

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, August 3, 2018

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Work starts on The Birthplace Project's £6.1 million transformation of the David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre

Construction work starts on site this week on the much anticipated £6.1 million Birthplace Project to transform The David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre into a world-class visitor attraction.

Clark Contracts Ltd. has been appointed as the main contractor on the multi-million pound operation to restore and renovate the 11-hectare Station Road site which includes the iconic Shuttle Row mill-workers' tenement where the legendary explorer and missionary was born and raised.

The Birthplace Project is jointly funded by The National Lottery through The Heritage Lottery Fund (£4.1m), the Scottish Government (£1.3m) and Historic Environment Scotland (£575,000).

The funding will see David Livingstone's birthplace redeveloped to provide a vibrant new museum, setting Scotland in a global context and celebrating the inspirational story of how a poor millworker became one of the most popular British heroes of the Victorian era and a hero of some Sub Saharan African countries today.

The project will include the renewal of the historic buildings, a newly interpreted exhibition which will showcase artefacts from the Trust's collection of 3000 objects and an upgrade of visitor facilities such as the café and shop.

Dr Isabel Bruce, Chair of The David Livingstone Trust, said:

"The Trust welcomes the appointment of Clark Contracts Ltd. as main contractor and looks forward to work progressing swiftly on this important project to re-ignite the powerful story of David Livingstone for new generations and further strengthen the worldwide connections that Livingstone, his principles and legacy have inspired locally and globally.

"Once complete, the Centre will become a key resource for learning about his heritage and his far-reaching impact in science, health, exploration, faith and humanitarian endeavour.

"Visitors will travel from all corners of the globe to explore his story and we believe it will ensure that the impact of David Livingstone's living legacy continues to be felt locally, nationally and internationally for future generations."

Michael Scanlan, Director, Clark Contracts, said:

“Clark Contracts is delighted to be involved in this landmark project. We have a long track record on heritage and cultural projects and the Birthplace Project provides a great opportunity to continue our work in this sector.”

David Kirkwood, Project Director, David Livingstone Trust, said:

“It’s extremely exciting to see the David Livingstone Birthplace Project take shape and we hope everyone will bear with us while we create a better and more enjoyable experience for all our visitors. During the construction phase we are working closely with the community to limit any disruption to our neighbours.

“Access to the buildings at the David Livingstone Centre will be restricted, however visitors will be able to continue to use the wider site for walks and leisure activities. An access map will be available soon on the David Livingstone Trust’s website www.david-livingstone-trust.org and social media channels.”

Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development, Ben Macpherson said:

“David Livingstone is an iconic figure to many people in Scotland, in Africa and across the world. Much of his inspirational work was underpinned by the principles of global humanitarianism and solidarity.

“That is why the Scottish Government has aided the transformation of the historic building and surrounding grounds that bear his name, with £1.375m funding. Once refurbished, the David Livingstone Centre will be a fitting venue to celebrate the important legacy of one of Scotland’s national heroes.”

-ENDS-

EDITORS’ NOTES

1. Images free to use. Follow Dropbox link.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ftfzqjbnodgh44c/AAAFNcTSojp7ioXaPrT1Rv-Qa?dl=0>

Image 9: Pictured from left to right – David Kirkwood (Project Director, David Livingstone Trust), Dr Isabel Bruce (Chair, David Livingstone Trust) and Michael Scanlan (Director, Clark Contracts Ltd.) pictured at the David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre.

Image 16: Pictured from left to right - Michael Scanlan (Director, Clark Contracts Ltd.), David Kirkwood (Project Director, David Livingstone Trust) and Dr Isabel Bruce (Chair, David Livingstone Trust) pictured at the David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre.

Image 6: General view of the Blantyre site before work started.

2. About David Livingstone

David Livingstone is considered to be of great international importance in terms of his contribution to science, exploration, faith and humanitarianism. Born in 1813 in a cramped mill home, Livingstone started his working life aged 10 with 12-hour shifts in the cotton factory. However, his passion for education, exploration and his deep faith led him to Christian missionary work and 30 years of exploring Africa, often in places where no European had previously ventured. His discoveries – geographic, technical, medical, and social – provided a complex body of knowledge that is still being studied today. The respect he gained from Sub Saharan individuals, such as Chief Sechele of the Bakwain people, opened the door to missionaries who introduced education and health to the local people, it inspired abolitionists of the slave trade, and influenced European and Western attitudes towards Africa. More information at www.david-livingstone-trust.org

3. The Birthplace Project

The Birthplace Project will transform The David Livingstone Centre in Blantyre into a world-class visitor attraction which preserves the birthplace and legacy of David Livingstone and retells his story to modern audiences in fresh and exciting ways. The project will include:

- Renewal of the historic buildings of Shuttle Row and the Weavers' Cottages (Grade A listed buildings) to include additional museum display space, refreshed storage facilities with refurbished research and education/workshop spaces.
- New interpretation of our internationally important Collection, telling the story of David Livingstone from poor millworker to global figure to enable all of us to think about how we too might too make an impact on our world.
- The refurbishment of the café and shop; and multi-use space for temporary exhibitions, talks, workshops and community use
- Landscaping of part of the grounds to recreate an authentic sense of the Shuttle Row courtyard and to open up the entrance, leading visitors to the Birthplace Museum.
- Delivery of an Activity Plan to engage our public, inspire social justice and personal achievement; and make our visitors aware of the heritage value of the historic site. More information at www.david-livingstone-trust.org

4. Clark Contracts Ltd.

Founded in 1978, Clark Contracts Ltd is a privately owned main contractor with six operating divisions; Construction, Fit Out, Small Works, Retail, Maintenance and Manufactured Joinery. The company works throughout the UK, employing over 250 employees and is number 72 on the 2018 Sunday Times Best Companies to Work for List. The proportion of business derived from repeat customers each year has averaged 76% over the past ten years and 72% of customers rate the contractor as 'Impressive' or 'First Class'.

5. 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.

6. Historic Environment Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland provides a significant role as a grant provider, investing over £14 million per year in national and local organisations to support building repairs, ancient monuments, archaeological work, the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme and the

requirements to apply for grants under the various schemes at:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/>



**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



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