Caernarfon’s Quay to Success

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Artistiaid Argraff – Caernarfon

Nestling in the shadow of a world-famous castle and with the Snowdonia mountain range providing a fitting backdrop, Caernarfon is a quiet harbour town with a unique waterfront steeped in centuries of history.

Now, thanks to nearly £3.5m raised by National Lottery players, the once bustling industrial centre of the town can be returned to its former glory.

The financial support will help regenerate part of the former slate quay on Caernarfon waterfront, known as the Island Site, transforming it into a vibrant development of artisans’ workshops and tourist hotspot fit for the craftsmen of today.

This project is funded under the Heritage Enterprise programme - set up with the sole purpose of supporting economic growth by investing in neglected historic buildings and bringing them back into commercial use. By working with not-for-profit organisations, Heritage Enterprise also encourages private sector investment as well as levering in additional funding from government and local authorities.

The funding was announced by Sir Peter Luff, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), as he visited the iconic site: "Bringing heritage back to life can transform areas and make them better

places to live in, work in and visit. That's why it is absolutely vital that we continue to secure the future of the heritage at the heart of our communities.

“The Heritage Lottery Fund works closely with a huge range of heritage projects across Wales and the rest of the UK. We want those projects to reach as many people as possible through funding generated entirely by National Lottery

"Not only do heritage projects like this one at Caernarfon create jobs, support skills and boost the local economy, but they also make a lasting difference to people’s lives by creating new economic strongholds. The heritage assets of communities, then, are as directly relevant to people today as they were to their predecessors a hundred or more years ago".

A series of workshops and spaces for small scale, artisan design will be coupled with unique historic tourist accommodation as part of an ‘artisan quarter’, celebrating the site’s historic purpose as an industrial site with forge and slate shipping quay that still dominate the waterfront.

Harbour Trust Chair, Cllr Ioan Thomas, explains the vision for the site: “Where once slate was unloaded before being sent around the world for roofing, and iron was forged before being used in such historic buildings as the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey by Brunswick Ironworks, now Caernarfon waterfront can once again be home to Welsh craftsmen of the 21st century.

“We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has recognised the exciting potential of the Cei Llechi development. Bringing these abandoned buildings back into life will not only create jobs and enhance the local economy by providing an additional attraction for residents and visitors, it will help secure the future of Caernarfon's historic waterfront and town centre.”

Siân Gwenllian is the Assembly Member for Arfon and welcomed today’s announcement: “The waterfront receives a constant footfall thanks to Caernarfon Castle on one side, and the Welsh Highland Railway on the other – so artisan shops, artists’ residences and community spaces will be an ideal replacement for the site’s current derelict industrial buildings. This is excellent news for the town and the wider north Wales area and will help knit modern Caernarfon together with its industrial heritage.”

The scheme is part of the wider £15m EU-funded Caernarfon Tourism Attractor Destination project led by Croeso Cymru and managed locally by Cyngor Gwynedd. The project also includes developments of Galeri 2, a new station for the Welsh Highland Railway and improvement of pedestrian and traffic links within the town centre.

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