Kresen Kernow secures £11.7m investment thanks



Kresen Kernow is supporting 100 local community heritage groups and giving children and young people the opportunity to learn more about Cornwall's wonderful heritage

After more than 10 years in the planning the final element of funding has been found to turn the dream for a new archive centre for Cornwall into reality.

Today John Whittingdale, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, welcomed a £11.7million Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) award to Cornwall Council to create Kresen Kernow, an inspirational new archive centre on the site of the former Redruth Brewery. With an ever growing interest in Cornish heritage, this new building, complete with cutting edge digital facilities, will help people across the globe learn more about Cornwall and its rich culture and history.

Culture Secretary, John Whittingdale said: "National Lottery money continues to make an absolutely vital contribution to our culture and heritage in the UK. I am delighted that this investment will help safeguard the historic brewery buildings at the heart of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site. The new archive centre at the Redruth brewery will be home to the world's largest collection of manuscripts, books and maps related to Cornwall and will inspire people of all ages by showcasing their rich and distinct history for future generations."

Welcoming news of the funding Julian German, Cornwall Council's Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture, said: "This grant from HLF will enable us to make our vision for Kresen Kernow possible. We have been working with

partners in Redruth for two years to clear the Brewery site, which has been derelict for nearly a decade. With this announcement today we can build on this effort and create a thriving and vibrant archive centre, which will be at the heart of a wider heritage-led regeneration scheme, creating over 300 jobs and £40m of investment in Redruth."

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: "This inspiring project is now ready to transform Redruth's old Brewery into a centre dedicated to Cornish heritage. At its heart, it's a celebration of Cornwall's strong tradition of storytelling but it will also provide a new use for an existing historic building and create much-needed jobs. We're hugely supportive of these plans which we believe to be exemplary in providing investment at both a local and wider regional level."

At the heart of the project will be the extensively refurbished historic brewhouse with a new environmentally sustainable extension for archive storage and care. The design, developed by leading architects Purcell, takes advantage of the unique heritage features of the brewery buildings and carefully integrates contemporary archive and learning facilities. Work will begin on construction in 2016 with the centre due to open in 2018.

During the 18-month development stage, the project team spoke to thousands of people about the scheme and their ideas are central to the project. The new exhibition and public spaces will transform how the internationally significant collections are shared with visitors of all ages and a learning studio will provide a dedicated area for schools and community groups eager to find out more about Cornwall's archaeology, history, literature and culture.

The HLF grant will also fund a wide programme of events and activities at the centre, around Cornwall and online, including workshops, training and the 'Out of the Ordinary' exhibition, featuring loans of significant Cornish documents from national collections. Digital engagement with Cornwall's archives will be transformed, and a dynamic and enhanced range of volunteering opportunities will be on offer.

Due to Cornwall's connections all over the world and the growing interest in ancestral tourism, the centre is expected to attract visitors from as far afield as Australia and South Africa. However, it will retain the brewery's heritage at its core, with artefacts, documents and memories from the brewery's heyday also preserved in the exhibition spaces.

Cllr Judy Davidson of Redruth Town Council said: "the site of the former brewery here in Redruth is steeped with history. Being confirmed as the site for the new Kresen Kernow ensures that this history will not only be recorded, but continued. We are delighted to be hosting this project for the whole of Cornwall, and the funding from the HLF ensures that not only will we have a first class facility in the town, but this will be a catalyst that unlocks the site for the future investment in the town."

This view was echoed by Horace Yao, of Sino Ltd, the private sector partner leading on the development of the wider site adjacent to the new building. "We are delighted to hear this news" he said. "We will be working with the local community to make sure we can deliver our plans to build new homes, workspace and micro-brewery and complete the transformation of this site and turn around the fortunes of this historic town."

Notes to editors

The project

Kresen Kernow is funded by Cornwall Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund and will be built on the former Redruth Brewery site, enabled through investment in flood alleviation and other works funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Local Enterprise Partnership and Developer Contribution from Sino.

The building will bring together the collections of Cornwall Record Office, the Cornish Studies Library and Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record. Together they form the biggest collection of information for studying Cornwall's people, places, history and culture, including the nationally Designated archives of Hard Rock Mining and significant works on the Cornish language. In May 2013, the project secured development funding for the project and since then has carried out an extensive consultation programme as well as clearance and propping activities to secure the historic site.

Cornwall Council is contributing £4.6m to the scheme, which will secure the future of its historic collections for the next 100 years. Popular interest in Cornwall's history has increased over the past decade, and engagement with schools and local community groups has grown. However, the current facilities means the services are unable to meet the needs of the collections and the people who want to use them. The five-year funded programme of activities will give more people the opportunity to explore and learn about Cornwall's archaeology, history, literature and culture through events, activities, training and volunteering. It will deliver a 71% increase in direct users, a 121% increase in participants in activities and a tripling of the volunteer team.

The design team

For over six decades, Purcell has been involved in the care and development of some of the best loved buildings and places in the UK and abroad. The practice has designed archive and community engagement facilities throughout the UK including the Sammy Ofer Wing at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; the Story Museum, Oxford and St Fagans Museum, Cardiff.

The project will offer a model of how archives can be environmentally sustainable. Engineers Arup have incorporated innovative energy saving elements into the project and worked with national experts on 21st century archive buildings to develop the design.

The site

Redruth Brewery operated from the site for over 200 years and at one time was the largest brewery in the South West. It eventually closed in 2004. Vandalism and a series of arson attacks left the buildings on the 3 hectare site derelict and an eyesore at the gateway to the town.

During the project development phase, 2013-2015, over £5m was raised from multiple funders to deliver a package of essential enabling works required for the archive scheme and the mixed-use private sector development on the rest of the site. This has included demolition, propping and ground works to create a central landscaped square with green spaces and sitting out areas, and a new main street, public footpath and cycle way. It will create a green route linking Kresen Kernow, new housing, Redruth town centre and the school. The scheme has also provided flood attenuation, re-creating an open landscaped leat as a major feature through the site.

The public investment in this site will lever in £40m of private sector investment, generating £1.7m additional spend in the local economy and creating 300 jobs. The redevelopment work will include townhouses and flats together with other spaces, such as offices, retail, a hotel and a micro-brewery.

More information is available at the Cornwall Council website or the Kresen Kernow Facebook page.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact Trisha Hewitt, Corporate Communications Manager, Cornwall Council on 01872 321 186 / 07785 956 865 or e mail: phewitt@cornwall.gov.uk.

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Cornwall secures Lottery funding for Kresen Kernow