Boost for Tavistock

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A partnership bid by local councils, businesses and community groups to the HLF for its Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme has been successful in the face of tough competition from across the country.

The partnership has secured a development grant of £36,000 to help progress plans to apply for the remainder of the £1million at a later date. It was the only bid in the whole of the South West region.

The project will help transform parts of the historic core of Tavistock over the next five to six years with the aim of helping to improve the town's economy through conservation works. The winning bid was co-ordinated by the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership.

Chairman, John Taylor, said: "This is fantastic news as the money will assist the regeneration of the town's economy by restoring the fabric of important historic buildings at the centre of our World Heritage Site. I would like to thank the local councils, businesses and community groups who have supported and helped us with our successful bid."

The project will aim to re-roof the Pannier Market and the former Auction Rooms. Owners and tenants of other historic buildings will also be able to apply for grants to help with renovations and the restoration of historic features. This may include the Guildhall, Foulston's House and properties in King Street, Market Street and West Street.

The grant will be administered by Tavistock Town Council. The town's Mayor, Cllr Mrs Anne Johnson, said: "This is national recognition of the architectural importance of Tavistock and the strength of the partnership that developed the bid. It represents a unique opportunity to conserve our buildings, to promote employment and increase trade."

West Devon Borough Council is a key partner in project. Cllr Robin Musgrave, Mayor of West Devon, said: "Tavistock is already recognised internationally as a World Heritage Site and this lottery grant will help enhance the town's assets. By restoring some of Tavistock's key buildings, we hope that even more people will be attracted to the historic town centre and help boost the local economy."

Renovation work is expected to start next year.

Richard Bellamy, Head of HLF South West, said: "Tavistock is home to a number of wonderful historic buildings making it a popular destination for tourists. Due to the current economic climate this picturesque rural market town has struggled to maintain some of its buildings and is in need of investment to help kick-start a programme of regeneration. We liked the council's plans for this Townscape Heritage Initiative and are pleased to be giving our initial support along with an up front development grant to help proposals move along to the next stage."

The Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative Partnership now has 12 months to submit a second-round bid which could mean a total investment of over £2million by 2019.

Notes to editors

- An HLF Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) first-round pass means that money has been set aside by HLF. The applicants can then progress to the second round and send a detailed second-round submission to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that THIs can build strong partnerships with the

assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided their final proposals fully meet the programme criteria.

- THIs encourage partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces. Grants currently range from £500,000 to £2m.
- From April 2013, the programme will be known as Townscape Heritage with grants available from £100,000 up to £2m. The next application deadline is 31 August 2013 with decisions being made in January 2014.
- To date, HLF has invested over £214m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.