

Huge boost for Hartlepool's Church Street

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Hartlepool Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher and Jim Ainslie in Church Street

The project will conserve and rejuvenate historic buildings within Church Street, improve the local environment and see the creation of new community projects – all aimed at raising awareness of the history and heritage of the area and the significant role it played in the development of Hartlepool today.

Described as 'a huge boost' by councillors, it follows hard on the heels of the successful £5.5m Local Growth Fund allocation from the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership announced last year.

The Church Street area is one of eight locations identified by Hartlepool Council in its Hartlepool Vision plan to spark regeneration, create jobs and ensure future prosperity for the town.

Known as the Church Street Innovation and Skills Quarter, exciting new developments are already under way which include a new £11m state-of-the-art Cleveland College of Art and Design.

Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher, vice-chair of Hartlepool Council's Regeneration Services Committee, said: "The £1.2m HLF grant represents a huge boost to our exciting plans to enhance the heritage of Church Street to create jobs and improve the local environment. Together with the £5.5m Local Growth Fund grant, the funding will help enormously to turn our exciting vision into

reality and transform a key part of our town for businesses, residents and visitors. Preserving and enhancing heritage is important for the future of the town and this is an opportunity to work with communities, businesses and visitors to improve this significant Conservation Area.”

The £1.2m HLF grant will be used to help bring empty buildings back into use, improve the appearance of existing buildings, and enhance the area with new surfaces and street furniture.

Councillor Jim Ainslie, a local councillor for the area and the Council’s Heritage Champion, commented: “I am delighted that we have been successful in attracting further investment to develop the Church Street area. This is an area which is steeped in history and with some fantastic buildings which we must preserve for future generations. The aim of the Church Street Innovation and Skills Quarter is to create a vibrant environment where new businesses can thrive, creating job opportunities for the people of our town.”

HLF Chair, Sir Peter Luff, said: “Historic town centres are the beating heart of communities, so where they fall into disrepair, the community pays a heavy price. Research shows that this can be changed and that even small changes - improving shop fronts or restoring architectural features - can make a real difference. That’s what the Townscape Heritage scheme does so successfully, providing a boost for local economies, with vital employment and training opportunities, start-up spaces for small businesses and enhanced public places for residents and visitors. Townscape Heritage funding has made a huge difference to communities across the UK and this is only possible thanks to National Lottery players.”

The Council has already consulted the Church Street community on its plans and further consultation is planned in the weeks and months ahead.

Further information

Hartlepool Council on tel: 01429 523531 and via email: rob.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

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