

Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan, in partnership with Winckley Square Community Interest Company (WSCIC), a group helping to spearhead the revival of the Square, and Preston City Council, has received initial support* from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) for its Winckley Square Futures Project.

The Winckley Square Futures Project – valued at £1million - aims to create and implement a new vision for the Georgian square which will improve access, security and drainage, celebrate the heritage of the area and enable users enjoy the green space to its fullest potential.

The outline vision was developed by the partnership in 2013 and having received a first-round pass, the partnership will develop full scale proposals over the coming months involving a further public consultation. HLF has awarded the partnership £22,500 to develop the detailed plans.

David Gill, chairman of the WSCIC, said: “This is wonderful news and the culmination of a lot of hard work that has gone on behind the scenes since 2011. There is a lot of work still to be done to secure the funding but the fact HLF support the outline plans is a huge step in the right direction. Everything we are doing is geared towards creating a sympathetic improvement of the Square, improving its usability. That is what the community stipulated in our public consultation in 2011 and 2012.

“We passionately believe that Winckley Square and the surrounding district has the potential to be a historical yet vibrant visual, cultural and intellectual outdoor experience, bringing delight to the people of Preston and visitors alike.

We are now working to work up a detailed second round application to HLF by the end of summer 2014."

Andrew Darron, executive director, Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan, said: "We know that over the years it's not been easy to arrive at a vision for Winckley Square that meets the needs of past, present and future. Our philosophy has been to develop an in-depth understanding of the space, its uses, and what people value about it now, and build from there.

"The consultation has delivered a really exciting vision for Winckley Square, where nature, landscape and heritage can come together right in the heart of the city. We're really looking forward to bringing more people into the discussion as we develop the next level of detail for the project. It's great that we have been able to bring our expertise and approach to bear on such an important green space in Preston, to such a positive outcome.

WSCIC was founded in 2011 by local professionals David Gill, Simon Turner, Mick Goode, John Chesworth, Richard McDowell and Mark Clarkson, who are directors of WSCIC.

In addition to the founding members, the board of directors includes representatives from
Preston City Council, BID and Preston Historical Society.

The Business Improvement District (BID) pledged an initial £30,000 to WSCIC in 2011 and a further £150,000 over five years after securing a second five-year term in December 2011.

WSCIC conducted a public consultation in 2012. Over 250 members of the public took part wishing a sympathetic restoration of the Square. In 2013, over 100 people participated in a more detailed survey which has informed the development of the vision for the green space.

In April 2013, it was announced that Preston City Council had received initial support for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which will improve the condition of some of the significant buildings of the Square, and aspects of the public realm.

David Gill, chairman of the WSCIC, added: "It's been a real team effort so far with BID supporting us financially, and Groundwork, Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council all contributing to the endeavour. Securing outline support from HLF to improve both the built environment and the green space of Winckley Square in tandem, gives us the opportunity to really transform the area's future, and safeguard a vital part of Preston's history and landscape for generations to come."

Notes to editors

- *Initial support 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 the decision 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.
- The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks firmly back at the heart of community life.
- The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. It was established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.

Further information

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£26.5million to restore UK’s cemeteries and parks