

HERITAGE TRUST *for the* NORTH WEST

PRESS RELEASE

RESTORATION WORK SUFFERS A SETBACK

RESTORATION work at Lytham Hall has been dealt a blow with the announcement that the Heritage Lottery Fund has withdrawn a grant of £1.7million. .

The vital cash grant has been turned down by the Lottery after reviewing a revised application to develop the Grade One Hall and parkland, which is the former ancestral home of the Squires of Lytham, the Clifton family.

The original restoration scheme, unveiled in 2011, was costed at £5.9 million but following a series of delays and a reduction in funding from other sources, significant savings had to be found and a revised application submitted to complete the work which started in earnest in 2013.

The grant would have enabled the *Heritage Trust North West (HTNW) – which for the past 20 years has been responsible for the hall on behalf of the *Lytham Town Trust under a 99 year lease agreement - to undertake the restoration of the hall and enhance its visitor facilities.

Now HTNW's Lytham Hall project manager Simon Thorpe has said: "We need to take time to review our plans, consider different ideas, and talk to our funding partners. In the meantime its business as usual with the café and parkland open 7 days a week and more big events in the calendar."

Essential work to the exterior and interior of the Grade One-listed Georgian mansion which was originally due to begin in 2015 and be completed by December 2017, will now be postponed even further.

The prime aim remains to protect the historic building from further deterioration and also enhance income-generating activities within the hall and grounds, which are rapidly becoming one of the Fylde Coast's most popular tourist destinations.

Mr Thorpe said: "The withdrawal of the Lottery Fund support for this project is massively disappointing. We did not secure all the match funding that was envisaged for the original scheme and this has been compounded by the changes in the economic climate.

Nevertheless Mr Thorpe said that there had been three years of restoration work, for which an army of dedicated volunteers, staff and non-stop fund raisers, should be rightly proud.

To date some £1.8m of the original £5.9million budget has been spent, including extensive clearance works on the 78 acres of park grounds and woodlands with the creation of the South Prospect garden, the restoration of the Mount view point and the installation of new paths and drainage.

Mr Thorpe said: "There is a huge amount of local support for Lytham Hall. It is such a wonderful place, and I am constantly amazed at the enthusiasm and dedication of the volunteers and supporters. We are no longer a hidden gem but fast becoming one of the Fylde's most popular tourist attractions with over 30,000 visitors last year and a busy calendar of what's on events.

"Staff and Trustees of the both charities are determined to put the Hall on a sound footing for the future and are now taking time to consider revised proposals to deliver the restoration of the hall which will hopefully include a new bid to the Lottery."

Mr Thorpe added: "It is deeply disappointing news but we can be proud of all that we have achieved so far and we are determined to finish the restoration.

Notes to Editors:

Lytham Hall was the home of the Clifton family for over 400 years. The present building designed by John Carr of York for Thomas Clifton, was built between 1752 and 1764 and is a splendid example of Georgian architecture. The house sits in 78 acres of wooded parkland.

The Hall is a Grade I Listed building with many Grade II Listed buildings within the grounds, and the parkland is on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks & Gardens. The Hall is currently on the English Heritage *Heritage at Risk Register* because of concern over its condition.

*Lytham Town Trust acquired the Hall in 1997 with the aid of generous support from British Aerospace. The Trust leases the Hall to Heritage Trust for the North West (HTNW) to operate and manage.

*HTNW is a Building Preservation Trust whose aims are to restore and find appropriate new uses for Buildings at Risk in the North West. Its headquarters are at Higherford Mill near Nelson. In 1996 it merged with the North West Building Preservation Trust and has since developed projects across the region in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cumbria.

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For Contact, News & Events for Visitor Centres, see the relevant web sites...

Pendle Heritage Centre

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Heritage Trust for the North West (Charity Number: 508300) is a Building Preservation Trust registered with the Architectural Heritage Fund. Its aims are to restore and find appropriate new uses for Buildings at Risk in the North West. Its headquarters are at Higherford Mill (Grade II listed), Barrowford near Nelson, which it saved from demolition a decade ago; the Mill featured in the BBC TV Restoration Series in 2006.

The Trust's first project was the formation of Pendle Heritage Centre in 1977, at the time only the fourth Heritage Centre in the United Kingdom. Today it attracts over 100,000 visitors per annum.

Initially the Trust carried out projects across Lancashire, working in most of the 13 Boroughs. In 1996 it merged with the North West Building Preservation Trust and has since developed projects across the region in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cumbria.

It has formed two trading companies which generate funds for the Charity.

