Lottery grant to rescue England's highest listed



Saltdean Lido in its 1930s heyday

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced initial funding to help restore and reopen to the public Saltdean Lido, England's only Grade II* listed lido.

This development funding of £576,000 puts the project a step closer to securing a full grant of £4.7million.

Situated just four miles along the coast from Brighton, the lido was designed as the centre piece of Saltdean's new seaside resort and first opened in 1938. Comprising an iconic Art-Deco building and three pools, it was created to elevate Saltdean's status as a fashionable resort in the competitive 1930s British holiday market.

After just three successful seasons it closed in summer of 1940 and did not reopen to the public again until 1964. During the Second World War the National Fire Service used the pool as a water tank and its ground for training. The onset of war halted Saltdean's development and so in the years after, the Lido's changing rooms were sanctified and used for church services and a Sunday school.

With the exception of the council-run local library and a number of small-scale commercial activities in a 1960s extension, the site has been vacant since 2011 and is currently on English Heritage's At Risk Register.

Ben Greener, HLF's Historic Environment Advisor, said: "When it was built, Saltdean Lido was the beating heart of a successful seaside resort. Sadly, as the lido declined, so did Saltdean. Yet local people have never forgotten how important this heritage icon was to their town. Now, through our Heritage Enterprise scheme, the community can breathe new life into this precious local landmark, signaling Saltdean's return to prosperity whilst saving one of the most significant lidos in the UK."

This HLF funding will enable Saltdean Lido Community Interest Company (CIC) to renovate and revitalise the entire site, bringing both the iconic 1930s building and pools back into use. It will transform the site into a modern leisure destination providing the local community with a heated outdoor pool, indoor and outdoor play areas, café, gym, community and function rooms, and a revived library.

The closure of the lido and its sister building, the Ocean Hotel, has had a negative impact on the economic health of Saltdean. The revitalisation of the lido will act as a catalyst to regenerate the area, attracting further investment in other parts of the town.

Rebecca Crook, Chair of Saltdean Lido CIC, said: "The backing of HLF has always been central to the success of our project and we are delighted that all our hard work is coming to fruition. The Saltdean Lido CIC will be creating new jobs and bringing new revenue and much needed investment to the area. However, there are many challenges for community groups such as ours who are bringing heritage buildings back into use."

This money has been awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme. It is designed to help when the cost of repairing an historic building is so high that restoration simply is not commercially viable. Grants of £100k to £5million bridge the financial gap, funding the vital repairs and conservation work needed to convert derelict, vacant buildings like those at Saltdean Lido, into new, usable commercial spaces that can have a positive impact on local economies.

The freehold of Saltdean Lido is owned by Brighton and Hove Council. In 2010, local residents united to initiate a Community Asset Transfer and enable the site to be run by the community, for the community. After a successful community-led campaign which attracted support from around the globe, at the end of 2013 Saltdean Lido CIC was named as the preferred leaseholder and started a major fundraising programme with a target of £10 million.

HLF has agreed to give the group £576,000 in development funding to allow them to progress their plans. More detailed proposals will then be assessed at a later stage to unlock the full grant of £4.2million to fund the refurbishment of the building.

In January, £2.5million was also secured from The Coastal Communities Fund and in 2014 £490,000 from the Social Investment Bank to refurbish the outside grounds and pools.

Saltdean Lido CIC still has another £2million to raise to fund the project. It will be issuing a Community Share Scheme similar to that undertaken by Hastings Pier last year which raised £600,000.

Further information

More details about the project can be found at Saltdean Lido website or contact Natasha Ley at NatashaL@hlf.org.uk.





Eastleach Church Churches Conservation Trust



UK heritage

HLF’s Historic Environment Advisor, Ben Greener



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