Full steam ahead for Queen Victoria's station at



Bat & Ball Station platform side, as it looks today Sevenoaks Town Council

The Grade II listed Bat & Ball station building, built in 1862 for Queen Victoria's visits to Knole House, will be restored thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

The £755,600 National Lottery grant, secured by Sevenoaks Town Council, will see full refurbishment of the Bat & Ball Station building in Sevenoaks, Kent, which has been boarded up since 1991.

This new money has been awarded through HLF's Heritage Enterprise programme, which is designed when repairing an historic building is so expensive that redevelopment is not commercially viable.

Grants of £100k to £5million fund vital repairs and conservation work to convert derelict buildings like the Bat & Ball Station building into usable commercial spaces with a positive impact on local economies.

Regeneration project

The Bat & Ball station building is in the Sevenoaks Town Council's Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan to regenerate the area and complements the new Bat & Ball Centre which will be constructed on the opposite side of the railway, providing leisure facilities, business opportunties, and homes.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the restored station building will provide high quality venue spaces, a platform café, public toilets, and a café selling Kent produce and heritage information.

It will also have the ability to sell train tickets, where currently there is only a ticket machine. The project is on track to be completed in September 2018.

108,000 commuters are expected to use the station in 2018/19, and the completed works will address current concerns around personal safety at the site.

Community schemes

The community will also benefit from schemes including volunteering, construction apprenticeships, exhibitions and lectures, children's history and craft workshops, a local dramatisation of *The Railway Children* and a recreation of Queen Victoria's visit to Sevenoaks.

Michelle Roffe, Head of HLF South East said: "With its royal connection this is a fascinating part of our industrial heritage that is sure to delight the local community and visitors of all ages once returned to its former glory.

"We are delighted to support this project to restore the Bat & Ball Station, which, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, will mean that more people will be able to get involved with, protect, and learn about the exciting heritage right on their doorstep."

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