From maritime to market - HLF cash boost to create community hubs

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has today announced an investment of £581,300 to secure the future of Grade II listed buildings, Hay-on-Wye Cheese Market and St Mary's Church in Nefyn. The money will be used to restore them for community use and create museum and interpretation spaces to tell the rich history of both towns. Local people will be encouraged to play their part in the projects through a wide range of volunteer training opportunities including recording memories, photographic skills and social media.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF Wales, said: "Both of these buildings are heritage gems that are part of the fascinating story of their areas' history. We have made this investment in recognition of the benefits their restoration and regeneration will bring to their respective local communities.

"Both projects are supported by a committed team of volunteers who will now receive practical training to inspire other members of the community to learn about their local heritage.

"These investments have the potential to attract tourists to Ll?n Peninsula and Hay-on-Wye. We're confident that they will not only contribute to the local economy they will also have a lasting benefit to Wales' heritage as whole."

Hay-on-Wye Cheese Market Project

Hay-on-Wye Community Interest Company (HoW CIC), an organisation set up by a determined group of local residents and business people, has been awarded £286,800 from HLF to restore the former market hall and bring it back as a focal point for the community.

Best known for its famous literary festival, Hay-on-Wye also has a rich past as an ancient Marches market town. Built in 1835 by the Lord of the Manor, Sir Joseph Bailey, the cheese market sits in the centre of the Hay-on-Wye conservation area and is in desperate need of repair.

The grant will fund the transformation of the upper floor of the redundant building into a holiday flat to generate income, while the ground floor will be returned to its original purpose as a market hall.

The success of the project will be driven by the continued support of volunteers who will be trained in conservation skills and project management. There will also be wider opportunities for the local community to play their part in taking their heritage forward; especially young people who can learn skills such as social media, interview techniques as well as gain practical work experience opportunities. Plans include an archival and photographic research project with pupils from Gwernyfed High School, while members of Hay Youth Club and Llanigon Young Farmers Club will work with the Rural Media Group to create a series of short films capturing the memories of older community members, to be unveiled at the re-opening event.

With no current museum in Hay-on-Wye and lack of visitor signage, the investment will also support the creation of a heritage interpretation area located in the market hall, to encourage visitors and local people alike to explore the area and learn about the history of the building. Innovative interpretation plans include a smartphone app alongside more

traditional experiences such as a historical circular trail walk. HoW CIC will continue to work closely with partners including Hay Walking Festival and Hay Tourism groups.

Juliet Noble, Chair of the Hay-on-Wye Community Interest Company, said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting our project. We have been working on this since 2008 and the grant will allow us to renovate the cheese market and convert the first floor into holiday accommodation - making the building sustainable in the long term.

"It will also fund a part time Heritage Activities Manager to co-ordinate a variety of exciting activities. These include interpretation panels in the Market Hall area, which will tell the story of our local, thus transforming the cheese market from an empty unused building into an important public space, enhancing and enlivening the centre of the town."

Amgueddfa Forwrol a Chanolfan Treftadaeth Ll?n (Ll?n Maritime Museum and Heritage Centre)

HLF has awarded Ll?n Maritime Museum a grant of £294,500 to transform Eglwys Santes Fair (St Mary's Church) Nefyn into an interactive exhibition centre for the museum's maritime artefacts.

The foundations of the Grade II listed church date back to the 6th century where a priory once stood and was used as a resting place for pilgrims on the route to Bardsey Island. The church, rebuilt in 1825-27, will be fully restored, with the interior adapted to create a modern exhibition space.

Visitors to the museum will get to explore the themes of voyages and adventures; fishing; shipbuilding; farming and quarrying; utilising the museum's rich collection of film archives, oral history recordings and a variety of artefacts from shipwrecks, items belonging to captains and seamen, and old pictures of everyday life.

The exhibition will use a wide range of multimedia through film, oral and sound archives and sensory technology to help bring history to life and appeal to a younger audience.

The grant will fund a part-time Project Manager, who will be responsible for getting community groups involved in heritage activities and events relating to the local area, such as medieval fairs, boat building projects and singing sessions.

As well as working with local schools and organisations including Young Farmers Clubs, the Urdd and Wales Coast Path, the project will also give Welsh Baccalaureate students at Coleg Llandrillo Menai the opportunity to gain oral history skills through collecting and recording the community's memories.

Amgueddfa Forwrol a Chanolfan Treftadaeth Ll?n has established robust partnerships with other key heritage organisations locally which will support the delivery of the project, including the Ll?n Landscape Partnership Scheme and the Ll?n Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw and Plas yn Rhiw and is part of Cadw's Ll?n Pilgrim Trail project on the Wales Coastal Path.

Meinir Pierce Jones, Project Co-ordinator for Ll?n Maritime Museum, said: "As a group of volunteers and Friends of the Museum, we are ecstatic that we have been allocated this generous grant to re-open the Museum as a vibrant centre and tourist attraction. It will help to tell the tale of Ll?n's rich seafaring history and a Welsh way of life well worth treasuring, extending a big warm welcome to visitors from far and near."

Further information

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