Heritage Lottery Fund invests £10.5m in four places of historic significance

27/07/2010

Sir Walter Scott's home, 'Abbotsford', in the Borders; Newbridge Memorial Hall in Caerphilly; a Tudor dwelling house known as 'The Walronds' in Devon; and the 18th-century Wrest Park in Bedfordshire. Initial support** has also been awarded for projects in Staffordshire, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Suffolk and Worcestershire.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "The range of places that the Heritage Lottery Fund supports is tremendously varied – from the grandeur of Abbotsford in the Borders to the historic gem of The Walronds in the South West. What's exciting about these four projects is not just that they are all in wonderful places of historic importance, but that they will make a significant contribution to their local economies and to the quality of life of their local communities.

"Heritage can play an important role in economic recovery and we are anticipating an increased share[3] of Lottery income from next year. We know how welcome this investment will be during the tough times ahead."

The four confirmed HLF grants are:

Abbotsford, Melrose, Scottish Borders – confirmed grant of £4.8m
Abbotsford, home to one of Scotland's greatest writers, Sir Walter Scott, is located in the Scottish Borders. HLF's grant will enable restoration of the house and its contents, including fascinating personal items relating to historic figures such as Rob Roy's sporran and Napoleon's pen case. A new visitor centre will be discretely located in the landscape, a learning suite set-up in the basement and the Hope-Scott wing will be turned into self-catering accommodation to provide additional income.

Newbridge Memorial Hall, Caerphilly – confirmed grant of £2.9m
Known as the 'Memo', this Grade II listed building is an important focus for community life in the former mining town of Newbridge. It was created as a memorial to those who gave their lives during World War I and houses the largest ballroom in South Wales as well as a spectacular Art Deco auditorium. A finalist in BBC Two's Restoration series, the building is now set to be fully restored as a heritage centre where visitors can learn more about the history and people of the Valleys. A comprehensive training programme will give volunteers the skills to help run the centre.

The Walronds, Cullompton, Devon – confirmed grant of £1.7m
The Walronds is a Tudor house from the early 1600s. It was built in the centre of bustling Cullompton, a Devonshire market town owned for many centuries by Buckland Abbey. It is a rare intact example of an early town house and provides a unique snapshot of 17th-century living. The project will enable full restoration of the house and ensure the ground floor and gardens are available for wider community use. The upper floors will be converted into holiday accommodation to provide essential income for the site's long-term future. There will be an extensive education programme for people of all ages to learn about the property and acquire conservation and volunteering skills. The community kitchen will be the focus of a social enterprise partnership in catering for students with learning disabilities from nearby Petroc College.

Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordfordshire – confirmed grant of £1.14m
Wrest Park, charting over three hundred years of gardening history, is on a par with the great landscapes of Stowe and Stourhead and was worked on by a number of distinguished designers including Capability Brown, Nicholas Hawksmoor, William Kent and James Gibbs. HLF's support will enable the upper gardens and path network to be restored as well as providing better visitor facilities, improved exhibitions and opportunities for volunteers. The project will continue to build on experience gained from the HLF-supported historic and botanic gardens bursary training scheme by delivering on-the-job training for eight novice gardeners.

HLF announce £126,900 in development funding
A further four projects have received initial HLF backing today with development funding totalling £126,900. These projects can now move to the next stage of their plans before a final funding decision is made:

National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire - initial support for a £1.5m HLF bid
Opened in 2001 and comprising 150 acres of maturing trees and over 160 individual memorials, the National Memorial Arboretum was inspired by Virginia's moving Arlington National Cemetery. The Arboretum has become the UK's focal point for Remembrance and commemorates those killed in the Armed Forces, the emergency services and many other individuals who have a special reason for being remembered. The project forms the first phase of long-term plans to develop the site's visitor facilities and focuses on what Remembrance means to people. Plans include the recruitment and training of 70 new volunteers who will join the current 130-strong volunteer team.

Old Newcastle: 'Where the Story Begins', Newcastle-upon-Tyne – initial support for a £1.17m HLF bid, including £43,400 development funding
The Black Gate, Castle Keep and St Nicholas Cathedral form the medieval nucleus of modern Newcastle and a massive landmark in the city. The project aims to revitalise the 13th-century Black Gate and bring it back into public use as a heritage, education and community resource.

St Mary at the Quay, Ipswich, Suffolk - initial support for a £2.8m HLF bid, including £68,500 development funding
Plans to repair and adapt the medieval Grade II* listed St Mary at the Quay into a wellbeing centre have been agreed. The new centre would provide a flexible exhibition and performance space, a café and IT facilities, counselling rooms and an office area.

Croome Court, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire – initial support for a £1.5m HLF bid, including £15,000 development funding
The National Trust plans to undertake the first phase of restoration to Croome Court, a Grade I listed 18th-century Palladian mansion near Worcester. As Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's first complete landscape, this is an important site which created a new trend in garden design across the UK. The project, devised to complement the surrounding HLF-funded regenerated parkland, will provide greater opportunities for visitors to learn about the house and grounds and will help tell the fascinating stories of the Court over two and a half centuries of history.

Notes to editors

* A confirmed award means that money had already been earmarked by HLF for the project in question and that the full amount has now been secured.

** A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-

quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

The DCMS consultation on National Lottery shares is currently underway. The closing date is 21 August 2010. To find out more.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

Katie Owen or Alison Scott, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6036 / 07973 613 820.