

The north face of the Guildhall's clock tower and time ball, looking towards the river Humber, taken by HexCam Ltd's drone Historic England

The Guildhall Greenwich Time Ball in Hull is to be restored to full working order, thanks to National Lottery players.

Hull City Council has secured a £281,100 National Lottery grant to fully restore the Guildhall Greenwich Time Ball into a visitor attraction as part of Hull’s City of Culture legacy.

Dating back to 1918, Hull’s Guildhall Greenwich Time Ball is a rare historic timepiece. The devices were used to help ship's navigators tell the time and fix longitudes from sea.

One of the last examples of this type of timekeeping in Britain

Hull’s Time Ball is the highest time ball in the UK, one of the last to have been built. It is the only timepiece of its kind on a municipal building and one of only a few nationally. Installed between April 1915 – November 1916, it is a very late example of this method of timekeeping, and perhaps one of the last of its kind in Britain.

[quote=David Renwick, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber]“This is a fabulous project for Hull. The Greenwich Time Ball is a real landmark in the city and a timepiece of great heritage importance.”[/quote]

The historic building, once restored, will join a handful of other working time balls in the UK, including Greenwich London, Carlton Hill in Edinburgh, two in Kent and one in Brighton. None of these have public access to the time ball mechanisms.

Restoration works – which will include renovation of the clock tower as well as the timepiece - will be accompanied by an exciting programme of activities for local communities, residents and schools to learn about this truly one-of-a-kind piece of maritime heritage. An appeal will be held for memories associated with the Guildhall Time Ball, while brand new interpretation will also be on offer enabling visitors to see the time ball in full working order for the first time in over 100 years.

A fabulous project for Hull and its City of Culture legacy

David Renwick, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “This is a fabulous project for Hull. The Greenwich Time Ball is a real landmark in the city and a timepiece of great heritage importance. It’s fantastic news for Hull’s residents and visitors that, thanks to National Lottery players, it will be restored to full working order as part of the Hull City of Culture legacy.

"In total HLF has given just under £50million to over 125 projects in Hull from large-scale investments to small community projects – the restoration of Pearson Park, Beverley Road Townscape Heritage, and the Revealing Hull grant scheme in 2017 to name but a few. The Greenwich Time Ball will now join a host of wonderful heritage projects in the city that people can be proud of.”



'Everyone Back to Ours' is a 365-day cultural celebration focusing national attention on Hull Hull 2017

Hull UK City of Culture 2017 programme unveiled