

This is the culmination of a two-stage grant application process that began back in 2011, and reflects the vision and commitment of the Route to the Hills Partnership over the last four years and a shared commitment to support and stimulate tourism and the local economy in Malvern.

The Route to the Hills project aims to develop a heritage ‘route’ that will tell the stories of the town and stimulate people’s understanding and appreciation of Malvern’s outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage. By celebrating the town’s heritage and strengthening the links between the town centre and the hills, the project hopes to stimulate lasting economic benefits.

Cllr. Phil Grove, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development at MHDC and Chairman of the Partnership, added: “Malvern is a very special place with a wealth of natural beauty, history and heritage. But this history isn’t always easy to see or appreciate as you move around the town. The Route to the Hills project will help to make the special parts of Malvern more obvious to everyone.”

Examples of the kind of information the partnership is keen to promote are:

- Spring water water from the hills led to the development of the town as an important health spa in Victorian times. Many famous people visited for rest, recuperation and the ‘water cure’ including Charles Darwin and his daughter Anne, Florence Nightingale and F.D. Roosevelt.

- The Malvern Hills have influenced countless writers, musicians and artists. Lawrence of Arabia used to roar into town on his motorbike to see the latest plays by George Bernard Shaw in Malvern Theatre.
- Malvern Rock is around 600 million years old. From buildings made from Malvern stone, to the springs filtering through the granite and limestone, geology is a key influence in the town.

The award will see the installation of informative plaques, benches, signs and commissioned artwork to highlight the unique stories, buildings or views which might otherwise be missed. A programme of events and activities will run for three years and will offer excellent opportunities for local people to get involved as participants or volunteers.

Cllr. Cynthia Palmer, Malvern Town Council, said: “The strong partnership that has been working together over the last few years is now ready to deliver this project for the benefit of both visitors and residents by bringing the history of our beautiful town to life.”

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: “There are many aspects to this attractive town’s history of which people are unaware. This project will uncover those facts and engage the community in a number of ways, to guide visitors around local streets and buildings and reveal the stories about their fascinating past.”

All the key organisations in the town with an interest in heritage and the environment are represented on the Partnership and this award represents a timely opportunity for significant investment in Malvern town.

Notes to Editors

The Route to the Hills project is managed by a partnership of the following organisations; Malvern Hills District Council, Malvern Town Council, Malvern Hills Conservators, Malvern Civic Society, Malvern Priory Parochial Church Council, High Street Malvern, Malvern Theatres Trust, Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, Worcestershire County Council.