All Our Stories: Heritage Lottery Fund launches new funding programme

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This week, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is launching a new £1m small grant programme designed to help local communities answer these and countless more questions about their past.

All Our Stories will make available grants ranging from £3,000 - £10,000. From researching local historic landmarks, learning more about customs and traditions to delving into archives and finding out the origins of street and place names - this new programme will give everyone the chance to explore their heritage and share what they learn with others.

HLF has developed All Our Stories in support of the BBC's *The Great British Story – A People's History*. Presented by Michael Wood, the new series will be broadcast on BBC Two. All Our Stories will also feature in five BBC Learning events at flagship heritage locations, which will be run in tandem with the TV series, to get people involved with their local heritage.

Applications will be accepted from a wide range of organisations including community groups, heritage organisations and charities. The application process is simple:

- Go to the All Our Stories programme page
- Enter the details of your organisation
- Answer a series of simple questions including, what you want to do, how you will do it and how much money you will require.

Applications need to be submitted online by **31 July 2012** and applicants will receive a decision by **October 2012**.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "All Our Stories presents a fantastic opportunity for everyone to get involved with their heritage, from discovering the history of their town or street to learning about community traditions and customs. Our straightforward application process will enable organisations across the UK to get the financial and practical support they need to deliver worthwhile and exciting projects. We are looking forward to seeing what people will uncover about their past and what they learn about who they are and where they've come from."

Abigail Appleton, Head of Commissioning for BBC Learning, said: "BBC Learning is delighted to be working in partnership with the HLF. We hope Michael Wood's new series *The Great British Story - A People's History*, and the public events accompanying it, will inspire audiences to want to discover more about their own place in history. Having the HLF with All Our Stories at BBC Learning's five showcase events will give community groups a powerful way to take their learning journeys further. I look forward hugely to seeing what is uncovered."

To support the All Our Stories programme, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is funding research support for community groups interested in exploring their heritage through these grants. Researchers selected from 21 universities and other educational organisations will be available to support community projects from the beginning of the application process through to the research itself.

Researchers will be funded to support a wide range of activities including: holding open days to initiate new collaborations or to develop already existing partnerships with community groups; helping groups understand the historical, cultural, social context of proposed activities; advising on and helping support the activities themselves and their wider dissemination; working with groups to evaluate the projects; and helping to sustain partnerships beyond the timescales of the projects where appropriate.

Professor Rick Rylance, Chief Executive of the AHRC, said: “The combination of communities exploring their own heritage alongside academic researchers in an equal relationship is a powerful one indeed. This initiative shows how two very different sectors can come together to explore something of central importance to all of us – what our communities are and where they have come from. The AHRC is proud to be supporting this groundbreaking venture. It is truly all our stories.”

Notes to editors

BBC Learning is hosting a number of *The Great British Story* events across the UK from spring. HLF will be present with advice to support applications under All Our Stories. These events will provide opportunities for people to discover their place in history, learn about their surnames and uncover the history of their local area. BBC and partner events will be listed on BBC Things to Do from May.

AHRC The funding has been made available through the AHRC’s Connected Communities programme whose aim is to understand through research the changing nature of communities and the role of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life. A call for participation was issued towards the end of 2011 and the 21 organisations were selected following peer review.

The **NCCPE** support universities to engage with the public. We work with all the beacons to promote best practice in public engagement and provide a single point of contact for the whole higher education sector. We also work strategically with our key national partners to help develop work across the higher education sector.

Further information

Please contact Laura Bates or Lydia Davies, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6027 / 6032 or 07973 613 820.