Heritage Lottery Fund bid success for CISPP.

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The Carnivals In Somerset Promotion Project (CISPP) is the brainchild of long-time carnivalites broadcaster John Dando and wife Doreen, Sue & Gordon Stockman, Bridgwater film-maker Geoff Sherring, and university lecturer Dr Andrew Tallon.

Commenting on the Heritage Lottery Fund award, Sue Stockman, said: “We’re really pleased with this – the funding will go towards a mobile exhibition van, equipped with interactive displays, video and sound recording facilities and show-and-tell items.”

CISPP also plans to create an education programme based around a DVD, to tour schools and public events; it is already developing a leaflet to promote Somerset Carnivals. The group will also collect carnival ephemera and oral histories for the archives in the new Somerset Heritage & Records Offices at Taunton.

The group is also securing funding from local councillors and private donations.

Chairman of the group, John Dando, explained: “Three years of hard work has culminated in recognition for Somerset carnivals. We want to educate and encourage people in the Somerset area to get involved in carnival, and to raise awareness of its historical importance.” He added: “We need to explain the experience and benefits of participating in carnival. Somerset’s carnivals are unique and stimulate tourism, but they are under threat; we hope to build strong partnerships for the carnivals, to help protect their future.”

Explaining the importance of the award, Nerys Watts, Heritage Lottery Fund’s Head of Region for the South West, said: "The South West is recognised as an important centre for the illuminated carnival tradition, which has a history of more than 400 years; the influence of the three major carnival circuits based in Somerset on the social, cultural and economic climate of the local area should not be underestimated. This project will ensure that a much wider audience, including a new generation of young people, can experience and learn about these exciting and spectacular celebrations."

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. From our great museums and historic buildings to local parks and beauty spots or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up our nation’s heritage for everyone to enjoy. Since 1994 it has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating
over £4 billion across the UK.

The Carnivals in Somerset Promotion Project (CISPP), was formed by volunteers in January 2009, in response to concerns that the heritage of the Somerset illuminated carnivals could be lost in the future unless more people are encouraged to take part in the tradition.

The group believes that, while public and private finance has been made available for ‘outdoor celebratory events’,

Somerset carnival clubs and organising committees have been overlooked. Traditional Somerset carnival is a valuable community resource, which provides training and leads to the acquisition of many skills for people of all ages. Carnival, in addition, offers a range of other economic, social and cultural benefits – together, the carnivals bring in an estimated £40 million of tourist and other revenue each year. Around 10,000 people are thought to be involved in carnival and there are over 50 float clubs and another 100 or so other clubs who enter as walking groups or individuals.

Further information

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CISPP website

CISPP comprises of:

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and Doreen Dando.