£2million Lottery windfall for Stockton’s heritage

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Through both these grants, the local community and visitors will have a greater opportunity to experience the rich heritage of Stockton. The economic and wider community impact of the awards also means that there will be new training and volunteer opportunities for the local community and a chance for everyone to take an active role in conserving and enthusing others about the history of their town

Ivor Crowther, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund, North East, said: “These two transformational projects remind us that Stockton is steeped in history and will bring with them a host of benefits. Bringing Stockton Town Centre and Preston Hall Walled Garden back to life will allow for essential improvements and repairs to get underway encourage stability and growth for local business and offer local residents new opportunities. HLF is thrilled to support these projects which demonstrate how central heritage is to Stockton and the North East’s social and economic future.”

Regenerating Central Stockton, confirmed grant of £1.7m. Stockton lies on the banks of the River Tees and was originally a market town, probably founded at the end of the 12th century. The town is well-known for the Darlington and Stockton Railway which ran the world's first steam hauled passenger train in 1825.

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme forms part of a raft of projects aimed at reinvigorating Stockton Town Centre, and will be focused on working in partnership with property owners to bring unoccupied buildings back into use. Grants will also be given for making repairs to buildings that will enhance the streetscape in this central part of the Town Centre Conservation Area. The setting of the buildings will be improved by works in the public realm that will complement improvements to be made all along the High Street. Critical to the success of the scheme is the provision of training and other community involvement activities, with a programme of learning and work placement opportunities taking place.

Councillor Bob Cook, Stockton Council’s Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport, said: “We are delighted to receive the £1.7 million grant. We are committed to protecting and enhancing the heritage of our Town Centre and will build on existing assets, including investment in the Historic Heritage Quarter of the High Street to repair and restore the original features of up to 16 historic buildings. We recently launched our Town Centre prospectus which sets out our five year £20 million investment programme into the High Street and we are encouraging people to get have their say on the prospectus and our vision for the High Street."

Bringing Preston Hall Walled Kitchen Garden back to life, confirmed grant of £300,000. Preston Hall was built in 1825 by David Burton-Fowler and is home to Victorian walled garden and orchard, made up of apple trees, traditional flower beds, a vine house and beehives.

The project will see the currently derelict walled garden area and old orchard transformed back to its Victorian splendour where fruit, vegetables and herbs will be grown alongside traditional herbaceous planting. Essential restoration will also be carried out to the walled structure and original pathways. Educational activities will be introduced including guided tours and talks on the history of the garden and growing sessions that will encourage local young people to take part in the project. Volunteers will also be encouraged to get involved by being able to assist in the day-to-day running of the garden, take part in the seasonal planting of plants and vegetables and help look after the gardens long into the future.

Councillor Mary Womphrey, Stockton Council's Cabinet Member for Arts, Leisure and Culture, added: "We welcome this grant as the creation of the Walled Kitchen Garden will be a great additional feature at Preston Hall Museum & Park which is a real jewel in Stockton Borough's crown."

Notes to editors

* HLF's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) encourages partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces. Grants range from £500,000 to £2m. To date, HLF has invested almost £200m regenerating towns that have suffered serious social and economic decline.

Shaping the future – for heritage, for everyone

Have your say – HLF's three-month consultation on the future of Lottery funding for heritage is now live on the HLF website. To respond to the consultation and to view the video until 26 April 2011.

There are two questionnaires available on-line. If you work within the heritage sector or community organisations in a professional capacity and would like to contribute to the full consultation, please fill in longer questionnaire. If you are a member of the public and wish to express your personal views on HLF funding in the future, please fill in the less detailed public questionnaire.

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 more than 30,000 projects allocating £4.5billion across the UK.

Preston Hall is a110-acre Public Park, between Stockton and Yarm, popular both with local people and also visitors across the Tees Valley. It is part of the former Hall estate, and includes Preston Hall Museum, currently open to the public Tuesday to Saturday, 10am – 4pm, admission free.

Further information

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