Sacrewell celebrates £1.4million Lottery grant for Watermill project

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The HLF cash will fund just over £1.4m of the £1.7m project to fully restore the Grade II* listed building in Thornhaugh, Peterborough. It will also assist in funding the project for the first three years, during which time two new jobs and a number of volunteering opportunities will be created.

The work will restore and help conserve the Watermill, Mill Pond, Mill House, Bakery and Mill Gardens. The project will also install a hydroelectric turbine to the mill which will feed electricity back into the National Grid.

General Manager Mike Rooney said: “We are delighted that the bid has been accepted by the HLF. The grant will allow us to restore this nationally important building to its former glory and enable us to once again bring to life the rich agricultural heritage of the site.

“Generating hydroelectricity will not only add to the educational facilities at the farm by demonstrating an alternative use of water power, it was also help the mill to run more cost effectively.

“The timing is fantastic because the start of the project coincides with the 50th anniversary of the William Scott Abbott Trust which was founded in 1964.”

As part of the project the farm will be rebranded as Sacrewell Farm and Watermill and will recruit a Mill Project Officer at the beginning of 2014, followed by a Learning and Interpretation Officer. It will also recruit a team of about 75 volunteers to assist in delivering the project.

Mr Rooney said: “The recruitment of volunteers is essential to the success of this project. They will be trained in a range of areas and interests including traditional restoration and millwright skills, tour guiding, collections care, research and interpretation, community archiving, re-enactment and living history, tourism, marketing and event management.

“We will also be improving access to the ground floor of the mill as part of the project along with an accessible trail around the Mill Pond."

The project has received enormous support from the local community, giving the farm the opportunity to work alongside University Centre Peterborough, Peterborough Regional College and Peterborough City College in helping them to deliver heritage skills training courses.

It is also hoped to provide apprenticeship opportunities in both building and milling work whilst the restoration is carried out. The farm aims to become a centre of excellence for milling once the work is complete working alongside the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) Mills Section.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund for the East of England, said: “The Sacrewell Watermill Restoration Project is an excellent scheme we are proud to support, demonstrating how conserving our local heritage can be truly sustainable and provide real, tangible benefits to our local communities. Here, people of all ages will have the opportunity to learn about the history on their doorstep in fun, engaging ways, while a precious building is restored and

training opportunities are created giving people lifelong skills in the process."

Schools and visitors will also have access to and information about the mill project during the restoration works and the farm intends to host open days for interested parties and workshops on the history of milling, farming and food production.

An exciting range of hands-on interpretation will be developed to include a virtual tour of the mill downloadable as an app, publications and even a children's story book to enable them to discover the past, present and future of milling at Sacrewell.

Shailesh Vara, MP for North West Cambridgeshire, said: "This is excellent news. I have visited Sacrewell Farm and see the enormous potential it offers. It has many visitors throughout the year, especially school children, and the restored watermill will not only be fun to see but also provides a source of education. And it is great news that it will also provide more local jobs, which is always welcome."

Further information

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