Accrington Town Centre makeover will feature



Square to commemorate Accrington Pals will feature in makeover

Now a new town centre square to commemorate the sacrifice and bravery of the Accrington Pals, their families and comrades will be the centrepiece of a project which will also see the restoration of some of Accrington's historic retail and commercial buildings.

A £1.5million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has been announced to allow restoration of shop fronts and building repairs to be carried out to key properties in the town and create a new public square in front of the Market Hall and Town Hall to commemorate the Accrington Pals.

Hyndburn Borough Council is investing an additional £1.2million into the project which will see essential work carried out in the heart of the town centre. The Townscape Heritage project aims to restore these majestic, historical buildings and help bring vacant and underused premises back into use. This will give the local economy a vital shot in the arm.

Councillor Clare Cleary, Cabinet Member for Town Centres, said: "This is fantastic news. Accrington is a town with a strong and proud heritage and its fine legacy of mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings are key to its distinct identity. Building repairs, shop front restorations and the regeneration of vacant and underused floor space will enhance the town's key shopping corridor, create a strong backbone of regeneration and support recent and planned investments in the town centre. Together these works will improve the town centre's economic vitality and viability,

complementing the development of Accrington Railway Station, the proposed bus station and the transformation of Accrington Market Hall."

Council Leader, Cllr Miles Parkinson, added: "The council is committed to securing the future of Accrington Town Centre and this initiative will see the improvement of many attractive buildings along one of its arterial routes and the development of a public realm scheme commemorating the Accrington Pals. Recognising that the square is in the heart of Accrington, the Council will be working with local people and a variety of organisations, including the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, to ensure that these works provide a fitting remembrance of the bravery and sacrifice of the Pals."

The Accrington grant is the latest in a series from the Heritage Lottery Fund to give a new lease of life to the former mill towns of Pennine Lancashire, once the prosperous powerhouses of the Industrial Revolution. Local councils, working with various partners, have secured Heritage Lottery funding through the Townscape Heritage (TH) scheme (formerly Townscape Heritage Initiative) to regenerate these historic but often rundown towns.

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "We've worked really hard with local authorities, heritage organisations and other community groups across Pennine Lancashire for many years now. Towns like Accrington, Bacup, Burnley and Darwen have come a long way in terms of their heritage townscape and making the most of what their areas have to offer. It's great to hear what a difference HLF funding is making. These areas are still development areas for us – and we'll continue to try and encourage more applications – but we're delighted that the important heritage of these beautiful mill towns is being recognised and appreciated more widely than ever before."

Details of the other three Pennine Lancashire Townscape Heritage projects that are up and running are:

- **Bacup - £2m grant**. Bacup, close to the Yorkshire border, is the best-preserved cotton town in England, according to English Heritage. But many of its shops and buildings have been standing empty and shuttered. A £2m Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grant has kick-started a five-year programme of investment to improve shop fronts and revitalise the public realm.
- **Burnley - £2m grant.** The heart of Burnley's canal area, known as The Weavers' Triangle, is being supported with a THI grant of nearly £2m, complemented by council funding and private investment. The new University Technical College is one successful output of this funding, and more developments are underway.
- **Darwen - £1m grant.** Darwen is dominated by the Jubilee Tower, built high on the moors for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and the Italianate chimney of India Mill in the town itself, said to be inspired by the bell tower of St Mark's Square in Venice. The town has ambitions to become a tourist destination, and a £1m HLF grant is undoubtedly helping.

Further information

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