National Lottery Funding Secured for Staffordshire History Centre

Posted on Friday 2nd July 2021

Over a thousand years of Staffordshire's history is to be brought to life in an exciting new heritage project for the county.

Bringing together three incredible collections from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, the County Museum and the William Salt Library; the project will create exciting and imaginative ways to connect Staffordshire people and their stories.

Staffordshire County Council and its partner, the William Salt Library Trust, have received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £3,964,000 towards the Staffordshire History Centre project.

Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project will include an extension to the existing Staffordshire Record Office on Eastgate Street in Stafford, incorporating the William Salt Library.

The Library will be restored and will retell the story of the building, as well as William Salt and his collection.

A modern glazed link between the Library and the record office will create a new entrance and permanent exhibition space to showcase the collections.

In addition to modern reading areas and research labs, the centre will also allow people to discover more about their family or local history by visiting exhibitions, taking part in events and family activities.

Additional strong rooms will provide space for a further 55 years of collections and a new learning programme will be created for schools, with courses for students and adult learners.

The centre will be supported by a series of touring exhibitions and targeted projects, to reach all communities across the county.

Commenting on the award, Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture at Staffordshire County Council said:

> *"We are all thrilled with the funding award, which will allow us to preserve and promote the wonderful history of our great county and people.*

> *"We're incredibly proud of our history and amazing collections and we want to be able to share them and*

be able to protect them for future generations to enjoy.

"Not only will the project help to get more people interested in our history but it will also give us a brand new heritage attraction, which will support the recovery of Stafford town centre."

Staffordshire Archives and Heritage collections are nationally important, stretching back over 1000 years.

The archives are designated outstanding, including rare items such as Anglo-Saxon charters confirming the foundation of Burton Abbey and a letter written on the eve of the American Revolution.

The museum collections include the Douglas Hayward puppet collection and carriage collection, both of national significance.

The William Salt Library is an outstanding rare book and manuscript collection, amassed by Victorian collector William Salt, whose family originated in Stafford.

The Georgian Library building held the collection for over 100 years and has its own history as a fine town house, a doctor's surgery and a shop, before becoming a Library.

Mithra Tonking, Chair of the William Salt Library Trust added:

"The Trustees are delighted by the National Lottery Heritage Fund's generous grant towards the creation of the Staffordshire History Centre.

"The project will see the development of a fascinating new town centre attraction, that will preserve and create a new future for our much loved historic building.

"It will also make our unique library collection better known and more widely available."

The total cost of the project is £7.1m, with match funding of £3.184m already raised by the partnership, including Staffordshire County Council funding, grants, donations from local organisations and friends and in-kind contributions from volunteers.

Further details on the project are available at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Heritage-and-archives/Staffordshire-History-Centre

Rate this page Rate as good   Rate as average   Rate as poor