# Heritage Lottery Fund backs restoration of Portaferry icon

20/06/2011

The Grade A listed Portaferry Presbyterian Church (PPC) is one of the most important examples of Greek Revival architecture in Great Britain and Ireland.  Despite having been described as being 'in the first rank of neo-classical designs' by Sir Charles Brett, the building is in need of major restoration.

HLF has given significant support to the friends of Portaferry Presbyterian Church, a non-denominational charity that has been campaigning to ensure a future for this landmark building on the Ards Peninsula. HLF awarded a first-round pass[1] of £932,600 and a development grant of £40,000 to enable fPPC to draw up more detailed project plans in order to apply for a full HLF grant.

Once restored, the building is set to become an inspiring focal point for heritage-based activities in the area. Community projects will explore past generations of Portaferry people and their history will be celebrated through a series of exhibitions and group discussions.

fPPC has established a successful music programme, hosting globally recognised musicians as well as their flourishing community choir, the NewQuay Singers. The HLF funding will allow fPPC to involve the wider community in rediscovering their musical heritage with choral workshops and performances.

Tradesmen and homeowners will be able to get an inside look as building works progress with a series of 'Behind the Scenes' workshops. Traditional building skills will be taught and a variety of techniques discussed in this series of events and opportunities will be explored to link with Portaferry Regeneration Ltd, as part of their Townscape Heritage Initiative programme.

Commenting on the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "We are delighted to support these ambitious proposals to restore and revive this important local heritage asset.  Having received our initial support, the applicant now has up to two years to develop their plans further to compete for a firm award."

**Note to editors**

1 An HLF 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.

Friends PPC is a non-denominational charity aiming for the complete restoration and rejuvination of Portaferry Presbyterian Church, allowing it to be used as a venue to celebrate the rich heritage of the Upper Ards Peninsula.