UK's last surviving Victorian pottery spins wheel to



Carole Souter, Chief Executive HLF and Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive for the Princes Regeneration Trust

The grant of almost £1.5million comes hard on the heels of a host of other projects that are rejuvenating community and industrial buildings as well as parkland in and around Stoke-on-Trent.

The Grade II pottery site was saved by The Prince's Regeneration Trust and the charity is now working to restore and regenerate this unique hidden heritage site in the heart of Stoke-on-Trent an area that has suffered hugely from its traditional ceramics industry disappearing.

The project will benefit the wider community through an engaging programme of educational events and activities and the incredible collection of industrial machinery, archives and over 19,000 original moulds which will be conserved and catalogued. The Prince's Regeneration Trust is a national charity that restores and regenerates redundant historic spaces and places for the benefit of the surrounding community. It acquired the Middleport Pottery site in June 2011 after securing funding from a number of private and public sources.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive for the Heritage Lottery Fund, who visited the site this week alongside Ros Kerslake, the new Chief Executive of the PRT and local MP for Burslem Joan Whalley, said: "This is nationally important heritage that is also fundamental to understanding the history of Stoke-on-Trent and the Potteries. This project will not only conserve, protect and educate, it will help to keep pottery manufacturing as a going concern and sustain skills and employment for

the future.”

The Middleport Pottery site opened in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent in 1888; it provides a remarkably complete picture of a traditional production process that has been lost or modernised at other pottery sites. It is the home of world famous Burleigh and employs people who still use traditional craftsmanship to create a handmade product. The site houses a unique collection of master moulds, ceramics and a paper archive which together tells the story of 150 years of Burleigh.

The major buildings at Middleport will be repaired and renewed so they can continue to house Burleigh pottery production. The currently redundant floor space will be refurbished for use as new workshops, and publically accessible facilities will be created, including a gallery, café, and activity space that will deliver an education programme for local schools, students and others with particular interests in art, design, heritage, craft and technology.

Once the project is complete, visitors to the site will enjoy an exhibition with audio-visual displays to recount the history of Middleport Pottery, the local industrial scene as well as the processes used to create its famous products. Tours will give visitors an opportunity to observe first-hand the creation of a piece of Burleigh using hand-crafted, rare techniques. The spacious function room characterised by timber racking will host a plethora of activities including lectures, art exhibitions and ‘make and take’ workshops where people can mould an item of pottery using their own hands, have it fired and take it home.

As the site sits alongside the Trent and Mersey Canal, the project will also include waterside planting and creation of a nature and heritage trail for visitors.

A crammed activity plan supporting the restoration work includes among its highlights partnerships with local primary and secondary schools, creative community workshops with Burslem School of Arts, seasons of talks and lectures, and participation in the British Ceramics Biennia 2013.

During the period that repair works are underway young people studying at local colleges will have the chance to be trained in traditional building skills thanks to links with The Prince's Foundation for Building Community and Princes Trust’s apprenticeships programmes. The Prince’s Regeneration Trust will also be working closely with Keele University and Staffordshire University and other local organisations to develop volunteering opportunities at Middleport.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, The Prince's Regeneration Trust, said: "The restoration and regeneration of Middleport Pottery and the huge boost it will provide to the local community and economy simply wouldn't happen without Heritage Lottery funding. We would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for their tremendous support and investment in Middleport".

Joan Walley, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, also welcomed the news: “We are indebted to The Princes Regeneration Trust for securing this Heritage Lottery Fund grant. It is the best next step we could hope for and means that the extensive and priceless collection of moulds and archives will be on display to the nation. It means that as the Middleport Pottery site is mended, and production of Burleigh continues here in Burslem, its customers, visitors, and not least the people of Stoke-on-Trent can better understand, appreciate and take great pride in the skills of local workers. My thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund for backing Burslem.”

Notes to editors

The Prince’s Regeneration Trust - is a charity that rescues redundant historic buildings at risk of decay or demolition and gives them a sustainable new use that will benefit the wider community. It believes that to restore our historic places and spaces into active and relevant community assets is not only possible – it is the most sustainable approach to regeneration. It is a small charity works on a diverse range of projects throughout the country.

It is funded through its social enterprise arm and through private donations. It provides expertise, skills and tools to groups across the UK to enable them to lead successful and sustainable heritage-led regeneration projects.

The Princes Regeneration Trust is a separate charity to The Prince’s Trust.

Further information

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