Heritage Lottery grant to boost Portsoy's tourism



Exterior view of Portsoy Bunkhouse

This is the first project in Scotland to be awarded funding through HLF's Heritage Enterprise scheme. The project is being undertaken but the North East Scotland Preservation Trust (NESPT) and once completed, will be operated as a community business by the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival (STBF).

The buildings, known as Back Green, comprise a former sail making loft and associated cottages. They are category B listed and are located in the Portsoy Conservation Area. A comprehensive programme of renovation and repair work is required to convert the buildings into a 4 star bunkhouse accommodating 25 visitors. The work will be overseen by award winning company LDN Architects of Forres.

The project has already received funding from Historic Scotland through the Portsoy Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and from the Architectural Heritage Fund. The outcome of a funding application to the Coastal Communities Fund will be known in December.

All being well, work will start on site in May 2015 with completion of the project before the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival in June 2016.

Marcus Humphrey, Chairman of NESPT, said: "We acquired these wonderful, iconic buildings in 2007 and have been working tirelessly ever since to find a way of preserving them for future generations. Our partnership with STBF has been crucial in progressing the project and I am most grateful for their help and support"

Roger Goodyear, Chairman of STBF, said: "We have carried out considerable research and business planning work to demonstrate that the bunkhouse will be a viable business providing much needed accommodation for visitors and an income stream to help the viability of the two charitable trusts. The bunkhouse will also provide accommodation for participants on the residential boat building courses that we will be running at our new Boatshed facility under construction at the harbour."

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, added: “This is a landmark project in that it’s the first one in Scotland to be awarded a grant through our Heritage Enterprise programme, a programme which will help turn around the fortunes of many more neglected old buildings and help make them commercially viable.

“I am thrilled that the historic link these buildings had with the sea will not be lost as they provide accommodation to people coming to Portsoy to learn boat-building skills. Their new lease of life will be a great improvement to the village’s conservation area and a welcome boost to its tourist economy.”

Reporters and photographers can visit the site with Roger Goodyear, Paul Higson (NESPT Project Manager) and LDN Architects at 12 noon on Wednesday 12 November 2014.

The site is off Links Road, Portsoy, east of the Caravan Park.

Notes to editors

- The NESPT is a Registered Scottish Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. It was established in 1985 with the aim of acquiring and restoring buildings of architectural and/or historic interest in Aberdeenshire. In 2010 the Trust successfully restored the category B listed Georgian Townhouse at 2/4 Old Castlegate, Banff
- For further information contact Paul Higson on 07831 580 165 or email info@nespt.org
- Heritage Enterprise addresses ‘market failure’ - where buildings have previously failed to attract investment or realise their commercial potential because the cost of repair has meant that - until now - they were not commercially viable. The Heritage Lottery investment announced today bridges that financial gap. It will specifically help fund vital repairs and conservation works to the building, converting it into a safe, usable and inspirational space for new businesses. By doing so, the Lottery grant helps remove one of the key obstacles currently standing in the way of regeneration by transforming the neglected historic building into a productive enterprise that will create local jobs and generate wealth
- HLF has supported more than 3,000 projects with an investment of over £611million across Scotland.

Further information

For further Heritage Lottery Fund information, please contact Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142 890, email: shionamackay1@btinternet.com or Natasha Hughes on 020 7591 6143, email: natasha.hughes@hlf.org.uk.