Spodden Valley ‘eco-museum’ to launch in



The Healy Dell Viaduct, Whitworth, Rossendale, forms part of the Spodden Valley Revealed route Steve Massum

Mid Pennine Arts, a creative arts charity based in Lancashire, have been awarded £246,500 for a major new heritage and cultural project in Rossendale.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the two year project, Spodden Valley Revealed, will work with Lancashire County Council and local communities to create an eco-museum - a trail of discovery linking 11 sites of heritage interest to explore the long and unique history of human settlement in the area around Whitworth.

Spodden Valley Revealed will explore many stories including stone age hunting sites and the relics left behind, 19th-century hero James ‘Treacle’ Sanderson running close to the four-minute mile 90 years before Roger Bannister, and the Whitworth Doctors – 18th-century ‘bone setters’ attracting patients from all over the UK, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, with curious and strange treatments.

The ‘string of pearls’ of historic sites will be signposted for visitors to discover from a central cycling and walking route, improving access and way marking to key heritage attractions and destinations along the route. The project will also see new interpretation and panoramic viewpoints to enhance the experience of each site, public art, and a programme of community activities and events.

This project will add rich historic content and bring cycle ways overlooking the Spodden Valley in Rossendale back into full use, building on Lancashire County Council's ongoing strategic programme for cycle ways for East Lancashire - currently being improved to develop the East Lancashire Strategic Cycle Network along old disused railway lines running through Rawtenstall, Bacup and Whitworth.

Creating Spodden Valley Revealed will feature many opportunities for the community to get involved, with activities for schools, volunteers and residents of all ages whilst offering skills training for volunteers and boosting employability for young people.

Nathan Lee, Head of HLF North West said: "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, Spodden Valley Revealed will quite literally create a pathway to the area's incredible but often unknown heritage. Pennine Lancashire is a priority development area. for HLF and we look forward to seeing the exciting benefits this investment will bring for the heritage, people and communities in Spodden Valley."

HLF has also awarded funds to Blackburn Cathedral and Bacup Townscape Heritage in the Pennine Lancs priority development area.



An artist's impression of the Northgate and Blakey Moor townscape heritage scheme

Blackburn's heritage gets National Lottery funding boost