

Artist's impression of the Dreamland Parkscape

The HLF grant is match funding to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Sea Change grant of £3.7m and Thanet District Council's contribution of £4m. The money will be used by the Dreamland Trust to restore Dreamland Margate and create a unique visitor attraction for the UK - the world's first amusement park of historic rides with classic side shows, cafés, restaurants, special events, festivals and gardens and a celebration of our British seaside and popular culture with youth culture heritage at its heart.

Nick Laister, Chairman of The Dreamland Trust, said: "The Dreamland Trust is delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded our project a substantial grant. This puts in place all the funding we now need to enable us to reopen Dreamland Margate and at the same time secure the future of its three remarkable listed structures, the Scenic Railway roller coaster, Dreamland Cinema and 'Lord' George Sanger's Menagerie cages. These will form the centrepieces of the world's first amusement park of thrilling historic rides, which will open at Dreamland in summer 2013. On behalf of The Dreamland Trust I would like to thank our partners, Thanet District Council, our consultant team and, most of all, our supporters for sticking with us for so many years. Hold tight – we're nearly there!"

The revival of Dreamland is a major component of Margate's regeneration, providing a substantial visitor attraction which will generate 350,000 annual visits, with valuable learning, training and employment opportunities. The park will also have provision for a dedicated learning centre, exhibition space, community room, performance area, screenings, special events, festivals, and a sensory garden and allotment created by volunteers.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: "This project has huge potential to entertain, intrigue, and delight. As Margate's answer to an early Disneyland, the Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to award this substantial investment to Dreamland, and once restored to its former glory it will not only bring alive the historic rides of yesteryear but boost tourism too."

Dreamland's origins date back to the 1860s when the site, then known as the Hall by the Sea, was operated by the well-known caterers, Spiers and Pond. In 1874 the famous circus showman, 'Lord' George Sanger took over the site introducing his menagerie of wild and exotic animals. The site was later taken over by entrepreneur, John Henry Iles in 1919 who spent 20 years developing the site into Dreamland. The park last operated in 2006 and since then has hosted a number of major events.

Leader of Thanet District Council, Cllr. Bob Bayford, said: "We're delighted with this news, especially as it completes the funding needed for the first stage of the project. Dreamland is a key site for Margate's regeneration and that's why the council has been working with the Dreamland Trust to bring it back into use. This year is turning out to be a major milestone for Margate's regeneration, with the opening of Turner Contemporary and the hundreds of thousands of visitors they have bought to the town, the Queen's visit and now this announcement from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our next job is now to get the Compulsory Purchase Order confirmed, so that Margate can be home to a world first that will attract thousands more to the town."

The HLF funding will be released once the Compulsory Purchase Order on the site has been confirmed and will allow for completion of Stage 1 of the first phase of the project involving the restoration of the Grade II* listed Scenic Railway to full working condition – including construction of a new Scenic Railway station to replace the original one destroyed by an arson attack in 2008, restoration of the historic rides collection and Grade II listed menagerie cages, repairs to the Grade II* listed Dreamland Cinema and reopening of the main park entrance along with landscaping works.

The second phase of the project is the full restoration of the cinema building, which is subject to funding and the partners are confident this grant award and emerging interest in the project will stimulate further investment in the project.

Notes to editors

The Dreamland Trust is working in partnership with Thanet District Council (TDC) to create the world's first amusement park of thrilling historic rides, classic side shows, vintage cafés, restaurants and gardens with special events and festivals and to celebrate this important part of our popular and youth culture heritage.

The Dreamland Trust emerged from the Save Dreamland Campaign to rescue the park and its heritage assets including:

- The 1920 Scenic Railway - the UK's oldest roller coaster and a Grade II* listed structure
- The 1935 2,200 seat Grade II* listed cinema building - a super-cinema forerunner
- Lord George Sanger's Grade II-listed menagerie cages dating back to the 1800s - believed to be the last remaining type of their kind

Dreamland's description is an 'amusement park of thrilling historic rides' – it is not a fairground, fun fair, fun park, theme park or heritage park.

The Dreamland Margate project has grown out of a vigorous and widely supported community campaign to save the site from redevelopment into housing and retail units.

The Dreamland Margate project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Sea Change programme and TDC.

TDC served a compulsory purchase order on the Dreamland site owners on 3 June 2011, which goes to Public Inquiry in January 2012.

Further information

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