



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
North Nottinghamshire

PRESS RELEASE

Queen's Buildings, Potter Street, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S80 2AH

Contact: Jonathan Brassington
Policy & Communications Manager

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Tel: 01909 533 533

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Over 400 Years in the Making: Heritage Lottery Fund helps tell the Pilgrim Roots Story

More than 400 years after the Pilgrim Leaders, William Bradford and William Brewster, escaped religious persecution in Bassetlaw and began their arduous journey to the New World, the origins of their story will be retold, thanks to a National Lottery grant, awarded through the Heritage Lottery Fund. (HLF)

HLF East Midlands have approved the Pilgrim Roots project, which will see £776,000 worth of investment into the Roots area (North Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire and West Lindsey). HLF have committed almost £450,000 to the total sum.

This brings to fruition four years of hard work, putting together a bid that will really enable North Nottinghamshire to shout about our famous Pilgrim ancestors and position Bassetlaw at the forefront of commemorative plans for 2020, which is the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower reaching America.

What does this mean for North Nottinghamshire?

A state of the art Pilgrims Gallery at Bassetlaw Museum in Retford that will be interesting, educational and fun, giving families an opportunity to find out more about William Brewster of Scrooby, William Bradford from Austerfield, and the other familiar names including Clifton, Smyth, Robinson and Carver who are all associated with this area as well as the views of the native Americans they encountered in the New World.

An enhanced Pilgrims Trail with new interpretation boards at eight key sites that each have their own stories to tell, underpinned by a dedicated new website containing information on history, ancestry, news and events.

And the funding will allow Bassetlaw District Council to employ two new members of staff for a three-year period to tell the story of how the Pilgrims' Journey began.

The Heritage Engagement Officer will visit schools and groups across the Roots area equipped with dressing up costumes, learning boxes and lesson programmes to increase knowledge and pride in our ownership of the Separatist part of the Mayflower story.

The Heritage Support Officer will act as an intermediary, working with tour operators and individual visitors to ensure churches are open, tour guides organised, transport arranged and hotel and restaurant facilities booked.

Commenting on the difference the Heritage Lottery Grant will make, Cllr Jo White, Deputy Leader at Bassetlaw District Council said:

'We are absolutely thrilled to receive this funding. At last we will have a fully staffed Gallery dedicated to the Pilgrim story, from where we can signpost visitors around Retford on a mini-Pilgrim trail including St Swithun's and the Pilgrim Room at Retford Hub and then on to the surrounding villages where our Pilgrims lived and worshipped. This visitor experience is going to be greatly improved and will be a positive impact on our local economy. It will attract many new visitors to our area and gives US descendants who have previously visited a reason to return.'

Jonathan Platt, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: 'We are delighted to support this project that will resonate with visitors from both sides of the Atlantic, making Bassetlaw a prime destination as the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower approaches, and it is the generosity of National Lottery players that is helping to make this possible.'

A year-long calendar of events had been planned to coincide with the Mayflower 400 commemorative year, starting with Illuminate in November 2019 in Retford and ending with a headline Illuminate event in 2020. These events are part of the national Mayflower 400 Compact partnership led by Destination Plymouth. However, HLF funding enables the calendar to extend to an 18-month period as it will begin with the opening of the Pilgrims Gallery in Retford in Spring 2019 followed by the official launch of the Pilgrims Trail in Summer 2019. Other activities include a lecture series, festivals, touring exhibitions, photography and short story competitions, music and drama.

John Mann, Member of Parliament for Bassetlaw and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Mayflower Pilgrims said:

'Thanks to HLF for recognizing Bassetlaw as this small fragment of England where values of liberty, justice and tolerance have spread across the world. These values are intrinsic themes within the Pilgrim Roots bid and I am proud that HLF share my confidence in our ability to tell this story on a local, national and international platform in 2020'.

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The Pilgrim Roots project is a partnership led by Bassetlaw District Council with support from West Lindsey District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw Christian Heritage and the University of Lincoln. The project will run from September 2018 until September 2021.

Mayflower 400 is a partnership of 11 destination across UK that all share a part of the Mayflower story and includes Leiden in the Netherlands and Plymouth, USA

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 #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.