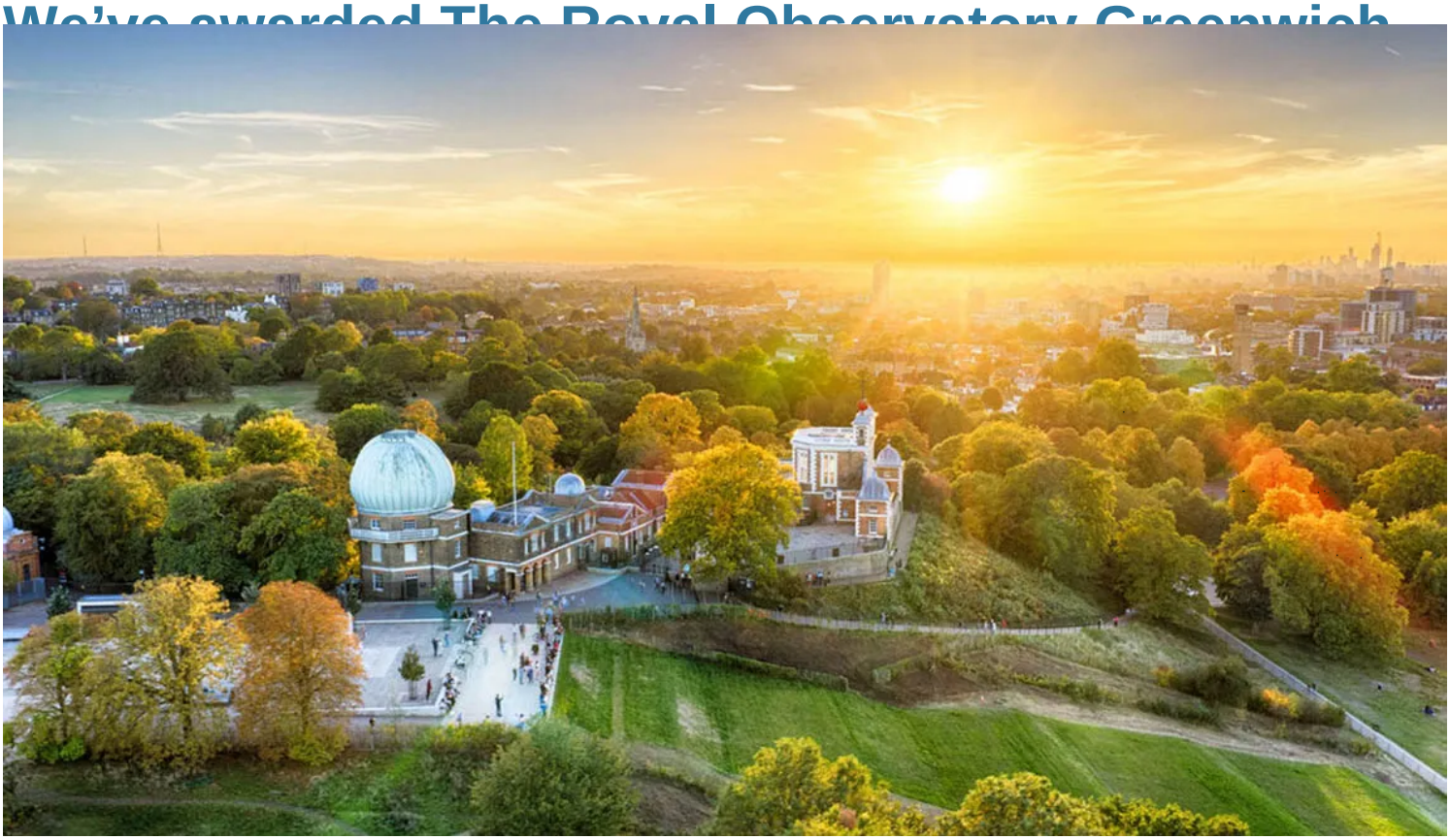
We've awarded The Royal Observatory Greenwich



The Royal Observatory. Credit: Chris Gorman / The Big Ladder.

Our funding will help protect the heritage of one of the world's most important historic scientific institutions and encourage a new generation of scientists.

We're celebrating World Space Week (4 October – 10 October 2025) with the announcement of £9.7m towards The Royal Observatory's £77m First Light project.

> World Space Week is the perfect time to announce our role as a funding partner in this transformational project, a testament to the wonders of history, astronomy and science.
>
> *Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive, The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

The project will improve access to the 350-year-old site, add new galleries and displays and inspire visitors to learn more about astronomy.

Improved access will help visitors get closer to the stars. Credit: Chris Gorman / The Big Ladder.

Paddy Rodgers, Director of Royal Museums Greenwich, said the latest funding “will assure its continuance for years to come as a place of awe and wonder that continues to further the public understanding of astronomy.”

New spaces

Our support will help conserve the Observatory’s highly significant listed buildings, which were founded by Charles II in 1675. Landscaped paths will link the north and south parts of the site, and a new access tower will be added to the Great Equatorial Telescope. Once the work is complete, visitors will enter through a contemporary new pavilion designed by award-winning Jamie Fobert Architects.

Our grant will also help renew galleries, including four interactive spaces – themed around matter, motion, light and space – where visitors can learn more about the universe and how astronomers explore it.

New spaces will host events including talks and object handling. Credit: Chris Gorman / The Big Ladder.

A new courtyard, Astronomers Court, will provide a covered space for more live science events, including experiments, astronomer-led talks and object handling. Above the new courtyard, a roof terrace will be used for live streaming of celestial moments through the Observatory's modern telescopes.

Museums Minister, Baroness Twycross, said: "The Royal Observatory Greenwich has been an icon of British ingenuity since the days of King Charles II and I'm delighted that it can continue to be so 350 years later. This is a great example of a listed building changing to meet modern needs, with beautiful new landscaping and galleries that will inspire a new generation of scientists."

Inspiring generations

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "World Space Week is the perfect time to announce our role as a funding partner in this transformational project, a testament to the wonders of history, astronomy and science.

"The Royal Observatory is a beacon of science and learning, and a World Heritage Site of national and international importance, so we are delighted that thanks to National Lottery players this magical place will continue to inspire for generations to come. It speaks strongly to our vision for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future."

The first phase of First Light starts in November and the project should be finished by spring 2028.

Supporting our museums and galleries

Since 1994 we have awarded £2.5billion to 6,000 museum, library, archive and collection-based projects across the UK.

Museum of the Moon by Luke Jerram is 6m in diameter and shows the moon's surface using stunning NASA imagery. Credit: Jenny Harper.

o mapped the moon

Science City: how London revolutionised the world of science