# Nant Gwrtheyrn

17/09/2009

The Heritage Lottery Fund has today awarded a grant of £527,700 to Ymddiriedolaeth Nant Gwrtheyrn to fund the restoration of historic buildings and develop interpretation facilities at the Welsh Language and Heritage Centre on the Ll?n Peninsula.

Located in the isolated 1850s settlement of Porth y Nant, Nant Gwrtheyrn has been operating as a centre for promoting the Welsh Language and culture in Wales since 1982 and was the first ever residential centre for Welsh learners. Nant Gwrtheyrn is of national importance playing an iconic role in the rebirth of the Welsh language in the 20th century as a centre teaching Welsh to adults from all parts of Wales and abroad. It is also an attraction for schoolchildren and visitors who are interested in the language and culture of Welsh speaking communities.

The centre is about more than the Welsh language however. Sitting on the dramatic coastline of the Ll?n Peninsula in Gwynedd, it offers a unique opportunity to tell the story of the granite quarrying industry and the people who worked and lived in the isolated community, a story not told elsewhere in Wales.

The HLF grant aims to engage a wider range of people in the heritage of the area and the history of the Welsh language. Funding will enable the centre to upgrade its interpretation facilities to include touch screen interaction, projected films, outdoor exhibits and sculptures.

A heritage Development Officer will also be appointed to recruit volunteers from the local community, engage with young people, residents and community groups, and to deliver community based projects that develop participants' sense of place, creativity and skills. A new heritage learning programme will offer visitors a series of interactive activities, including drama projects, oral history projects, Nant tales and Celtic crafts, granite sett making and guided walks and trails. There will also be other activities such as retired people's club, food and drink festivals and celebration days to engage with the wider community.

The project will include restoration of the Victorian Grade II listed Trem y Môr terrace, Offices and Plas buildings to their original condition.

The lottery money represents part of a larger £4.7million phased re-development of Nant Gwrtheyrn, supported by funding from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) which includes Targeted Match Funding and Visit Wales grant awards*.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: "This investment will fund important interpretation facilities which will help people learn about the unique heritage of the quarrying industry and the development of the Welsh language associated with this area.

"The volunteering opportunities that will be established as part of the project will enable local people to complete training and acquire new skills in areas as diverse as buildings conservation, oral history, customer care and film making. For these young volunteers in particular, the project will provide them with essential social and life skills, as well as giving them aspirations for the future

“By conserving the buildings, improving the centre’s facilities and funding a full time Heritage Development Officer, the money will greatly improve peoples’ experience and appreciation of the site’s historic and cultural heritage and ensure that it is maintained and managed for future generations to enjoy. “

Jim O’Rourke, Development Project Manager at Ymddiriedolaeth Nant Gwrtheyrn, said: “We are delighted to have received this grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Nant Gwrtheyrn represents the quarrying industry and Welsh heritage, and is home to the first Welsh language centre in Wales, so it’s important to safeguard its future.

“The project aims to make Nant Gwrtheyrn attractive for the whole community by engaging with schoolchildren, young people and other community groups through both social and learning activities, to help keep Nant Gwrtheyrn’s rich industrial and cultural heritage alive.”

HLF has made 127 awards in Gwynedd amounting to £14.5m. Other schemes include Ty Newydd House, Plas Tan y Bwlch Gardens and the Welsh Slate Museum.

*The project has also recieved grant awards from Cadw and the Department of Economy as well as contributions from Gwynedd County Council , The Linbury Trust, The Pantyfedwen Trust and numerous community groups, companies and individuals as part of a fundraising campaign.

**Notes to editors**

• 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 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK.

Fast facts on HLF:

• The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £190million of grants in Wales across more than 1,700 projects since 1995.
• We have invested £30million in land and biodiversity projects, preserving 1,500 hectares of our natural heritage - that’s an area the size of over 2,000 rugby pitches.
• HLF has invested over £25million in projects to preserve Wales’ industrial heritage. Big Pit at Blaenafon was voted ‘Museum of the Year’ after its lottery funded makeover, winning the coveted Gulbenkian Prize, the UK’s biggest arts prize.
• HLF’s biggest ever grant award in Wales was £10.75million for Swansea’s National Waterfront Museum, which opened in October 2005.
• It is estimated that every £1million of HLF funding attracts £800,000 from other sources, making a huge impact on conserving Wales’ heritage for the future.
• Fifty percent of HLF grants have been awarded to charities, community groups or voluntary organisations.
• Over £75million of HLF’s grants in Wales have helped to save, conserve and open up the country’s historic buildings and monuments.
• HLF funding reaches every corner of the country. We have supported schemes for Beaumaris Old Courthouse in Anglesey, the restoration and conservation of Cardiff Castle to Newport’s Belle Vue Park.

**Further information**

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