Lottery Windfall for Walled City's Heritage

11/03/2011

The grant was awarded to Holywell Trust and will be used to support a community based programme of research, events and activities to create a greater understanding of the importance of the City Walls to the history of the city and its people.

Derry-Londonderry is one of the oldest recorded cities in Ireland and the only one to contain a complete set of defensive walls. The almost 400 year old city walls are of huge symbolic importance to the both the Nationalist and Unionist communities in the North West, and are undoubtedly one of the Island's greatest heritage attractions. Last year Derry-Londonderry beat stiff competition to be named the first UK City of Culture in 2013, and today's announcement will help to put heritage at the centre of the purposeful inquiry* strand of those celebrations.

Announcing the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said the project will provide a unique opportunity to create a new shared future for the City: "We are delighted to support this ambitious project which will re-examine, and provide a modern understanding of the relationship between the local community and the iconic City Walls. This award is particularly timely, and will be of huge importance in putting heritage firmly at the heart of the first UK City of Culture celebrations in 2013, the year which will also mark the 400th anniversary of the building of the City Walls.

"With community engagement throughout, the project will enable all communities to explore this heritage, which is often viewed as contradictory or different, to uncover the shared history of the walls and their impact on people's lives. The Walls will be reclaimed for the people of the City, creating a new sense of ownership and civic pride towards one of the region's greatest heritage assets".

The three year Diversecity programme will reclaim the walls for the local community to use and enjoy. The shared heritage of the walls will be uncovered through a series of community based consultations, seminars, conferences and workshops. Working in partnership with a range of organisations including City of Culture, Derry City Council, ILEX and the Walled City Partnership, contributions from all communities will be recorded and used to produce a **Definitive History of the Walled City**. This contemporary account of the heritage of the Walled City and City centre will be used to challenge existing attitudes to, and reconnect local people with the Walls.

Research will be carried out into the contribution made by individuals and families not originally from Derry-Londonderry, whose past contributions have significantly impacted upon life in and the development of, the city. The project will highlight these key individuals to raise awareness of their achievements and celebrate the diversity of the former citizens whose contributions have helped shaped the city as we know it today.

A programme of innovative and creative events focusing on the Walls will also be staged, using themes such as plantation, identity and ownership, to encourage people to explore this historic icon. The project will link into existing local festivals, initiatives and organisations active within the city centre, such as the Playhouse, the Apprentice Boys and the Millennium Forum, to promote the inclusion of the Walls in the celebrations, helping to reclaim them for enjoyment and make them relevant to the wider community's daily life.

Viewing the Walls as a shared, open and welcoming space is a key objective of the project and opportunities will be created for volunteers from the local community to get involved in a range of activities, from researching the history of

the Walls to developing the programme of events and taking an active role in the management of activities. New educational materials – leaflets, publications and a website – will be developed to promote this heritage and encourage local people to participate in learning more about and enjoying the Walls.

Eamonn Deane, Director of Holywell Trust, said: “We are delighted with this good news for the Trust and for the City. It builds on the achievements of the Diamond War Memorial Project and gives us an opportunity to develop processes of partnership and collaboration as we deepen our understanding of past events so that we may create an inclusive future”.

Today’s announcement comes as HLF begins planning its new five year strategic vision. During their visit to the City HLF representatives will also be meeting with heritage experts to discuss the organisation’s funding priorities from 2013 to 2019. As part of this consultation process, HLF wants to hear from the general public and Lottery players in Northern Ireland about what is important locally and how, and on what, HLF money should be invested in the future.

To share your views on what matters most about Northern Ireland’s heritage, fill in the short consultation questionnaire . The closing date for responses is 26 April 2011.

Notes to editors

* The City of Culture programme will include a joyous celebration and purposeful inquiry into the culture of the City, its past and identity, with an ambitious cultural programme leading up to and including 2013.

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.

Since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £135 million to projects across Northern Ireland.

Shaping the future – for heritage, for everyone
Have your say – HLF’s three-month consultation on the future of Lottery funding for heritage is now live on our website.

All views given will help shape HLF’s strategy from 2013 to 2019. This is people’s chance to tell us what they think we should continue to do and what we should do differently.

To view our consultation video and to respond to the consultation by 26 April 2011.

There are two questionnaires available on-line. If you work within the heritage sector or community organisations in a professional capacity and would like to contribute to the full consultation, please fill in longer questionnaire. If you are a member of the public and wish to express your personal views on HLF funding in the future, please fill in the less detailed public questionnaire.

Further information

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