Blackpool’s first museum leads the way in heritage



A new museum for Blackpool has been awarded a £4million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant as part of a £10m package of grants, giving heritage-led regeneration and tourism a boost across the North.

Funding for Show Town: The Museum of Fun and Entertainment in Blackpool is one of the first awards made at the new National Lottery Heritage Fund North Committee this month which saw eight successful projects across the line.

The North Committee now has decision making powers up to £5million across Yorkshire and the Humber, the North West and the North East - enabling The Fund to better play its part in boosting heritage-led regeneration across the North where it is needed the most.

Due to open in 2021 and be free to all Blackpool residents, Show Town is Blackpool's first museum and lies at the centre of Blackpool's cultural and economic regeneration - expected to attract 296,000 visits annually, deliver 39 FTE jobs and provide £13.16m of regional economic benefit.

> "Thanks to National Lottery players, these grants will see a dazzling new museum of UK entertainment for Blackpool - it's first-ever"

In the two and a half year project, Blackpool Council and the V&A aims to celebrate the city's pivotal role in British popular entertainment and tell the story of the UK's first mass seaside resort through Britain's first permanent displays of circus, music, variety and ballroom dance. Items on display, among some 100,000 in the town's collection of huge international importance, include those belonging to some of the biggest names in British entertainment, such as Stan Laurel's hat and Morecambe and Wise suits, who considered Blackpool their spiritual home.



Morecambe and Wise suits

Playing a key part in the future of the North

Other key heritage-led regeneration projects awarded funding include:

- Bradford Live – just under £1m to help transform Bradford's Odeon into a world-class commercially sustainable 4,000 capacity entertainment venue
- Stockton Town Centre Northern Gateway – just over £1.8m to 'complete the jigsaw' of heritage-led regeneration and redevelopment in the town centre
- The Whitaker Experience – just over £1.7m to re-imagine a key museum for Rossendale as part of its tourism and regeneration strategy
- Dippy on Tour - £159,000 to see the North West play host to the Natural History Museum's most famous dinosaur



Bee installation for Dippy in Rochdale

David Renwick, Director of England, North, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Thanks to National Lottery players these grants will see a dazzling new museum of UK entertainment for Blackpool - it's first-ever; an iconic 1930s cinema building reimagined as a world-class entertainment venue – putting Bradford firmly on the map; and Stockton-on-Tees complete its 'regeneration jigsaw'. Together, with the other awards made today, this funding gives a clear message of how heritage-led regeneration can play a key part in the future of the North. We cannot wait to see these projects in action."

The three other projects to be awarded funding above £100k at the North Committee were:

- Durham Woodland Revival: restoring woodland habitats in Durham - £434,200 grant
- Seeing the North with Sankey: Rescuing, sharing and celebrating a unique photographic archive. Signal Film and Media, Barrow-in-Furness - £234,700 grant
- Windows to the World: St Mary's Church, Barnard Castle - £320,500 grant