited and eagerly supported project. We wish The Carpet Museum Trust every success with the creation of this new museum at Stour Vale Mill within Kidderminster and look forward to the benefits it will bring to the local community and its visitors."

Charles Talbot, Trustee and Honorary Secretary of The Carpet Museum Trust and Project Champion, said: "This award is the greatest compliment possible to the work of the volunteer team who have seen the project through over many years aided by excellent advisers. The Stour Vale Mill is an historic building and its use as a museum is most appropriate. We are very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for their continued support and to Morrison's and all the Trusts, Foundations and individuals who have contributed to our success."

Upon hearing the news, new MP for Wyre Forest Mark Garnier, who has been championing the project over the years, said: "I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given the Kidderminster Carpet Museum £2million. The name Kidderminster is synonymous with excellence in the carpet industry across the world and it is right that Kidderminster should be home of the

carpet museum. It will be a great boost to our town and a great boost to our local tourist industry."

Notes to editors

* The HLF grant to the project The Carpet Museum, Kidderminster is for £1,904,900 (71% of project costs) and is a confirmed award.

In 1973 the Kidderminster Educational Foundation was formed with the provision and maintenance of a Museum and/or Art Gallery as one of its main objectives. A Carpet Museum Trust was first established in 1981 and an Advisory Group formed in 1989. In 1991 the old Kidderminster Library/Museum was demolished and the collections were put into safe storage. Work on a Carpet Museum was held in abeyance in the mid 1990s due to the lack of a suitable site and a difficult period for the carpet industry in the town. Since 1997 The Carpet Museum Trust has been active again and in 2000 founded its Friends Association. www.carpetmuseum.co.uk

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 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4 billion across the UK, including £319 million to projects in the West Midlands alone.

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