Folkestone secures £1.8million for improvements to Old Town

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A partnership comprising Kent County Council (KCC), Shepway District Council (SDC) and the Creative Foundation has been working for over a year on detailed proposals for major remedial works on buildings that will help improve the streetscape and secure the heritage of the Old Town. This will be supplemented with £400,000 from KCC and £100,000 from SDC in a programme worth £1.8m to be spent over five years.

The scheme area includes the Old High Street, Tontine Street, Grace Hill, Rendezvous Street, and Payers Park. Individual grants will be available to renovate buildings that are most in need of restoration, as well as connecting steps and walkways at The Parade, Bayle and Tontine Street. Funds will also be used to help bring empty floor space back into use.

SDC Heritage Champion and Cabinet Member for the District Economy Councillor Alan Clifton Holt said: “This is fantastic news for Folkestone. This initiative will help to enable much needed repairs and improvements to traditional buildings and will encourage a greater understanding of the history and development of Folkestone, and of the role the Old Town has played in it.”

KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development Mark Dance was also delighted with the news, and said: “Kent County Council’s investment in this scheme will build upon the considerable successes achieved by the Creative Foundation and others over the last decade or more. Folkestone is fast becoming a beacon of excellence in coastal town regeneration and this programme will deliver further progress.”

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: “Today’s HLF funding announcement will make an important contribution to improving the local economy in Folkestone and improve the standard of living for residents. Investing lottery money to revitalise historic buildings at the heart of a community, not only makes a place more attractive to live, visit and invest in, it also provides jobs and training opportunities for local people.”

Creative Foundation Chief Executive Alastair Upton said: “We are really pleased that so much hard work on the bid has resulted in a successful outcome. This shows that the partners involved are all determined to maintain the momentum of positive change in Folkestone, which has already seen major transformation and which clearly has exciting times ahead.”

The programme will include a range of initiatives to engage the local community and encourage greater awareness of the history and development of the town and its buildings. Apprenticeships and training in traditional building skills will also be supported under the scheme.

Notes to editors

The partnership members are:

- Kent County Council, acting as the lead partner on the application, and providing most of the match funding in support of the application.

- Shepway District Council, the local planning authority for Folkestone as well as the neighbouring areas of Hythe and Romney Marsh, and playing a key role in providing support and delivery.
- The Creative Foundation, a charity that is playing a leading role in the regeneration of Folkestone's Old Town. It is investing some £48million in partnership with The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, mainly on restoration and refurbishment of run-down buildings in the Old Town for use by individuals and businesses working in the creative sector.

Further information

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