Seafront landmark saved thanks to £1.68m grant from Heritage Lottery Fund

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The Grade II listed Art Deco seafront Pavilion has been closed to visitors since the 1990's, but thanks to a community-led campaign, Penarth Arts and Crafts Ltd. (PACL) has secured the grant to fund major repair and restoration works to the Pavilion, both inside and out.

Built in 1894, the pier began life as a landing jetty and gradually developed into a focal point for the town's social life when a Pavilion was built in 1929. PACL hopes to re-establish that focal point for activities appealing to local residents and visitors alike.

Following restoration the Pavilion will host a range of activities such as school sessions and will have a dedicated exhibition area focusing on the area's maritime heritage. The first floor balcony will be redesigned to create an auditorium for lectures, conferences and film screenings and a café will be created which will overlook the seafront.

PACL has developed strong partnerships with a number of groups including the volunteer organization 'Coastwatch', wildlife sanctuaries and the RSPB. A new observation post will give people the chance to watch birds and other wildlife, with live images linked from cameras located in the Bristol Channel.

As a landmark structure on the south Wales coast, Penarth Pier currently attracts more than 315,000 visitors annually, with numbers soaring in the warm summer months. The reopened Pavilion is expected to attract substantial numbers looking to explore the building and find out more about the area's heritage.

The local community will continue to play a crucial role in the project. 10,000 people signed a petition to save the Pavilion and, as a result of this grant up to 230 people including staff, volunteers and students will be offered training opportunities in conservation and leisure learning.

Five jobs will also be created through the project, including positions for an Education and Learning Officer and Pavilion Manager and it is expected that more than 1,000 community members will get involved as volunteers, taking on roles such as heritage visitor guides.

Abi Trotman 22, volunteer and campaigner for the project, said: "Growing up in Penarth I've always felt the pier and the Pavilion is an integral part of the landscape. I am thrilled to know our generation will be able to make full use of all its facilities, like music and heritage crafts."

Dan Clayton Jones, Chair of Heritage Lottery Fund Committee for Wales, said: "Penarth Pier and Pavilion is an iconic landmark for south Wales and a fine example of early 20th century seaside architecture. This project will secure its future, celebrate its rich maritime history and create a focal point for community activities, both social and educational.

"We've supported PACL in recognition of the difference the project will make to the area as part of the regeneration of the town's seafront for both visitors and residents alike. The project has been led by the community from the start and it's fantastic to see so many local people continuing to pledge their time and support as volunteers to make it a success."

Maggie Knight, of PACL, said: “We have always wanted to see this become a flagship project for Wales, to bring in people to the town and have the community enjoy the facilities while they learn about their history and the wonders of the waterway on which the Pavilion and Pier are situated. I’ve been proud to work with many dedicated people on the programmes, from education through environmental objectives and a heightened awareness of the heritage and natural wildlife.”

Vaughan Gething, Assembly Member for Cardiff South and Penarth, said: “I was delighted to hear that the project has secured £1.68 million of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The pier is the jewel in the crown of our seafront but the Pavilion needs investment. This funding will enable the Pavilion to become both a focal point for the community as well as a centre of excellence for the environment, maritime and social history, heritage, education and entertainment. The reopening will make a huge difference to Penarth and I hope it will kick start further investment on the seafront.”

PACL was awarded £99,600 by Heritage Lottery Fund in November 2009, to develop their proposals further, and prior to that a grant of £50,000 was awarded in 2007 for essential planning work.

Further information

Kate Sullivan or Helen Newton on 029 2076 4100 or hlf@equinoxcommunications.co.uk