Million pound National Lottery win for the Gwent



The Gwent Levels

The Living Levels project joins the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, and the Elan Valley as recipients of this HLF funding. All are recognised as areas of great beauty – and they all have the potential to use their natural landscapes and wildlife, distinctive buildings, local traditions and stories and even industrial archaeology to increase tourism and boost jobs through carefully planned conservation and renovation activity.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the multi-million pound investment will protect these landscapes as well as inspire local people and organisations to come together to develop the full economic potential, bringing increased prosperity and other regeneration benefits to the countryside.

This significant funding will give people at the heart of these rural communities the power to play an active role in deciding how these extraordinary places will be looked after and managed for their benefit in the future. The latest investment will see 3,000 training opportunities created, as well as a similar amount of volunteering opportunities.

Making the announcement, Richard Bellamy, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said: “Our stunning landscapes define the very character of Wales and are as much a part of who we are as our castles, language and rugby. They are as much loved by the people who call Wales home, as by the tens of thousands of tourists who visit them.

“These fragile places must be conserved. However, if carefully managed, our landscape and countryside can also play a vital role in growing our nation’s economy.

“Thanks to National Lottery players we now have the chance to support three stunning areas, each with their own individual character and rich man-made heritage. They will now be looked after in a holistic and appropriate manner, harnessing their economic potential to the benefit of everyone who lives and works there.”

The funding has been provided through HLF’s Landscape Partnership programme, which provides grants for schemes aiming to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character.

Rich in both historical and natural heritage, the Gwent Levels is an important landscape for agriculture, biodiversity and recreation. Working with volunteers, farmers and communities to collectively increase wildlife-friendly management, provide interpretation and create new trails, the project aims to increase people’s awareness of the area’s unique features.

Mark Underhill of RSPB Cymru, one of the project’s partners explains: “Our belief is that to conserve landscapes effectively it is essential to get local communities interested and involved. For such a significant project we would usually work with contractors to deliver many elements of the work, but the Living Levels ethos is to deliver this project through working with local people and volunteers. We do not always appreciate the landscapes that surround us, but by looking at new ways of telling the stories of how this unique part of Wales evolved we intend to bring the area to life for local people and visitors alike.

“It is fantastic that the Heritage Lottery Fund recognises the importance of safeguarding our landscapes. The Living Levels will be a significant step to ensuring the Gwent Levels will be conserved for future generations.”

Welcoming the announcement today, the Welsh Government’s Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, said: “These areas are being rightly recognised, not only for their beauty but for the significant role they play in representing the ‘Wales’ people think of and love – and come to visit. The support awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund will allow these areas to flourish from an environmental perspective, but the areas will also be able to reap increased economic benefits from tourists and business too through new jobs being created and significant training opportunities.”

Notes to editors

About the Landscape Partnership programme

HLF’s Landscape Partnership programme – which has now been running for over a decade - is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects. Across the UK, £146m has been invested in 86 different areas helping forge new partnerships between public and community bodies and ensuring people are better equipped to understand and tackle the needs of their local landscapes.

Clwydian Range and Dee Valley (£1,382,300)

The project centres on the landscape of the Dee Valley and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, and is focussing on the journeys that have been, and continue to be, a key feature of the area which is cut by the canal, Telford’s A5 and the River Dee. Visitors have drawn inspiration from this beautiful valley in art and poetry since the 18th century, and it continues to captivate tourists in search of the ‘sublime’ to this day. But this landscape is under extreme

pressure, with high numbers of visitors drawn to what are often its most fragile sites. The communities on its doorstep, born from the area's industrial past, are now less connected to the benefits the landscape offers. The five-year project will invest in key visitor sites and engage communities living locally, while reinterpreting this rich landscape for a new generation.

Elan Links – People, Nature & Water (£1,713,300)

Elan lies at the heart of the Cambrian Mountains in Mid Wales. Its unique landscape combines remote hill land, isolated farmsteads, steep-sided wooded valleys and an extraordinary feat of Victorian engineering that brought clean water to the then rapidly expanding industrial city of Birmingham. Today, Elan's 20,000 hectares - 1% of Wales - is a haven for wildlife and people. Its 154,000 visitors a year enjoy the breath-taking scenery, nature, recreational facilities and extensive free educational resources for schools, families and communities. The project's vision is to further develop all aspects of this special place to benefit people, as well as the environment itself.

Living Levels Partnership (£2,865,300)

The Gwent Levels is a South Wales estuarine landscape, rich in both historical and natural heritage. Reclaimed from the sea in Roman times, the land is a criss-crossed network of fertile fields and historic watercourses, known locally as reens. This unassuming yet appealing landscape of high skies and low horizons lends it its status as one of the finest examples of a 'natural' landscape really crafted by people in Europe; and one of the largest tracts of bio-diverse wet grassland left in the UK. Living Levels formally brings together like-minded stakeholders to work together to collectively restore, enhance and protect the historic area for all to enjoy. The Living Levels is a partnership that will work with the local communities and farmers of the Gwent Wildlife Trust. The partners are: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Newport City Council (NCC), Monmouthshire County Council (MCC), Cardiff City Council (CC), Rick Turner OBE, Cardiff Story Museum, Sustrans, National Trust, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife.

Further information

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Dee Valley



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Pendle Hill Alastair Lee



oes across UK

Part of Pendle Hill carved with 1612 Alastair Lee

Double, double, toil and trouble: Halloween funding boost for home of Pendle Witches!