Orange Hall receives initial support for restoration and diverse local history project



View of the outside of Derrygonnelly Orange Hall building

The B2 listed building was designed by Enniskillen architect Thomas Elliott and constructed in 1889. It is a prominent local landmark sitting on the main entrance road to Derrygonnelly Village but its deteriorating state has been of concern to the local community. In recent village plans the community were keen to see the building restored to improve the attractiveness of the village.

Despite the best efforts of its owners, over the last 125 years the renowned Orange Hall has fallen into disrepair and requires major restoration, including re-roofing, external rendering and repair of ceilings, floors, internal plasterwork, woodwork and staircases.

The Sillees River Social and Cultural Society now aims to restore the building and increase its use as a community hall so that its long term future can be secured. Alongside the restoration works, the society will be running a programme of heritage activities.

These will include researching the history of the building and the people who passed through it and exploring the diverse cultures and traditions of the village and rural Fermanagh. They will also be carrying out an oral history project, as well as gathering and digitisation of old photos, documents and newspaper articles, cine films and artefacts.

Local people will be encourage to help out by taking part in the public meetings, as well as story-telling activities, ceilidh evenings and shared cultural events. The project's results will be shown off on a newly-created website, booklets and an exhibition displaying the findings inside the refurbished building.

Development funding of £103,500 has been awarded to the Sillees River Social and Cultural Society following their first-round award pass, to help them progress their plans and once the project has been further developed they will be submitting a second-round application to secure the full grant amount of £761,900.

Paul Mullan, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, said: "We are delighted to be able to support a local project like this, where a distinctive and prominent building is not only restored but finds diverse uses to sustain it for future generations. We were impressed with the initial plans to conserve the building and make it a much more open and welcoming place and we look forward to working alongside the team as their proposals develop in the coming months."

Mark Byers, from Sillees River Social and Cultural Society, said: "An award from the Heritage Lottery Fund will save an historic building and provide a local history for everyone in the community. We are pleased to have received this backing so far and cannot wait to move forward with the project.

"Derrygonnelly Orange Hall can be a major hub for people in the area and is a great place to preserve and celebrate various aspects of local heritage."

Notes to editors

Heritage Grants applications are assessed in two rounds.? A first-round pass is given when HLF has endorsed outline proposals and earmarked funding. A first-round pass may also include an immediate award to fund the development of the project. Detailed proposals are then considered by HLF at second-round and as long as plans have progressed satisfactorily and according to the original proposal, an award for the project is confirmed.

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Since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £192million to over 1,000 projects across Northern Ireland.

Further information

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