Newcastle’s heritage receives £2.5million boost



Former nightclub Maxim's will be transformed into a community hub

Two historic buildings in Newcastle-under-Lyme will share National Lottery funding of £2.5m for two projects to save and restore the buildings, and encourage local people to explore the heritage of their community. Both projects will also create new volunteering and job opportunities, and will revitalise a much-loved area of the historic town.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: “We are thrilled that, thanks to National Lottery players, we are able to provide this important investment in Newcastle’s heritage. We are keen to fund even more in the Borough and are encouraging local groups to get in touch about their ideas for projects.”

Paul Farrelly, MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, said: ‘I’m delighted about these latest grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund in Newcastle. It has been a sad state of affairs to see Maxims - the old Sammi Belles when I was a lad – stay derelict for such a long time and I look forward to the building finally being restored. The bid from St Giles’ church is one I’ve supported strongly, too, and I want to congratulate the team on their success. What we need now is more local groups to come forward with worthwhile projects for the Lottery to enhance Newcastle’s heritage."

Belong Heritage Gallery

CLS Care Services has been awarded nearly £1.8million to restore and bring back to use the former Maxim's nightclub. The Grade II listed coach house has been a popular spot for locals to socialise since the 17th century, most recently as Maxim's nightclub. Having closed in 2006 and fallen into disrepair, this former coach house is set to be transformed into a heritage gallery that will tell the story of the site's history and bring the building back to life for people to enjoy once more.

Working with specialist development and investment partner Prime plc, the project is part of a wider Belong Village, which will provide a range of housing, amenities and specialist care services in the context of a vibrant community hub.

Tracy Paine, Belong Operations Director, said: "Maxims is an iconic building in the local community, and we are absolutely delighted that, thanks to this grant from the HLF, we will now be able to realise our vision and restore access to this wonderful venue. Having a heritage gallery within the Belong village provides an exciting opportunity for us to create a dementia centre of excellence that will link the past and present through people, their memories and a shared exploration of the past."

St Giles Heritage Churchyard project

St Giles PCC has been awarded £720,500 for a project to transform its historic churchyard and help local people learn about the fascinating social history of the local area through archaeology, research their family history and restore a Saxon monument.

The project will excavate the large spoil heap, a mass of rubble left from previous building works and currently seen as a site of anti-social behaviour, with a landscaped area showcasing the site's historic gravestones. Local people will be able to discover their ancestry and explore their links to Newcastle's historic burgesses with free family history sessions.

Elizabeth Shenton, Deputy Leader of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, said: "St Giles Church, in its various iterations, has always been a centre piece for Newcastle-under-Lyme, both in religious and secular terms. The tower, with the sound of its familiar bells, is a borough landmark and it is a pity that the churchyard itself has not been equally valued by the community over the recent past. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough itself has a remarkable history stretching back over 800 years. It is therefore important that our local cultural and social history is made easily accessible to our communities, and this project brings a welcome addition to the information and resources currently on offer to residents."

The Heritage Lottery Fund is keen to continue to invest in the heritage of Newcastle-under-Lyme. Groups can book a one-to-one chat to discuss their heritage project ideas on Monday 2 November or Friday 6 November at VAST, Merrial Street, Newcastle. For more details or to reserve a space contact Development Officer Elise Turner 0121 616 6883 or email elise.turner@hlf.org.uk.

Notes to editors

Belong is part of CLS Care Services Limited, a charitable organisation. It operates villages providing a range of care, housing and support options for older people, as well as extensive amenities in the village centre. These include bistro, hair salon, exercise studio and function rooms, all of which are open to the public as well as to the Belong community. People can choose to live independently in a Belong apartment or within a supported 24-hour care environment.

Belong specialises in supporting people with dementia, and 24-hour care is provided in extended family sized households, with modern open plan layouts specially designed around the needs of people with dementia. All employees working in Belong villages are trained in dementia awareness, from domestic assistants through to bistro staff. The organisation is also a registered domiciliary provider and can support people in their own home, through its Belong at Home service.

There are five Belong villages in Atherton, Crewe, Macclesfield, Wigan and Warrington, with further villages under construction. For more information, see the Belong Homes website.

Further information

For further information contact:

Heritage Lottery Fund: Felix Gott, Communications Manager on: 020 7591 6138, email: felixg@hlf.org.uk.

CLS Care Services: Megan Cutts at Triangle PR on: 0161 873 8009, email: megan.cutts@trianglepr.co.uk.

St Giles PCC: Catherine Ralph, Project Manager on: 01782 294 555 email: catherine.ralph@staffs.ac.uk.