Protecting our white cliffs landscape

04/10/2012

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has confirmed an award of £1.64m, which, with match funding of £800,000 from local partners, will support a range of exciting projects by the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership to protect landscape and heritage and encourage community involvement.

This major success follows extensive work by the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership, working closely with local communities, and covers a landscape area of 12,000ha of chalk downland around Dover and Folkestone.

A range of exciting initiatives as part of the Up On the Downs project includes:

- The building of an education shelter at Samphire Hoe, the newest part of Kent, which was created from chalk dug out to make the Channel Tunnel
- Restoring chalk grassland and conservation work on key heritage features such as the remnants of military occupation
- Initiatives to get local communities involved in conserving their local heritage, and an extensive programme of activities including themed talks, demonstrations and guided walks
- Providing training and skills in heritage management and creative arts for young people - apprenticeships will be offered in environmental conservation for 16-18 year olds.

The Landscape Partnership involves a range of partners working together, including: Dover District Council, Shepway District Council, Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, National Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust, Kent County Council, Eurotunnel, Dover Town Council, Pent Valley Technology College, National Farmers' Union, Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Kent Police.

Cllr Nicholas Kenton, DDC Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "The white cliffs landscape is known around the world, and it is great to see the importance of this area recognised in this way. This award from the Heritage Lottery Fund is excellent news, and will provide a major boost to partnership work to support conservation and continue to preserve these internationally important chalk downlands for future generations."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: “The White Cliffs of Dover are one of the UK’s most distinctive stretches of coastline, thanks in part to Dame Vera Lynn’s famous wartime song. We're delighted to confirm our support for such an important Landscape Partnership project which will help conserve the area's distinctive white cliffs and chalk downlands and provide new opportunities for people to get out and learn more about this beautiful part of Kent."

Nick Johannsen, Chairman of the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership Board and Director of the Kent Downs AONB Unit, said: "I am delighted that this Landscape Partnership Scheme has been approved, the Kent Downs AONB Unit led on the successful first stage application and it is excellent that Dover District Council has taken the baton and submitted the details which have secured this substantial project.

"The cliffs and chalk grassland around Dover and Folkestone are some of the most iconic landscapes in Britain. I am sure that the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership Scheme will bring a transformational change, and there will be five years of exciting work, involving a wide partnership; we look forward to it.”

Notes to editors

HLF's Landscape Partnerships are helping bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and rural communities. Grants currently range from £250,000 to up to £2m. From 2013, this range changes to £100,000 and up to £3m respectively. The next closing date for LP applications is May 2013.

The White Cliffs Landscape Partnership involves a range of partners working together. The partnership prepared a detailed bid for funding following news from HLF in 2010 of an earmarked first-round pass for a local partnership project under the HLF Landscape Partnership programme. The white cliffs landscape is instantly recognisable, and covers an area of chalk downland around Dover and Folkestone, and a rich mosaic of habitats is found here, with orchids and butterflies being particularly plentiful.

Further information

For more information on the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership, or the range of projects that are now moving forward, please see the Dover District Council website.