



**PRESS RELEASE 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**Community Centre Trustees land £845,715 Big Lottery investment for new £1.3m community facilities in Bedlington Station**

Trustees at East Bedlington Community Centre are celebrating receiving the largest grant awarded in Northumberland. The £845,715 grant awarded by Big Lottery Reaching Communities (Buildings) will ensure that work can start on renovating the former co-operative hall in Station Street, Bedlington Station. This will include extending the existing community facilities to three floors which will provide modern, accessible amenities for the whole community.

East Bedlington has a population of 9000 residents and currently has minimal community facilities. The East Bedlington area suffers from significant levels of deprivation and has lacked investment for decades. The trustees have been supported throughout their campaign by East Bedlington Parish Council who have pledged £450,000 towards the scheme along with the Coalfield Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) who have pledged £48,500. The project will see the redevelopment of the lower floor to provide improved office accommodation, public access IT facilities, refurbished kitchen and meeting space, new activity space for youth facilities and indoor bowls along with an 8 person passenger lift accessing all three floors. The second floor will see the exciting development of Platform 1 - a refurbished ballroom that will provide a multi-use space including community theatre



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and cinema, refurbishment of the existing stage and green room facilities along with a new licensed community café. In addition there will be a new mezzanine level providing a seating/meeting area and additional storage and office accommodation. When complete the project will create up to 7 new jobs as well as opportunities for volunteering and work experience.

The project design team including Hugh Massey Architects, Taylor Design, Artis Consulting Ltd and structural engineers BDN have produced a blue print which will sympathetically restore the original features of the building and create an energy efficient and environmentally friendly flagship development.

Speaking on behalf of the trustees chairman Ron Straughan said “we are delighted to bring this investment to Bedlington Station, it is an incredible achievement for our team and we have worked hard alongside the community to make sure we are developing a fully accessible building to deliver the facilities the community want and a venue that will help bring people together”. The new Centre will provide a range of leisure and social activities as well as opportunities for learning and skills development. East Bedlington Parish Council Chairman Alex Wallace also welcomed the news and added “we hope the redevelopment of this facility will act as a catalyst that will lead to further investment in the high street. It is an exciting time for East Bedlington with the potential reopening of the Ashington -Blyth-Tyne line. The parish council have fully supported the scheme and congratulate the trustees on their success”.

It is hoped that work to refurbish the Community Centre will start in early 2016 and will take around 28 weeks to complete.

## Notes to Editor

The Big Lottery Fund supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. We are responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by the National Lottery for good causes and invest over £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes.

Since June 2004 we have awarded over £8 billion to projects that make a difference to people and communities in need, from early years intervention to commemorative travel funding for World War Two veterans.

Since the National Lottery began in 1994, £33 billion has been raised and more than 450,000 grants awarded.

## Ends

All enquiries

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