

Help save Astley Castle

by RYAN MERRIMAN

PEOPLE are being asked to do their bit to help save a castle that is steeped in history but on the brink of collapse.

Just £298,495 is all that is needed to ensure a massive project to restore Astley Castle to its former glory gets underway.

With that in mind The LandMark Trust, the heritage organisation behind the ambitious plans for the project, has sent out an appeal to people to help out where they can.

On the trust website it states: "We are reliant on individual supporters to make a donation to our appeal to help save Astley Castle. A donation no matter what size will help us ensure Astley Castle's future is secure."

The renovation scheme is set to cost a total of £2.175 million and as reported in the Heartland Evening News The Landmark Trust received a massive boost thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) pledging support of £1.47 million.

English Heritage has also confirmed a grant of £300,000 towards emergency stabilisation work which will start later this year to stop the building deteriorating further.

At the time Peter Pearce, director of the Landmark Trust, said: "For the past 30 years the castle has gradually deteriorated to the sad state we see it in today.

"This marvellous news from the Heritage Lottery Fund brings us closer to our vision of giving the building a future and allowing many thousands of people each year to experience it.

"This site has witnessed events over the past 1,000 years. We must find a way to save it and will work closely with the HLF to make this a reality."

Dating back to the 1200s the castle is of significant national importance, but it has lay derelict since it was devastated by fire in 1978.

It is often known to many as the home of three Queens of England Elizabeth Woodville, Elizabeth of York and Lady Jane Grey.

The perilous state of the castle means that a normal conservation solution is no longer possible so Landmark has proposed to create modern holiday lets in the ruined walls.

This will allow the building to be used and enjoyed once again so that it never again falls into disrepair.

The project will also include a learning programme with schools, eight annual public open days with interpretation and special activities, in addition to improvements to parkland routes and signage.

Anyone who would like to make a donation to the project can visit www.landmarktrust.org.uk, call Emma Seymour on 01628 825 920 or send a cheque payable to The Landmark Trust to Emma Seymour, Development Department, The Landmark Trust, Shottesbrooke, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 3SW.

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