Wrexham Consultation Event

16/02/2011

What matters to you about Wrexham's heritage? The town's parks? Perhaps it's the football club? Or maybe it's Wrexham's historic brewery?

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 the funding priorities for the future. As part of this conversation HLF wants to hear from the people of Wrexham about what is important locally and how and on what HLF money should be invested on in the future.

During the past 16 years, HLF in Wales has supported more than 66 projects in Wrexham, investing over £6.6million in the area. Projects range from the £1.8 million improvement to the high street, including the Ebenezer Chapel, in Cefn Mawr, to an award of £48,200 to encourage young people to find out about the Iron Age fort at Caer Alyn and, of course, a major investment into the recently opened Wrexham Museum.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of HLF in Wales, said: "The money the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested so far in Wrexham has helped make a real difference to the area. In addition to helping people to celebrate and get involved in their heritage, it has helped create jobs, contributed to economic regeneration and, in turn, has attracted more visitors to the area.

"What's more these projects have given local people the chance to develop a range of new skills and train as volunteers, which is both fun and rewarding.

"People are at the heart of HLF projects and we value their view which is why, as well as consulting with heritage experts at a meeting in Wrexham this week, we are asking for views from local people on what's important about their local heritage and how HLF money should be spent. This is your chance to tell us what you think our priorities should be, what we should continue to, and what we should do differently."

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

Public responses from Wrexham will feed into HLF's new five year plan from 2013 which is currently being prepared for launch in 2012, shaping the future funding priorities across the UK.

If you are a member of the public and would like to express your views on heritage, please go to the consultation page . The consultation is open from **14 February 2011** to **26 April 2011**.

HLF projects that have made a difference in Wrexham by the people behind the projects:

Cefn Mawr Townscape Heritage Initiative
Cefn Mawr in the Wrexham Borough is just one of many communities in Wales to have benefited from much-needed investment as part of the HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). Cefn Mawr was first awarded a £1m grant from HLF in September 2005 and a further Round One pass of £870,600 including a £8,400 development grant was awarded

in May last year to help Wrexham County Borough Council build on the success of the first THI phase and develop plans for the commercial centre of the town.

The completion of the scheme will help encourage further business start-ups, maintain the new level of community pride and optimism and attract a wider tourism audience.

To date 16 building projects have been completed, 1,846 sq m of vacant floor space has been brought back into use, with 27 full time jobs created and 25 safeguarded and 500 people have attended a skills training scheme.

Maelor Lloyd-Williams has been in business in Cefn Mawr for the last 20 years with a pharmacy and hair salon in the village. His latest business is one of nine new business start ups as a result of the Phase One and is testament to the positive impact the THI has had on the community. He said: “Once the renovation work to our properties was completed we took the opportunity to expand the hairdressers and open a beauty salon. We’ve had such a positive response to the look of the salon and we’re now attracting a high level of customers from outside the area.

“The scheme has been a tremendous benefit to us and I’d encourage others to take advantage of it and start a new business in the village. With the Pontcysylte Aqueduct being named a World Heritage Site, the area is now attracting more tourists to the area, particularly walkers and we need to capitalise on this.

“I’d like to see HLF money being invested in helping develop and establish further tourist attractions that will secure our heritage whilst bringing visitors into the area. This will then have a knock on effect on business and trade which will in turn attract further investment.

“I’m extremely positive that Cefn Mawr will be a really busy and bustling village again and I’m proud to be a part of it.”

Caer Alyn Archaeological and Heritage Project
Since 2006, HLF has invested over £77,500 in Caer Alyn Archaeological and Heritage Project in Wrexham. Two individual grants were awarded to support the Project’s Your Heritage and Harvesting the Past to Sustain the Future which aim to encourage volunteers and young people to get involved in the area’s heritage whilst providing them with new skills.

Phil Cox, Project-Coordinator and volunteer, said: “Through ‘Your Heritage’ we wanted to get the local community involved in the archaeological history that is right on their doorstep and in some cases, in their own backyards.

“The project has worked incredibly well. It provided volunteers with training in technical skills in research and archaeology that they needed to explore the area’s heritage, whilst also developing their confidence, presentation and social skills along the way.

“Despite the Your Heritage project coming to an end in 2009, HLF funding allowed us to put the procedures in place and train volunteers for a sustainable future. This has meant that our 40 volunteers have been able to continue with their great work.

“The project has made such a difference to the whole community. Our volunteers are regularly meeting with other community groups and speaking at events, so they’ve been able to pass on their knowledge and share their skills with others.

“Investing in the people behind the projects is vital in sustaining our heritage, and a big part of this is getting young

people to take part. A new project ‘Harvesting the Past to Sustain the Future’, which is supported through HLF’s Young Roots programme, aims to engage young people through combining archaeology with modern technology.

“So far we have 12 young people involved in the project, and although it’s still early days, they’ve already begun making the decisions and steering the project. It’s extremely rewarding to see them developing new skills and growing in confidence.

“I’d love to see HLF investing in more projects like these in the future. I think we all need to be looking at ways of making heritage more appealing for young people and the outlets that we’re using to engage with them. Ultimately, young people are going to be responsible for taking our heritage into the next generation.”

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. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects allocating over £4.5 billion across the UK, including more than 2,000 projects totalling over £217 million in Wales.

General facts for Wales:

- In Wales, over £217 million has been invested in projects across the country, from Newport Medieval Ship to Skomer Island; from Pontypridd Museum to Nant Gwrtheyrn.
- Every £1 million of HLF funding attracts £620,000 from partner organisations.
- 62% of HLF projects in Wales have been led by local community groups and voluntary organisations.
- 25 public parks in Wales have benefited from £25million in HLF funding, including Bute Park, Cardiff, Brynmill Park, Swansea and Ponciau Banks, Wrexham.
- More than 98% of grants awarded in the last year have created volunteering opportunities.
- 21 deprived urban conservation areas have been rejuvenated through the Townscape Heritage Initiative, which has awarded £22 million to towns such as Aberdare, Denbigh, Cardigan, Colwyn Bay, Bridgend and Cefn Mawr.