Christmas comes early for Lord’s Garden, Ruthin

23/12/2013

The grant will aid the conservation of the Grade II listed garden, situated behind the prominent Nantclwyd y Dre house in Ruthin, whilst opening it to the public for the first time.

This phase of funding from the HLF follows a Round 1 development grant provided in March 2012 to the Denbighshire County Council’s Heritage Service, the organisation leading the project. Since November 2012, a restoration Master Plan has been created outlining plans for stabilising and reinstating historic features. Originally believed to be a medieval castle garden built during the 13th century, the layout visible today was developed in the early half of the 18th century. Due to concerns about safety there is currently no public access to the garden. The restoration will take 18 months to complete and the garden will be open to the public for the first time in the summer of 2015.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said: “We are delighted to be able to provide this much needed support for Lord’s Garden. The project has been driven by a real need to restore and protect the historic garden and will also give extensive opportunities for people to learn more about its heritage and gain new skills. It’s inspiring that local people have provided so much support for this project, particularly the Friends of Nantclwyd-y-Dre and I am really looking forward to following the progress of the project and the difference that it makes.

“This latest Lottery investment will also bring wider community benefits with local volunteers, especially those from the Friends group, and local youngsters not in education helping to restore the Grade II listed Lord’s Garden”

Samantha Williams from Denbighshire’s Heritage Service said: “We’re delighted to secure Heritage Lottery funding to restore this fascinating garden. Nantclwyd y Dre has always been well supported by local people – the lead up to securing these funds has generated a new buzz amongst its supporters and volunteers. We’re all keen to get started on the restoration of this important ‘secret’ garden and would like to thank everyone involved so far. We also look forward to welcoming anyone interested in volunteering when the project starts in the New Year.”

Notes to editors

About Lord’s Garden, Ruthin:

- The Grade I listed Nantclwyd y Dre is reputedly the oldest known timber framed town house in Wales. Dendrochronology suggests that it was built around 1435-36.
- The Lord's Garden is located at the rear of the house behind a smaller, later period garden. The garden is believed to have originated as a medieval castle garden as early as 1282 - with a significant productive purpose growing fruit, vegetables, medicinal and strewing herbs for Ruthin Castle.
- Whilst the origins of the garden can be traced to the middle ages, the period of greatest significance that created the layout visible today was the early half of the 18th century. This was the period when the garden, already walled, was linked in ownership with Nantclwyd y Dre, rectilinear paths were laid out and a gazebo added in the north east corner.
- The garden is entered on the Cadw Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales at Grade II and is considered to be one of the most precious and interesting historic gardens in north Wales for its great age and rarity.

- Both house and gardens are owned by Denbighshire County Council and managed by Denbighshire Heritage Service.

Project plans:

- Restoration of the Grade II listed Lord's Garden situated behind the Nantclwyd y Dre house within the Ruthin Conservation Area. The garden will be conserved as an early 18th century garden with medieval elements.
- Young volunteers from Ysgol Bryn Hyfryd will research and design interpretation for the garden which will include a planting plan and leaflets.
- Volunteers will provide content for the existing interactive touch screen tour available within the house to include information about the Lord's Garden.
- Volunteers will receive training in gardening skills and grounds maintenance including propagation, restorative pruning and traditional meadow maintenance. Skills training will be delivered by a range of local professionals drawn from the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, Coed Cymru, the North Wales Orchard Restoration project, North Wales Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Skills Centre.
- A partnership with Llwyddo'n Lleol to offer a number of projects to 11-19 year olds based around the restoration work.
- An existing partnership established with the local branch of Barnardos during the first phase of the project will lead to groups of NEETs as well as groups of young care leavers participating in the restoration work.

A full programme of activities for volunteers to help with the restoration and learn a range of traditional skills will be available. To get involved contact Wendy Williams: wendy.a.williams@denbighshire.gov.uk or 01824 708 232.