Heritage Lottery Fund gives the green light to Hexham Abbey

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This news means that plans can now be developed for a major heritage regeneration project which aims to breathe life back into some of the former monastic buildings adjoining the Abbey.

Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the North East, Ivor Crowther, said: “Hexham Abbey is one of the North East’s most significant buildings and has fascinating links with the growth of early Christianity, not just in Northumberland but across the UK. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s initial support means that the Abbey can now develop its plans to help people learn more about the Abbey’s remarkable treasures, and bring the historic buildings around it back into daily use.”

The project has also been awarded £175,000 in devlopment funding to help develop plans for the Abbey that include re-acquiring and refurbishing the Carnaby Building, lost to the Church at the time of the Reformation. Other plans include introducing new education facilities, to help tell the story of the Abbey and its major contribution to the life of Hexham and to the North East’s heritage. HLF support will create more opportunities for local volunteers to get involved with the buildings and collections, through guiding visitors and researching the fascinating artefacts that still remain on site.

Hexham Abbey, originally founded by St Wilfrid during Saxon Times (c 674 AD), has provided local people with a stunning place of worship for over 1300 years. The building is of national historical importance and houses some fascinating collections of rare Saxon and Roman stone artefacts and medieval paintings.

Canon Graham Usher, speaking on behalf of Hexham Abbey, said: “I am delighted that the Hexham Abbey Project has captured the imagination of the Heritage Lottery Fund. The community at Hexham Abbey is most grateful to the Trustees for this initial support. If successful at second-round the project will enable the Abbey to restore significant medieval buildings, but it will also open up a greater understanding of the unique history of this site, and make an important economic contribution to this Northumbrian market town.”

Notes to editors

* 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.

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

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

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