HLF West Midlands committee welcomes new members

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He will be joined by two newly appointed committee members, Professor Ian Grosvenor, and Dr. Clive Harris and their first meeting will take place next week on 22 June 2010.

The HLF Committee for the West Midlands is made up of leading figures in the heritage sector across the region who are chosen for their wide range of experience and local knowledge. Responsible for making decisions on regional applications to the fund from £50,000 to £1million, the committee are supported by the regional HLF team for the West Midlands, who operate from Birmingham based offices.

Les, together with new colleagues Ian Grosvenor and Clive Harris, will join the existing four other members of the committee* made up of local people through open advertisement. Their expertise widely reflects and complements the range of heritage applications that HLF receives.

Les Sparks, from Selly Park in Birmingham, brings experience as an architect and planner specialising in urban design, conservation and regeneration, for which he was awarded an OBE in 1997. Highlights of his career to date include being a founding member of CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), holding the post of Deputy Chairman of the English Heritage Advisory Committee from 2004-2009, and extensive senior level local government experience. He is currently a Trustee of the Birmingham Conservation Trust and has been a board member of Groundwork Birmingham.

Commenting on his new post, Les said: "I admire the HLF for embracing every aspect of our region’s rich heritage; from the archaeological record over centuries through to the recent past; from buildings, machinery and transport to our rural landscapes and wildlife; from historic documents to recording the reminiscences of living people. By understanding our past and caring for this heritage we can provide inspiration for future generations living and visiting the West Midlands.”

Ian and Clive, also from Birmingham, both have strong academic pedigrees in teaching history at West Midlands Universities, working with communities and in the Third Sector.

Ian Grosvenor, who has recently been made Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor (Cultural Engagement) at the University of Birmingham, said: “In my career as a teacher and as an academic researcher I have drawn heavily on the collections of local archives and museums. I am delighted to be able through the Heritage Lottery Fund to do something in return for heritage in the region.”

Anne Jenkins, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the West Midlands region, said: “We are extremely pleased to be welcoming these three new members to the committee. They bring a wealth of experience to what is already a very strong team of decision makers. Their wide ranging expertise and strong regional awareness will be of great benefit to both HLF and the heritage of the West Midlands.”

HLF funds an amazing array of projects that encompass all aspects of the UK’s rich and diverse heritage. The committee that Les Sparks will chair covers the West Midlands metropolitan heartlands plus Shropshire, Herefordshire,

Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire.

During the last 16 years, the region has shared over £327million in HLF funding and supported more than 2,827 projects. These range from restoration of historic buildings, improvements to museums and galleries, makeovers for town parks, purchasing works of art and treasured artefacts, helping to conserve the natural environment, and promoting community involvement in conserving local social histories. The projects are both large and small ranging from multi-million pound building refurbishments to local youngsters tracing the history of their local town and filming a DVD or producing a play.

Recent highlights in the region awarded by the West Midlands Committee include £376,500 for the restoration of Moseley Bog, a well-loved Birmingham nature reserve acknowledged by JR Tolkien as the inspiration behind the mystical Old Forest in his world famous novels; £375,000 to Stoke-on-Trent's 'Cathedral of the Potteries' Bethesda Methodist Chapel second phase restoration; and opening up and improving access to the Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve in the Black Country, in particular the Severn Sisters mine.

Biographies

Les Sparks OBE DipArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI HonDDes FRSA
Les Sparks, from Selly Park in Birmingham, is an architect/planner with a specialism in urban design and conservation, and with senior experience in local government. He was Director of Planning and Architecture at Birmingham City Council from 1991 to 1999 and previously Director of Environmental Services at Bath City Council from 1980 to 1991. He worked part-time as a planning inspector from 1999 to 2002.

In 1999 he was appointed as one of the founding Commissioners of CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. He led the Commission's early work in setting up regional networking, and chaired the Design Review Panel from 2004 until his term as a Commissioner ended in 2006. He was made a CABE Fellow in 2008. He currently chairs the CABE Crossrail Design Review Panel, the West Midlands Regional Design Review Panel (affiliated to CABE), the Nottingham Design Panels and the Urban Regeneration Panel set up by Bath & North East Somerset Council.

