Funding announced for Woodbridge Tide Mill

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The HLF first-round pass* means that Woodbridge Tide Mill Trust can now progress to the second stage of the HLF application process. They have up to two years to submit more detailed plans, but hope to be working to a very much shorter time scale. They are seeking to achieve an approximate £970,000 of HLF support for their estimated £1.2million overall project. First-round development funding of £13,800 has been awarded to help progress the plans.

Nigel Barratt of the Woodbridge Tide Mill Trust, explained: “Alongside the restoration and protection of this historic building, we have proposed an exciting and innovative project that will deliver an authentically restored and working tide mill, capable of producing flour from grain. It will provide an almost unique interpretative experience to demonstrate and explain how our ancestors from nearly 900 years ago harnessed the power of the tide to help fuel the growth of the nation from the medieval period through the industrial revolution into the 20th century.”

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "This first-round pass is an important step toward the future restoration of Woodbridge Tide Mill. This is one of Suffolk's heritage treasures, and provides a rare example of this important part of our industrial heritage. There is still work for the Trust to do and they will be developing their proposals so that everyone can learn about the history of this building. HLF is offering the Woodbridge Tide Mill Trust full support in taking their application further."

The first recorded evidence of a tide mill on this site dates from 1170. The present Woodbridge Tide Mill was constructed in 1793 and operated until 1957. It is one of only five tide mills that remain of around 70 across the UK in the 19th century. The last major restoration project took place nearly 40 years ago.

Since then, time and tide, with the constantly changing River Deben and its mud has resulted in the deterioration of the fabric and foundations of the Mill. The effects of future climate change, continually shifting mudbanks, tidal surges, and rising sea levels present an increasingly serious threat to the mill structure.

Under the proposed project plans, a limited amount of sheet piling with an improved concrete breakwater will be placed in the river to protect the mill, and a new wheelhouse constructed allowing the repair of equipment and providing more space for maintenance and viewing. Interactive models will provide ‘hands on’ experience in how the mill and its machinery works, supplemented by practical demonstrations to be offered in flour milling, alongside workshops offering practical sessions to a variety of age ranges including primary and secondary school students.

Displays, exhibition boards, information leaflets and hand-held audio guides will describe the history of the Mill, the lives and working conditions of millers and the impact on the local community, highlighting the connection between tidal power and other sources of sustainable energy in a reduced carbon economy.

Nigel Barratt, went on to say: “The Trust is appreciative of the support given by HLF to date, and that while a significant amount of the additional funds (without which the project will fail) to matchfund the hoped for HLF contribution is already raised, additional fundraising is currently in hand and all contributions are welcome.”

Notes to editors

*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.

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

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, including £290million to nearly 3,000 projects across the East of England.

Further information

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