Elsecar beaming with success

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The two-year project, to be run by Barnsley Council, will see the world-famous beam engine, shaft, and engine house restored to full working order and conserved within the wider site of the Elsecar village conservation area as a premier tourist attraction in Barnsley.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “Currently, Elsecar Heritage Centre attracts 225,000 people a year and the importance of its unique industrial heritage is not as widely understood or as accessible to the public as it could be. This project, in addition to saving the Newcomen engine for future generations, will see greatly improved interpretation at the site and activities for visitors in addition to training and volunteer opportunities for people so they can get involved in protecting this wonderful place.”

The engine, which pumped water out of the Elsecar New Colliery from 1795 to 1923 and remained in working order until the 1950s, is one of the top 10 key industrial sites on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register due to its 'outstanding importance to England's industrial past'. Described within the heritage sector as 'the forefather of the industrial revolution' the Scheduled Ancient Monument is the last to remain in-situ in its original engine house and is amongst the most important heritage sites in the world.

Elsecar was the industrial powerhouse of the successive Earls of Fitzwilliam from nearby Wentworth Woodhouse. The astonishing surroundings remaining today around the Newcomen Engine include ironworks, workshops, a canal, a colliery and the Fitzwilliam's family railway station. The village itself is an excellent example of an industrial model village - perhaps the earliest in England.

Councillor Stephen Houghton, Leader of Barnsley Council, explains further what the award will mean for the local community and beyond: "This is fantastic news for Elsecar and for Barnsley. We're proud of our rich industrial heritage, of iron and coal production going back many centuries. Elsecar, with its ironworks, canal, railway and this important beam engine, has the potential to be a first class visitor attraction. Now we have the chance to share its inspiring stories with visitors from across the region, around the world and with future generations, too."

Finally, Michael Dugher, MP for Barnsley East, also offers his support: "The Newcomen Beam Engine in Elsecar is one of Yorkshire's finest surviving legacies of the industrial revolution so it is great news that this money has been awarded for its restoration. And, as well as restoring the engine back to its original state, I think this new project will be an excellent opportunity to showcase our area's proud past.

“But with the funding also being used to develop and update the visitor attraction, this is also about helping our local economy in the future, too. Particular thanks should go to the tireless campaigning by local Councillors Robin Franklin and Tim Shepherd. They have both played a crucial role in securing this investment and, ultimately, ensuring that this important part of our heritage is celebrated in our community for many years to come."

Could you help the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to discover Yorkshire’s enormous heritage potential?
This year HLF is looking to recruit four new committee members to join its Committee for Yorkshire and the Humber. Made up of local people across the region, a place on the committee represents an exciting and challenging opportunity for individuals with a strong commitment to our diverse heritage. From April all HLF regional committees will have

responsibility for awarding grants between £100,000 and £2million and acting as advocates for the value of heritage to modern life at every stage of the grant process. For more information on how to apply please call 0113 388 8030 or email FionaS@hlf.org.uk

Notes to editors

HLF's grant to the project Industry and Innovation: The Newcomen Engine at Elsecar is for £425,000 (83% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Elsecar Heritage Centre

Set in an attractive conservation village, Elsecar Heritage Centre is an antiques, history, craft and events destination located within the former ironworks and colliery workshops of the Earl Fitzwilliam. Restored buildings house an antiques centre, craft workshops, businesses, children's indoor play centre and exhibition hall which features a year-round programme of events. Home to a popular heritage railway, the centre is an ideal point to access the Trans Pennine Trail and walks along the Dearne and Dove Canal.

Further information

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