

Trenance Cottages are GO!

Big community effort pays off...

After five years of fund-raising and applications to various bodies, the charity Trenance Cottages Newquay has hit the jackpot – a major grant award from The Heritage Lottery! Trustees have just heard that the South West Regional Committee of the fund based in Exeter has judged the project worthy of receiving £170,000. The money will be used to build an extension to the rear and restore the interior rooms to provide the following facilities:

1. Heritage displays depicting aspects of Newquay's past, and the way families lived inside the three cottages during the 19th and early 20th centuries.
2. Space for multi-purpose use, such as meetings, exhibitions, etc.
3. Facilities for IT training.
4. An archive collection to include audio memories and other materials as may be loaned by Newquay Old Cornwall Society.
5. A period-style Tearoom and Summer Tea Garden – to be named “Wilton's” as a tribute to the prominent families who lived in Rose Cottage.
6. A shop to sell local products and produce.
7. Training in catering skills and courses to enhance knowledge of the local environment / history will also be offered, and projects by local schools will be encouraged.

Project Manager Ted O'dell said: “Getting the money from Heritage Lottery is the final piece of the jigsaw. We are confident we can see the scheme through, with parts of the cottages open by next Summer and the rest by early 2012.” Although modern toilets and other facilities will be added, he was keen to emphasise that the authentic interior and exterior of the cottages would be preserved – “ For instance the tiny rooms and Cornish ranges will be kept, and we are in touch with Cornwall College who are keen to bring students over to learn traditional building methods for walls, limewash , etc.”

The Friends of Trenance Cottages began their fundraising activities in 2005 when the cottages were still owned by Restormel Borough Council, and after the authority had applied twice for grants and failed, the Friends pressed for, and obtained, the freehold in 2008. Mavis Warman, who is now the chairman of the Friends said: “We had to do hours of paperwork and so-on to persuade the council our project was a good one, but we knew from surveys we'd carried out that the Newquay people were behind us and we listened to what they wanted. I'm sure they'll enjoy seeing the cottages come back to life, and all the things we put in there”. Events such as the popular Santa's Grotto, Easter Fayre and others will still continue, she added – “We want it to be a real focal point for families and the whole community”.

Ted O'Dell also paid tribute to all the volunteers who've helped to raise money over five years and the support of the town generally.

History Note (using information provided by Chris Shinner of Newquay Old Cornwall Society):

Trenance Cottages are believed to date from the mid-1800s, but sources also suggest buildings on the site from the 18th Century, including a malt house. Families which later lived there included the Wiltons and Oulds. Billy Wilton was a coastguard and coxswain of the lifeboat in 1895 and his grandson Gilbert, who was born there and lived in Rose Cottage until 1966, is still a familiar figure around town. Elizabeth Ould celebrated her 100th birthday in Vine Cottage in 1926. During the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the cottages housed a museum of local curios, run first by Horatio Thatcher and, until his death in 2002, by Former Mayor of Newquay Derek James and his wife Mary.

More details from:

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Footnote to editors: Grants have also been obtained from the Cornwall County Foundation (£4,700), O2 (£700), Cornwall Council's Community Chest Scheme (£500) and Newquay Town Council has allocated £10,000. Our own (Friends) fundraising events have made £30,000. The total project cost is likely to be in the region of £250,000.