Six significant heritage tourism projects receive major backing

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Ranging from the magnificent Winchester Cathedral and picturesque Windermere Steamboat Museum to the 15th-century mansion of Knole in Kent, these grants will enhance and promote a better understanding of our heritage while contributing to the £26bn UK heritage tourism economy.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: “We know that heritage is a huge draw for visitors from home and abroad. More than a quarter of all UK holiday activities undertaken by UK residents now involve heritage. These projects all offer the public the chance to explore and enjoy our rich and complex history. Many of us will be spending our holidays at home this summer, so it’s a great time to celebrate the unique range of things to see and do right here on our doorstep.”

The six successful projects are:

Knole, Kent – £7.75m
Knole, a beautiful and distinctive medieval palace, renaissance mansion and former hunting lodge to Henry VIII, is set to be refurbished. The project will bring the house closer to the community, making it a more integral part of everyday life in the area. A bespoke space - Knole Studios – will also be built for conserving the world’s largest collection of Royal Stuart furniture.

Windermere Steamboat Museum, Cumbria – £9.4m
A showcase of two hundred continuous years of boat building in the Lake District will be reopened to the public in a new museum on the edge of Lake Windermere. The development will create an exciting new addition to Cumbria’s tourism offer, as well as providing a range of accredited training and apprenticeship opportunities.

Winchester Cathedral, Hampshire – £10.5m
One of Europe’s most magnificent medieval cathedrals will undergo urgent conservation works, together with transforming the visitor experience. Major new exhibitions exploring its greatest treasures, including six mortuary chests containing the bones of Anglo Saxon kings, will tell the stories of the cathedral’s importance in the development of the nation and kingship.

Flax Mill Maltings, Shropshire - £12.8m
A significant complex of 18th and 19th-century industrial buildings in Shrewsbury, including the world’s first iron-framed building. The forerunner to the modern skyscraper, the building will be restored for commercial, community and visitor purposes.

Chester Farm, Northamptonshire – £4m
An archaeologically and historically important site, on which is a complex of Grade II and II* listed buildings, currently at risk, will be developed and opened up to the public. The Chester Farm site provides evidence of human activity over a period of around ten thousand years. The project will include an archaeological resource Centre and a series of excavations will be carried out to uncover the buried stories of those who lived here in the past.

Brecknock Museum and Art Gallery, Powys – £2.5m
Home to important archaeological material from mid-Wales and nationally significant contemporary art. Considered one of the finest examples of early Victorian Greek Revival architecture in Wales, the gallery will be revitalised as a key heritage resource for the area.

HLF's investment is further good news for the tourism industry as new research by HLF recently revealed that the sector is now worth £26.4bn to the UK economy each year. The recent report suggests that heritage is playing an increasingly important part in the choices of British residents who decide to stay in the UK for their holiday.

Projects in the pipeline

In addition, initial support plus £466,800 of development funding has been awarded to four projects across the UK:

- V&A Exhibition Road Building, London – £5m bid
- Middlesbrough Town Hall, Middlesbrough – £4m bid, including £299,400 development funding
- Enniskillen Castle Masterplan, Northern Ireland – £2.5m bid, including £111,200 development funding
- John Wesley's New Room, Bristol – £2.3m bid, including £56,200 development funding

Notes to editors

Visit England, Visit Scotland and Visit Wales: The Great Britain Tourism Survey (2011). Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency: Domestic Tourism Estimates: Northern Ireland (2011). Visit Britain: United Kingdom Tourism Survey (2007).

New research by HLF announced on 10 July revealed that heritage-based tourism is now worth £26.4bn to the UK economy – £5.8bn higher than the previous estimate published in 2010.

Further information

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