£955,800 funding towards the restoration of Woodbridge Tide Mill

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Therese Coffey, MP for Suffolk Coastal welcomed the excellent news of this grant, saying: “It will provide an opportunity for local and national schools to learn about its important role in the industrialisation of England. Our coastal heritage is of great importance to the United Kingdom; this project is so special in terms of its bridge between the sea, the river and industrial manufacturing.”

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: “Woodbridge Tide Mill is one of Suffolk's much-loved heritage treasures, and provides a rare example of this important part of our industrial heritage. Through the range of activities and new exhibitions this project will offer visitors from across the community new opportunities chance to explore and learn about the mill and its history, whilst ensuring that the mill is preserved for future generations to enjoy.”

The works include protecting the foundations of the mill with a new concrete breakwater, and the creation of a new wheelhouse to provide more space for maintenance and viewing.

Interactive models, computer generated graphics, games and puzzles will offer interest and enjoyment to all ages and give ‘hands on’ experience in how the mill and its machinery works.

The conservation work will be supplemented by practical demonstrations to be offered in flour milling. Displays, exhibition boards, information leaflets and audio-visual aids will describe the history of the mill, the lives and working conditions of millers and the impact on the local community, highlighting the connection between tidal power and other sources of sustainable energy in a reduced carbon economy.

The first recorded evidence of a tide mill on this site dates from 1170. The present Woodbridge Tide Mill was constructed in 1793 and operated until 1957, and was the last working tide mill in the UK. It is still one of only five tide mills that remain of around 70 in the 19th century.

Since then, time and tide, with the constantly changing River Deben has resulted in the deterioration of the fabric and foundations of the Mill. The effects of future climate change, tidal surges, scouring action of the silt, and rising sea levels present an increasingly serious threat to the mill. The cost of the total project is estimated to be £1,227,000.

Nigel Barratt, went on to say: “The Trust is appreciative of the confidence provided by HLF in offering the full amount of the grant requested. We couldn’t have got this far without many others, and loads of thanks to all those who have already contributed or pledged, including the Woodbridge Community Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council, the Suffolk Environment Trust, as well as many local charities, individuals and businesses. There’s still a lot more we’d like to do, and while this project is fully funded, additional fundraising is currently in hand and all contributions will be welcome. This is an exciting project that will enhance Woodbridge’s reputation as the gateway to the Heritage Coast and a popular visitor destination.”

Further information

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