



New funding from Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation to address gap in traditional construction skills at Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation has awarded a grant of £95,447 towards Historic England's Heritage Skills Programme, part of the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings project to restore the iconic Grade I listed Main Mill and Grade II listed Kiln in Shropshire.

The new programme offers training opportunities, work-based placements and continuing professional development opportunities for trainees, students, contractors, craftspeople and other professionals.

It also includes hard hat tours for heritage, construction and local interest groups, giving behind-the-scenes access to the internationally important Main Mill building. Led by Croft Building & Conservation Ltd, participants will be able to see at close hand the complex repairs that are taking place to the roof, brickwork and window openings.

Tours are underway and will include parties from colleges and universities in the region.

Alastair Godfrey, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, Historic England said:

"We are so pleased to have received this grant from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. One of the biggest challenges to the future preservation and maintenance of our nation's historic buildings is the shortage of craftspeople and the gaps in knowledge and skills of working with traditional construction techniques and materials. This grant will help us address this challenge by providing much-needed practical training on site at the Flaxmill Maltings in Shrewsbury. Trainees, students, craftspeople and professionals will gain a truly unique experience with us on the world's first iron framed building, a building of truly international importance and significance."

Mark Wordsworth, Chairman of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation said:

"We're delighted to be able to support Historic England's Heritage Skills Programme, which keeps vital heritage skills alive and kicking for the next generation. The programme fulfils two of the goals of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation: to encourage training and enable access into careers in the arts and to ensure that our heritage is preserved."

Councillor Nic Laurens, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Shropshire

Council said: 'I am delighted to see a range of training activities on offer at this internationally important historic site so people can learn first-hand about its unique construction and the complex restoration works which will bring the first iron-framed building in the world and adjacent kiln back into productive use'

Alan Mosley, Chair of the Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings said: "The Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings are delighted at the progress being made on this vital project. The restoration works are extremely complex and it is very important that the processes are shared through the well planned training events and construction orientated tours."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The Stage 2 project at Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, which has also received funding of £20.7million from The National Lottery, will restore the Grade I listed Main Mill – the first cast-iron framed building in the world and forerunner to the modern skyscraper, and the Grade II listed Kiln along with landscaping and a new car park. When complete there will be visitor interpretation, activity space and a café on the ground floor which will be managed by the Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings. The upper four floors of the Mill will provide commercial office space. A programme of activities will be available during construction with training opportunities and chances for the local community to get involved.

Work began on 19 June 2017, carried out by Croft Building and Conservation Ltd, who are responsible for structural repairs to the Main Mill and reintroducing windows that were closed during the Maltings phase. This will flood the building with natural light. The works should be complete by the end of 2018 when work will start to repair the Kiln, fit out the buildings and complete all associated landscaping work and car park. The Heritage Skills Programme will be completed in 2021, when the restored spaces will be open to the public.

The Flax Mill was built in 1797 and was the largest employer in Shrewsbury. The flax business declined in the 1870s and the mill closed in 1886. The site was converted into a maltings in 1897-8, when the Kiln was added. After being used as a temporary barracks during World War Two, the site resumed as a maltings until its closure in 1987. These works will transform and open the site back up for local people, visitors and local businesses.

About [Historic England](#)

Historic England is the public body that champions and protects England's historic places. We look after the historic environment, provide expert advice about it, helping people protect and care for it, and helping the public understand and enjoy it.

Historic England, who took over the site in 2005, and its partners Shropshire Council and the Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings are building on the success of the Stage 1 project, which created a visitor centre (opened late 2015) within the Office and Stables part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and have secured funding to cover the Stage 2 project which is due to open to the public in 2021.

About the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation

The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation was set up by Andrew in 1992 to promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit; since inception Andrew has been the principal provider of funding for all its charitable activities. In 2010, the Foundation embarked on an active grant giving programme and has now awarded grants of £17.5m to support high quality training and personal development as well as other projects that make a real difference to enrich the quality of life both for individuals and within local communities. Significant grants include £3.5m to Arts Educational Schools, London to create a state of the art professional theatre, £2.4m to The Music in Secondary Schools Trust, £1m to The Architectural Heritage Fund, \$1.3m to the American Theatre Wing and over £300,000 annually to fund 30 performing arts scholarships for talented students in financial need.

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About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported and #NationalLottery.

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:

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