

Stone dial indicating distances to various places from Chesterton

They will be studying the Roman history to be found around the sites of a fort, a settlement and a military camp at Chesterton. The project, run by Sporting Communities CIC, will include re-enactments of Roman life and games and the creation of an amphitheatre in the local park as a permanent legacy of the research.

The young people taking part will focus their attention on a 1st-century fort, part of which lies buried beneath Chesterton High School, a settlement at Holditch and the site of a military camp at Loomer Road.

A dig at Chesterton High School two years ago unearthed a Roman silver coin and some examples of Flavian pottery. The fort is thought to have housed as many as 500 legionnaires. At Holditch, a Roman-British settlement in the late 1st and early 2nd century, a number of artefacts have been excavated and are now on display at Newcastle Borough Museum.

The ‘marching camp’ – a temporary military fortification – at Loomer Road measures 325 by 300 square feet and some of the earthworks are still visible at the south-east side of the Church of St John the Evangelist.

Young volunteers from Chesterton Youth Forum will help run the project and get involved with a series of eight ‘pop-up’ events, including Roman Games, to tell people about their discoveries. A main celebratory event at the end of the project will include re-enacted scenes from Roman life. The young people will be assisted by students from Staffordshire University who will help with the design and creation of replica Roman costumes.

A small amphitheatre will be built as a space where young people can meet in Chesterton Park. This site, perpetuating the Roman theme, will be created with support from Newcastle-under-Lyme Council. Disabled young people will also have an opportunity to get involved in the project through arts and craft work; building replicas of Roman military equipment and creating a mosaic.

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: “This project, supported by our Young Roots programme, gives those taking part a real opportunity to achieve a glimpse of local life under the Romans 2,000 years ago. And what they discover will be shared in a fun way through costumed re-enactments and sporting events as well as social media.’

Kevin Sauntry, Senior Director of Sporting Communities CIC, said: “We are absolutely delighted with this award by the Heritage Lottery. The project it is funding ‘Bridge to the Future’ links the past to the present and the future. Connecting young people to the heritage of their community, generating an interest and pride in where they live. It gives a much-needed message to the young people, that they are important and valued.

Notes to editors

Sporting Communities is a Community Interest Country based in Kidsgrove. The organisation comprises highly experiences leisure development professionals from a range of backgrounds, in particular working with young people at risk of causing antisocial behaviour.

Further information

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