Iechyd da! Reasons to be cheerful on St David's Day

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced today initial support** for major redevelopment projects in Cardiff, Halifax and London. These are: St Fagans, one of the UK's earliest open-air museums which has been pivotal in shaping Welsh cultural identity; the Piece Hall, an 18th-century square and monument to Yorkshire's textile industry; and the Science Museum's new galleries designed to honour achievements in science and digital communications.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of HLF, said: "It's fitting to announce HLF's initial support for St Fagans – a place which has contributed so much to the understanding of Welsh identity - on St David's Day. We were also impressed with exciting plans for the Piece Hall and the Science Museum. These three major projects highlight the special role heritage can play in bringing people together and recognise the importance of creating wonderful places for learning and recreation."

St Fagans, Cardiff - initial support for a £8.7m HLF bid, including £450,000 development funding

Established in 1948, St Fagans has played a crucial role in defining Welsh identity and is the country's top tourist attraction with 600,000 visitors each year. Part of the National Museum of Wales, it comprises historic buildings, parkland, archaeological sites and collections. Plans for redeveloping the site include the introduction of the National Archaeology Collection, modernising galleries and adding storage space, refurbishing the main building and creating a 'Green Pavilion' where people will be able to watch archaeologists at work. The vision for the project is to produce 'a world class museum of learning'.

The Piece Hall, Halifax – initial support for a £7m HLF bid, including £239,700 of development funding

Each year, over one million people walk through the Grade I listed Piece Hall's open courtyard which was originally designed as a place for cloth manufacturers to trade 'pieces'. Whilst currently underused as an open civic space and tourist destination, Calderdale Council hopes to transform it into a vibrant European-style piazza in keeping with the Hall's 18th-century Italian architecture. A space will also be created to explain the important role that the Hall has played in Yorkshire's history.

The Treasury Galleries at the Science Museum, London – initial support for a £6.34m HLF bid, including £346,200 of development funding

The National Museum of Science and Industry is planning to create a set of 'Treasury Galleries' at the Science Museum in South Kensington. Proposals are for four floors of the current museum to be redeveloped and turned into major galleries. HLF would support two of these galleries: one focusing on the ground-breaking achievements of scientists and the other highlighting revolutions in digital communications. These would be part of a wider £100m master plan to reinvigorate a significant part of the museum's total public gallery space.

Notes to editors

* Iechyd da – ‘good health/cheers’ in Welsh.

* A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

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 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

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