The Future of Our Past

02/03/2011

With a massive £300million annual awards budget to allocate from 2013 to 2019, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is asking people across the UK about its funding priorities for the future.

In addition to consulting with local heritage experts, HLF wants to hear from the general public and Lottery players in Northern Ireland about what is important locally and how, and on what, HLF money should be invested in the future.

Heritage is anything that we've inherited from the past that we want to pass on, for future generations to enjoy. It can include cultures, traditions and memories, historic buildings and monuments, places of worship, industrial heritage, landscapes, archaeology, historic parks, museums and archives, wildlife and nature conservation.

Since 1994, HLF has invested £135million in Northern Ireland's heritage. Projects range from the high-profile, like the £4.7million rejuvenation of the Ulster Museum or the development of the new £3million visitor experience at the Giant's Causeway, to smaller projects that have benefited from grants of up to £50,000, which have enabled local communities to explore, protect and preserve the heritage that matters to them.

Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "Over the last 16 years, HLF funding has supported over 1000 projects that reflect the diversity of our unique heritage, and have helped to make a real difference to people in Northern Ireland. To ensure that our funding continues to deliver real benefits to local communities we are asking the public to tell us their views on how we should spend our money in the future.

"Local people know what matters to them in their community and what might need help. They know what they value and wish to preserve for future generations, so listening to their opinion on where our money should be invested is very important. This is your chance to tell us what you think our priorities should be, what we should continue to do, and what we could do differently, particularly as other sources of public investment become increasingly scarce."

Public responses from Northern Ireland will help develop HLF's new five year plan which will shape the organisation's funding priorities across the UK from 2013 to 2019.

To share your views on what matters most about Northern Ireland's heritage go to the consultation page to complete a short questionnaire. The closing date for responses is 26th April 2011.

HLF projects that have made a difference to communities across Northern Ireland:

Bringing Our Heritage to Life - Ulster Museum, Belfast
HLF's total investment in local museums stands at £24million. In addition to helping more than 35 museums and galleries improve learning facilities, collections, displays and the overall visitor experience, the HLF funding has levered £43million in additional project spend.

The Ulster Museum was awarded HLF's largest grant in Northern Ireland, a huge £4.7million. Boasting a new welcome zone, learning discovery zones, a spectacular Window on Our World exhibition and new science and history galleries, the refurbishment has enabled the museum to re-interpret its collections, and bring them to life for new audiences.

Challenging Perceptions of Our Past - Diamond War Memorial, Derry
An HLF award of £49,800 enabled the team at Holywell Trust to uncover the hidden heritage behind the Diamond War Memorial. The project opened up the shared history of the city's involvement in the First Word War, helping to create a greater understanding of the sacrifice made by people from both the Nationalist and Unionist communities.

Celebrating Our Diverse Cultural Heritage - Indian Heritage in Northern Ireland
The Indian Community Centre led a two-year project to explore the impact made by the Indian community from 1930, when the first generation arrived in Northern Ireland, to the present day. Supported by an HLF grant of almost £50,000, the project recorded and showcased the stories, memories and experiences of members of the Indian community and collated photographs, video footage and artefacts, such as jewellery and art, to create a visual record of the heritage. In addition to seminars and workshops, an exhibition has been developed and displayed at locations to share this heritage with wider audiences.

Celebrating Our Heritage - Celebrating Achievers, Across Northern Ireland
HLF awarded a grant of £49,200 to the Ulster History Circle for a five-year project to commemorate the men and women who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of ideas and society in Northern Ireland. Blue Plaques have been unveiled across the country to honour and raise awareness of these local heroes whose contribution to the fields of science, politics, the arts and academia have shaped our present.

Notes to editors

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.

Since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £135 million to projects across Northern Ireland.

General Facts for Northern Ireland

- Since 1994 HLF has invested £135million in projects across Northern Ireland.
- Every £1million of HLF funding attracts £863,000 from partnership organisations.
- HLF has supported the social and economic regeneration of our historic townscapes with an investment of £13million in over 20 schemes across Northern Ireland. The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme has helped to restore almost one hundred under used, dilapidated and derelict buildings, providing over 27,000sq metres of much needed community space and business units and creating 244 new jobs through schemes in places such as Derry, Lisburn, Omagh, Magherafelt, Newry, Randalstown, Richill, Lurgan and Lisnaskea.
- Northern Ireland has some of the most diverse landscapes in Europe, packing a huge variety of wildlife into a modest area. HLF has awarded grants of £27million to conserve and protect habitats and species, increase accessibility and get communities involved with our rich natural heritage through projects such as Castle Espie Wetland Restoration, Lagan Valley's Laganscape Landscape Partnership scheme and the Hedge Laying Association of Ireland's 'Hands on Hedges' hedgerow management programme.

Further information

Julie Halliday, HLF Northern Ireland on 07733 100 674 or julieh@hlf.org.uk