Working together to preserve Basing House

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Basing House, site of the greatest private mansion in Tudor England, will remain open for everyone to enjoy, as Hampshire County Council begins work on three key projects:

- Completing the transformation of Basing Grange, through the refurbishment of the cow byre building into an education workshop. This will become a key part of the visitor and learning experience, providing a hub for community engagement.
- Installing a viewing platform which will provide a birds-eye view of the remains of the Tudor House, the Civil War earthworks and Basing Common (the site of the main Parliamentary siege camp).
- Repairing and conserving the historic brickwork and surviving archaeological remains of the once-great Tudor mansion, to enable future generations of visitors to continue to enjoy this nationally important historic site.

The education workshop will provide the space to support community activity and temporary exhibitions, focusing on conservation and archaeological research on the Basing House site. Working with Hampshire County Council, students from Basingstoke College of Technology Construction will also be offered unique, hands-on work experience sessions at the site. An annual archaeological programme will provide further training for budding young archaeologists under the supervision of experts. A wide range of volunteer training opportunities will be designed focusing on conservation and heritage skills, working with Hampshire Building Conservation Trust.

During the last three years HLF grants, totalling more than £1million, have helped to transform the site which was once the largest private house in Tudor England until its destruction following a siege by Oliver Cromwell's forces during the Civil War. The grants have already helped create a visitor centre in the restored Grade I listed Great Barn, improved access and signage throughout the historic site, and established a museum displaying artefacts recovered from the site.

Together with partnership funding from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and other grants, Basing House is now one of the top historic sites in the South East of England. It is also now home to an impressive LEGO model of the full Tudor Mansion and its grounds, built at Milestones Museum.

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: "This was a once great mansion whose destruction testifies to the violence of the Civil War. This project will help conserve valuable remains while creating many opportunities for students and volunteers to acquire skills and knowledge, all of which will help protect heritage for future generations."

Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Culture and Recreation, Councillor Keith Chapman, said: "Basing House is one of the most prominent historic sites in Hampshire telling the story of one of the most important periods in our country's history. Visitors can get a real flavour of that remarkable story and this project promises to protect the historic remains as well as educate future generations about that period."

Notes to editors

Basing House was built by William Paulet, 1st Marquess of Winchester, who served Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. The Paulet family remained loyal to the monarchy during the Civil War and, as a Royalist stronghold, Basing

House was besieged on three occasions. The third and final siege, in 1645, was directed by Oliver Cromwell himself who brought with him the largest artillery at his disposal. The house was successfully stormed and, following its capture, Parliament ordered the destruction of the buildings.

The cow byre, built in the 18th century, is a Grade II listed structure and its transformation to an education workshop will be carried out in consultation with English Heritage.

Further information

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