He was appointed as a Commissioner of English Heritage in 2001, and was the Regional Commissioner for the East Midlands. He chaired the former Advisory Committee on the Historic Built Environment (HBEAC), and was Deputy Chairman of the English Heritage Advisory Committee (EHAC) from 2004 to 2009. He has been a member since January 2000 of the EH/CABE Urban Panel, and its Chairman from 2003.

Whilst at Bath he was instrumental in establishing the Historic Towns Forum of which he is now an Honorary Life Member. He was appointed to the MOD Historic Buildings Advisory Group in 1994. He chaired the Expert Panel on Historic Buildings & Land for the Heritage Lottery Fund from 1999-2001.

He has been acting as a specialist advisor to the Crown Estates Commissioners and Nottingham City Council since 2001, and formerly to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (from 1999 to 2007). He was a Visiting Professor at the University of West of England, Bristol from 1999 to 2007, where he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Design. He is a patron of the Urban Design Group, and was formerly on the Steering Committee of the Urban Villages Forum. He is a Trustee of Birmingham Conservation Trust and has been a board member of Groundwork Birmingham. He has chaired design competition juries, including those for Old Market Square in Nottingham, Stoke-on-Trent Public Realm and Kings Square Gloucester.

Les has been a member of many government steering groups and sounding boards. He was a member of the DCMS Steering Group for the Heritage Protection Review, and carried out research and prepared advice for the Householder Development Consents Review undertaken by ODPM/CLG. He is the author of “Constructive Talk”, the Planning Advisory Service’s guidance on pre-application discussions and was awarded the OBE in 1997 for his services to Urban Regeneration.

Professor Ian Grosvenor from Edgbaston in Birmingham, is Professor of Urban Educational History at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. After reading History and Politics at the University Of Hull he trained as a school teacher. He has taught in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in Wolverhampton and Sandwell. After fourteen years as a teacher he moved to Newman College as a primary teacher trainer. He became Head of History at the College in 1994. He then became Director of Educational Research in the School of Education at Nene College (now the University of Northampton). In 1998 he joined the School of Education at the University of Birmingham as a PGCE Secondary History tutor. He has held several roles in the School, including Head of School 2006-2008. He was awarded a personal chair in 2004.

With a longstanding interest in history Ian has also worked as a local history tutor for the WEA and the School of Extramural Studies at Birmingham. He has been actively involved in local history projects, most notably Making Connections (2002), Connecting Histories (2005-07) and Birmingham Stories (2007-09). He is currently researching an exhibition on Children’s Lives for Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 2012. He was co-convenor of Black Pasts, Birmingham Futures 1999-2008.

He is author of numerous articles and books on the history of education and childhood, holds the post of Chair of the Friends of Birmingham Archives and Heritage and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Dr Clive Harris, from Kings Heath in Birmingham, has lectured for over 20 years in a number of Midlands Universities – Birmingham City, Warwick and Birmingham. His main areas of teaching spanned sociological theory, methodology, and ethnic studies. He now works as a Director of QSR2 Solutions Ltd, a Third Sector capacity-building social enterprise. This organisation was established to respond to the policy trends impacting on the voluntary/community sector and to offer a range of services to develop their capacity and 'Managing change through partnership' is its guiding motto.

In 2007 – 08, Clive was Project Director and lead researcher for Three Continents, One History, a Heritage Lottery Fund supported project that explored the relationship between Birmingham and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This was the most significant and ambitious community project throughout the country marking the 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Recently he has been a member of the Historians Advisory Group assisting BMAG to develop a new Birmingham gallery at the museum. He currently serves on the steering group for a significant project directed by Prof Catherine Hall (UCL) which has been analysing the extensive records of the Slave Compensation Fund, the body that oversaw the distribution of the £20,000,000 compensation given out to planters for the loss of their labourers.

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK.

*Les Sparks, Ian Grosvenor, and Clive Harris have their first Committee meeting on 22June 2010. The other HLF

Committee members are: Harriet Devlin, Jenni Ord, Kathy Gee, and Susan Veile.

To find out more about the WM committee members.

Further information

Vicky Wilford, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401 937 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk