

Celebrations are underway as we announce £10m of funding to bring the Grade II* listed Birnbeck Pier back to life (left to right: Gill Crocker, Marni Eddins and Lou Eddins). Credit: Chris Gorman/Big Ladder.

The unique Victorian landmark has been given a lifeline on its 160th anniversary, thanks to National Lottery players.

Birnbeck Pier in Weston-super-Mare will be saved from being lost forever and brought a step closer to reopening to the public.

The project, led by North Somerset Council in partnership with the RNLI, will use the £10m to restore the Grade II* listed pier structure – currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register – to make it safe and usable once again.

> We are proud to be part of this transformative project, which promises to enhance and regenerate the cultural and economic landscape of the area.
>
> *Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

Designed by Eugenius Birch and opened in 1867, Birnbeck Pier stands as a remarkable example of Victorian engineering and was once a popular destination for day-trippers. The pier's popularity waned after the Second World War, with the last steamer excursion taking place in 1979.

The lack of maintenance during private ownership caused the pier to become unsafe and in 1994 it was closed to the public.



Birnbeck Pier historical photo © National Piers Society.

The regeneration of Weston-super-Mare

The funding is a significant step in North Somerset Council's ambitions to reopen the pier and support the wider regeneration of Weston. It is one of only six Grade II* listed piers in England and the only pier in the UK to connect the mainland to an island.

Once the pier structure has been saved, plans can progress for the restoration of the listed buildings on the pier and island and the RNLI's plan to develop a new lifeboat station. The island remains the safest and most effective location to launch lifeboats in Weston.

Councillor Mike Bell, Leader of North Somerset Council, said: "£10m is a significant amount of money – we're so grateful to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for their ongoing support of our project to restore Birnbeck Pier. I must also acknowledge and thank National Lottery players as this simply wouldn't have been possible without them."



Sun setting over Birnbeck Pier. Credit: Chris Gorman/Big Ladder.

A milestone year

The announcement was made 160 years to the day since the pier's foundation stone was laid on 28 October 1864.

It also comes as we celebrate our – and the National Lottery's – 30th birthday and as the RNLI celebrates its 200th anniversary.

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "This is great news for Weston-super-Mare and beyond. Thanks to National Lottery players, Birnbeck Pier is set to be brought back from the brink of loss, ensuring its 160-year historic legacy is preserved for generations to come.

"We are proud to be part of this transformative project, which promises to enhance and regenerate the cultural and economic landscape of the area, provide local employment opportunities and be a source of pride and enjoyment for generations to come. National Lottery funding ensures that this heritage will be valued, cared for, and sustained for everyone, now and in the future."

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Former dock worker Leslie Morgan (centre) and children from the Gateway Learning Academy schools (waving flags representing the Windrush generation), alongside Tilbury port's 16ft docker puppet, celebrate the Tilbury Riverside Station grant in the building that will be transformed into a creative community hub.



ead of our 30th birthday

Hastings Pier during the Edwardian period

Hastings Pier