£1million Lottery grant breathes new life into Donaghadee

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Today, HLF announced an award of almost £1million to help Ards Borough Council promote the sustainable, heritage-led regeneration of Donaghadee's Conservation Area. The project will transform the commercial heart of the town, with the focus on bringing derelict, redundant and underused historic buildings back into full use.

Since 1998, HLF has helped breathe new life back into historic towns through its Townscape Heritage (TH) programme, which has invested more than £19.7m in 24 schemes across Northern Ireland. More than 100 underused, dilapidated and derelict buildings have been brought back into sustainable use to provide 27,000sq metres of much needed community space and business units.

A town of Anglo-Norman origins, Donaghadee is located on the east coast of the Ards Peninsula overlooking the Irish Sea. Once an important port, its more recent history includes a period as a popular seaside resort. Currently, the town has a significant number of underused historic buildings suffering from under occupancy, lack of investment and buildings in need of repair and maintenance, which reflects the gradual economic decline of the town.

The conservation area encompasses a relatively large area and includes the whole of the town's historic core, which is predominantly focused on the old harbour. This new project will encourage the repair and reuse of a number of buildings within the commercial core of the town along High Street, New Street and Bridge Street. The restoration will greatly enhance the historic character and visual appearance of the area, helping to increase business and community confidence and providing opportunities for employment and investment.

Commenting on the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "It is fantastic to announce almost £1m to transform the historic heart of Donaghadee. This ambitious project is such good news for the area. The works carried out over the five year scheme will breathe new life into the main commercial centre of the town and deliver real benefits for the local community, attracting new businesses and investment to the area. It will restore the unique character of the town, helping to boost its appeal as a tourist destination with a distinct offering, and we are delighted to be involved."

Donaghadee Historical Society will be a partner in the education element of the programme.

Councillor Tom Smith Chair of Donaghadee Town Steering Group said: "Ards Borough Council is delighted to have received such substantial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The grant is a massive boost for the town, and we can now start to put measures in place to allow us to move ahead with the project, such as appointing an officer to manage the work, and putting plans in place to promote the project."

Further information

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