Restoration and modernisation of Dean Castle



Dean Castle Country Park

The total project cost will be £5m with funding also secured from Historic Scotland (£500k) and the remainder from the council.

Development funding of £43,500 has also been awarded to help the council, supported by East Ayrshire Leisure, to progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The project aims to carry out essential stonework restoration to the external fabric of the castle buildings, carry out new internal modernisation and redisplay of the world class collections and exhibition areas, and support a range of apprenticeship and learning programmes around the stonework restoration and collection conservation aspects of the project.

Councillor Douglas Reid, Leader of East Ayrshire Council and Chair of East Ayrshire Leisure, said: “We’re delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. Dean Castle is a valuable part of Kilmarnock’s Heritage and is one of East Ayrshire’s major tourist attractions, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, and houses some of the finest collections in Scotland including rare musical instruments.”

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Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, added: “Dean Castle is a major heritage attraction in the west of Scotland, housing important collections of arms and armour and musical instruments. Thanks to players of the National Lottery, we are delighted to give our initial support to a project which will revitalise these fascinating collections. It will encourage many more people to visit the castle to enjoy and learn from its fascinating heritage, bringing economic benefit to the area.”

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.

About Dean Castle
Dean Castle in Kilmarnock, described in the Everyman’s Collections Guide, as ‘the best example of a faithfully restored medieval courtyard-castle in Scotland’, has a unique and important place in the history of the country. It was the family home of the Boyds, Earls of Kilmarnock from the early 1300s through to 1748, and subsequently passed into the ownership of a succession of powerful and influential people and eventually into the care of East Ayrshire Council.

The castle publicly displays and stores a series of highly impressive objects of international significance. The collections held within Dean Castle represent well over 150 years of collecting. For any local authority, these collections are regarded as extraordinarily varied and of incredible importance and kudos. The National Audit of 2001 placed East Ayrshire’s collections in the top 20 of the largest collections of international, UK and national significance in Scotland.

About East Ayrshire Leisure
East Ayrshire Leisure is a charitable trust that manages Dean Castle on behalf of East Ayrshire Council.