Skills for the Future programme open for business

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The Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Skills for the Future programme is open to applicants[1] as of today (Wednesday 2 December). This new £5million grant programme will deliver up to 1,000 paid training opportunities for people across the UK seeking a career in heritage. It will not only support traditional conservation training but also a wide variety of skills needed to engage people with heritage and utilise new media and technology.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the HLF, said:

"More than ever in these difficult times, HLF wants to focus on offering people skills that will give them a future career and at the same time meet the needs of the sector. I believe passionately that heritage can play a significant part in the UK's economic recovery.

"This £5million commitment will ensure our heritage is protected for the future and represents a hugely exciting chance to attract people who might not usually consider a career in the heritage sector."

Skills for the Future will help equip organisations to engage with the widest possible range of people and inspire them to get involved with heritage. Its focus is on vocational learning. It will train people in how to best work with families, schools, young people and communities and teach the skills needed to use new technology to bring heritage sites and collections alive for new audiences. Skills for the Future will also help meet the skills gaps identified by heritage conservation bodies.

Organisations will be able to apply for funding – from £100,000 to £1million - for a number of traineeships over a period of up to five years with an emphasis on high-quality work-based training. There is only one opportunity to apply and the closing date is 19 March 2010 with awards being made in May 2010.

Skills for the Future is complementary to HLF's Training Bursary Programme which is already delivering a wide range of skills training - including blacksmithing, botanic gardening, stone masonry, gold leafing and thatching. HLF recently announced that it was helping seven projects[2] under the programme with an additional £2.85m investment for placements that will provide accredited work-based training with highly-skilled crafts people and environmental specialists.

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