



**Embargoed until 00.01hours on 4 July 2017**

## **Friends win National Lottery support for exciting history project on St Catherine's Hill in Christchurch**

Today, the Friends of St Catherine's Hill (FSCH) have received a £10,000 National Lottery grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting project: "History of the Hill, Christchurch Remembered".

Led by volunteers from the local community and with the support of Christchurch and East Dorset Councils, the project focuses on researching, interpreting and raising awareness of the use and importance of St Catherine's Hill during the First World War. A key part of the project will be the delivery of an on-site community 'History Day', taking place on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September this year.

Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the project will enhance this popular biennial event through the funding of living history displays and a pop-up First World War cinema as well as allowing research into the trench workings and other wartime uses, forming links with Christchurch Junior School and the commissioning of paintings by local artist Craig Wilson.

St Catherine's Hill is a local beauty spot, rich in both history and wildlife. Designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its ecological, historical and geological significance, the Hill contains evidence of use over many historical periods from the Stone Age to the present day. The site was also used during both World Wars, particularly for trench warfare training during the First World War, including Field Engineers from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

It is an opportunity for the Friends to better identify heritage features from this period and for the wider community to learn about and better understand their rich local heritage in an enjoyable way. They would welcome contact from anyone with a particular interest or connection to the site that would be happy to provide related material or volunteer their time, to help enhance the project.

Commenting on the award, Melanie Gibbons, Chairman of the Friends, said: "We are delighted to have received the support of the National Lottery and are confident the project will help all of us better identify and understand the rich historical connections of the Hill both, now and into the future."

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we're pleased to support this project which will enable people of all ages to understand the experience of their community during the First World War and the legacy of the conflict for St Catherine's Hill."

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

#### **About Friends of St Catherine's Hill:**

The Friends of St Catherine's Hill is an organisation that promotes the preservation and protection of the Hill, including its use as a recreational resource, particularly by local residents. It also liaises with land owners on the management of the area in the interests of conservation and local residents.

The project is supported by many local organisations; including Jumpers and St Catherine's Hill Residents Association (previously known as the West Christchurch Residents Association), Christchurch Gun Club, Hampshire Cultural Trust and Christchurch and East Dorset Councils.

#### **Attached image:**

Wooden mock-up of the side of a Mk V, WW1 tank at the St Catherine's Hill History Day 2015

#### **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](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported.

#### **For further information, images and interviews, please contact**

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