Monmouth’s newly restored Shire Hall re-opened by Princess Royal

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Shire Hall, a Grade I listed building which dates back to 1724, has had a £4.5 million refurbishment, £3.2 million of which came from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The building will form a key focal point for the town.

Monmouthshire County Council put in over £1million into the project and co-ordinated the restoration in partnership with the town.

The official opening saw a day of celebrations in the town, including a Spitfire fly past the building as part of the Rolls 100 year celebrations and a visit from the Princess Royal.

Peter Fox, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council, said: “I’m so proud that we can open this beautiful building and that it is now accessible for everyone to use. We’ve had great assistance and collaboration with the community and support as well as money from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Since we’ve started the restoration it’s been an eventful time. During the first stages of refurbishment in December 2008, our museum staff were excited to find a lemonade bottle, a paper bag and a copy of The Times under the floorboards. It gave us a fascinating insight into people's lives up to 136 years ago."

"We’ve installed a lift, put up decorative hoardings on the building and spruced up the courtrooms. We’ve also had a 218 year-old staff stolen from the hand of the statue of Henry V at the front of the Shire Hall, then we had it returned! All the effort that’s gone into this project has been worth it and we hope the community can get great use from this facility.”

Dan Clayton Jones, Chair of the HLF Committee for Wales, said: “This award to Monmouthshire County Council has helped them to conserve one of the county’s most significant and historic buildings, and bring to life its rich heritage. It will become a vital community resource for use by local people, from school trips to community meetings, enabling everyone to learn more about the past on their doorstep. This is what lottery funding is all about."

"The interpretation displays will undoubtedly become a hub for students and visitors alike, with activities and tours that will make learning fun and bring history to life. The project has received tremendous support from the community, particularly the Shire Hall Stewards and is sure to become a jewel in Monmouth’s crown.”

Shire Hall opened to for public preview one weekend this month as part of ‘Heritage Open Days’, organised by the Civic Trust for Wales, giving people a chance to see how the building has been transformed.

Mike Booth, Shire Hall’s General Manager said: “The response was great from people who visited and many people comment to me and told us on Twitter that they were impressed with the improvements we’ve made.”

Facts about Shire Hall Works

- 2000km or 1243 miles of cable was used, which is roughly the distance from Monmouth to John O'Groats and back.
- 10km or 6.2 miles of pipe work was used which is approximately 25 times around a rugby pitch.

- 50km or 30 miles of scaffolding was used.
- 165,000 man hours on site which is roughly 2 men working all their working lives on the project.

Further information

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