

# Heritage Lottery Fund makes a big splash at one of Wales' largest Lidos!

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Women swimming in the lido at Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd

Funding of £75,000 was awarded to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to help them progress their plans to save and restore the Grade II listed lido complex.

The HLF first-round pass means the Council can now progress to the next stage of the HLF application process. They have up to two years to submit more detailed plans and apply for the £2.1million of HLF support that they are seeking for the £3.6 million project.

Built in 1927 in an arts and crafts style the lido has a distinctive Mediterranean influence and, with its swimming pool, bath gallery and changing rooms the lido complex is unusually large, accommodating up to 1000 people in its heyday.

During the post-war years the lido remained a popular attraction for the local community but in the 1980s the complex fell into decline and was closed in 1991. The lido is now in a state of disrepair.

With its rectangular shaped pool, rounded corners and semi-circular diving area the lido was considered to have one of the largest open air swimming pools in Wales. It is also the only listed lido to have survived in Wales and one of only 14 with architectural significance left in the whole of

the UK.

The proposed plans will involve the complete restoration of the lido and provide modern facilities to create an amenity for the local community to use.

Another important part of the project will be an ambitious programme of learning, training and volunteer development to help promote the understanding of the rich social, heritage and memorial aspects of the lido complex and Ynysangharad Park.

The project is proposed to create ten work placements and provide training opportunities for up to 25 volunteers in conservation and maintenance skills.

Commenting on the award, County Borough Councillor Robert Bevan, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism, said: "This funding will allow the Council to further explore the feasibility of the scheme and the regeneration opportunities this important site could present.

"We will be looking to examine the business case for the development for what is a culture and recreation asset, which could potentially offer a unique leisure experience, not only for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taff but for the whole of South Wales.

"On behalf of the Council, I thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for this development funding and their recognition of the historical importance of the Lido.

"We will now be exploring other funding sources and will be seeking to engage partners to help ensure the scheme is a viable one that can play a strategic role in the regeneration of Pontypridd."

The lido is located in the popular Grade II listed Ynysangharad War Memorial Park in the centre of Pontypridd which attracts up to 800,000 visitors a year.

Dan Clayton Jones, Chair of HLF Committee for Wales, said: "Lidos are unique and a rare heritage asset and this project will aim to restore one of Wales' finest. Not only will this project reopen the lido complex to the local community and visitors alike to enjoy, it will also provide opportunities for people to learn about the rich local heritage.

"We have awarded a development grant in recognition of the project's potential and the benefits it could bring to Pontypridd and surrounding area. There is now huge competition for our grants so Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council now needs to develop its plans fully in order to compete for a firm award."

Lidos were very popular in the 1920s and 1930s where several hundred were built around Britain however, over the years the majority have closed and today only 97 remain operational.

The term 'Lido' comes from the historic Lido, Venice; they are designed for activities around water where people can bathe, sunbathe and relax.

## **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.

### **Further information**

Kate Sullivan, Equinox Communications on 029 2076 4100