Renovation works at Scapa Flow Museum move a



Orkney Islands Council agreed recently to put aside £1,547,000 of council funding to include the project on its next capital programme.

The project has already secured over half a million pounds of external funding, including:

- £500,000 from Historic Scotland's Building Repairs scheme towards repairs and restoration of the existing historic pump house, oil tank and Romney hut
- £25,970 from Museums Galleries Scotland Capital Fund to help pay for specialist conservation work on smaller artefacts and provision of climate-controlled display cabinets for fragile exhibits

A further £900,000 of funding is also looking hopeful, with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirming this week they have given initial approval to the project which includes the development of a new building alongside the pumphouse following a successful first-round bid from the council. The development would house more display areas, a shop and café, and improved visitor facilities including fully accessible restrooms. Development funding of £4,000 has meantime been awarded by HLF to help the council further develop the project and put together their second round application for the £900,000.

Councillor Janice Annal, Chair of Orkney Islands Council's Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, which submitted the project for consideration by the Council, said: “I’m delighted the project has reached this stage and is to be included in the Council’s capital programme.

“Although there is some way to go before the HLF funding is confirmed, their support for the project so far is also encouraging. I congratulate the staff involved for their hard work progressing the project on these fronts. These achievements will help protect an important wartime heritage asset, something especially welcome as we draw nearer to important national WW1 commemorations, some of which will take place in Orkney.”

Colin McLean, Head of HLF, Scotland, commented: “The sheltered waters of one of the world’s largest natural harbours have shaped the history of travel, trade and maritime warfare across centuries. Scapa Flow has an internationally important story to tell and HLF is delighted to give its initial support to a project which will do just that.

“Not only will rare military equipment from both World Wars be saved but some of the stories of the 12,000 people once stationed there will bring the Naval Base’s incredible history back to life.”

Council officers will now be pressing ahead with the more detailed second-round bid to secure the £900,000 of HLF funding.

The Scapa Flow Visitor Centre and Museum was created in 1990. It tells the story of Scapa Flow and Orkney in both the First and Second World Wars. Included in its collection are key First World War artefacts from the 1919 scuttling of the German Fleet in Scapa Flow in 1919, among them the ensign from SMS Hindenburg. The museum also holds a propeller from the ill-fated HMS Hampshire, which sank off Birsay on 5 June 1916 with the loss of 650 lives, including the then Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, who was aboard.

Scapa Flow was a Royal Naval base during both the First and Second World Wars, and the Scapa Flow Visitor Centre and Museum is located about a mile from the Lyness Royal Naval Cemetery - among those laid to rest here are more than 440 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War, nearly all sailors, of whom 107 remain unidentified.