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HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND SAYS YES TO “THE PEOPLE’S PIER”

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced it has given the green light to support the Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust (HPWRT) in their bid to save Hastings Pier, East Sussex.

Development funding of £357,400 has been awarded by HLF to enable the Trust to move to the next stage of its plans before a final decision is made on a full HLF grant of £8.75m.

HPWRT’s project involves the heritage-led transformation of the pier by restoring the substructure, deck and railings; and redeveloping the above deck. A restoration programme will preserve the Eugenius Birch structure, as well as introducing new structural elements. An accompanying education programme will deliver learning opportunities for all ages and include hands-on heritage learning and, in association with Sussex Coast College Hastings, apprenticeships to develop the next generation of pier engineers. Much of this will be run from a purpose-built Heritage Learning Centre on the pier.

The commercial programme involves establishing the People’s Pier Company, a community-shareholder owned management company run by an experienced leisure management team, to manage the pier. The commercial and educational activities will provide employment and volunteering opportunities for Hastings.

By the end of this project, the pier will be structurally sound and a great investment platform for the future, a catalyst for the economic, social and cultural regeneration of Hastings and the British seaside.

This is a great moment to celebrate the ‘dogged persistence’ of the local trust and the wider community over the past five years, especially now that the new Hastings Pier Charity has received charitable status.

This project is a real opportunity for the local community - including residents, businesses, and schools - as well as visitors and supporters from all over the world to continue their great work in helping to save this much-loved structure and reinvent it for future generations.

Angela Davis, HPWRT trustee who led the application said: “We are absolutely delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting our project. This news strengthens our resolve to continue working with Hastings Borough Council to secure the pier’s ownership so we can deliver the vision of an iconic pier for Hastings.”

Jess Steele, Treasurer, added: “The Battle for Hastings Pier isn’t over yet and the Trust needs your support as much as ever, including raising the essential match funding. So please sign up as a member, sponsor a plank or become a volunteer. As the banner on the People’s Pier says: ‘You Can Save Me!’”

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: “The Heritage Lottery Fund was extremely impressed by the Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust’s ability to mobilise enthusiastic support from the town’s local community for this innovative project. It was evident to us that this was a historic structure that people really cared about. The Trust is right at the start of their journey to fully restore the Pier and we look forward to working closely with them in the coming months as their plans begin to take further shape.”

– Ends –

Notes to Editors

*A **first-round pass** means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

On occasion an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 33,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK. Website: www.hlf.org.uk. For more information, please contact Katie Owen, HLF press office, on tel: 020 7591 6036/07973 613820.

HPWRT would like to thank: the people of Hastings & St Leonards, including those spread across the country and the world who still care; current and past trustees, volunteers and members; David Francis Pier Shop Manager, Hastings Borough Council; Amber Rudd MP; Michael Foster (former MP); local business supporters and especially Priory Meadow; the Development Trusts Association (now Locality); and a host of other funders and supporters.

Other HPWRT quotes: John Hough, HPWRT Trustee and Manager of Priory Meadow Shopping Centre in Hastings said, "For me, the Pier has always been one of the missing pieces of the jigsaw in the economic regeneration of this truly remarkable Town. After the devastating fire last year, this demonstration of support from the Heritage Lottery Fund is a dream come true."

The next steps: The next public consultation on the Hastings Pier will be held on 4th June at St Mary in the Castle, Hastings. A schools art project, using recycled materials to design a vision for the pier is being held at Ore Valley Adventure Playground on 18th June. HPWRT's AGM and initial launch of the Community Share offer will be held at the Sussex Rooms, White Rock Theatre, at 7pm on 9th June 2011.

HPWRT website www.hpwr.co.uk or visit our shop at Arthur Greens, 34 White Rock, Hastings TN34 1JU (open Thurs-Mon)

For further information, images and interviews:

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