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St. Ives
Town Deal

Visit to Leach Pottery Town Deal project

Cornwall Council Leader and St Ives Councillor Linda Taylor, portfolio holder for the economy Louis Gardner and the newly elected Chair of St Ives Town Deal Board Andrew Baragwanath visited Leach Pottery to see the progress which is being made to deliver its exciting and ambitious project transformation project.

With funding from St Ives Town Deal, the Arts Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the £8.9m project will see the pottery transformed with a new Learning and Production Centre, revamped museum, shop, gallery and café.

The group were met at the site by Leach Pottery Director Libby Buckley who outlined the aims of the two-year project and explained the work which has been taking place during the first phase which was granted planning permission in May 2023. Phase 2 was given planning permission in January 2024, with work due to begin in early 2025. The final stage is due to be completed in Summer 2026.

“The aim of this investment is to create a community hub where local people and visitors can come together to train” said Libby. **“Up to now we have been working in a fairly inaccessible, damp and inefficient space in Beagle Cross, a 1950’s cottage which is unsuitable for teaching and community workshops.**

“The new production studio and learning space will create new all year-round jobs, providing additional training, work facilities and apprenticeships.”

Following the appointment of specialist contractors Classic Builders, a temporary kiln shed was constructed to allow the potters to continue working and training onsite. The stored collections, Library and Archive were relocated to Kresen Kernow, with the learning team now delivering the learning programme from Newlyn School of Art and in the Museum. This was followed by the demolition of the former Beagle Cross cottage and kiln sheds in May, with much of the interior fixtures and materials from the buildings recycled by the local community.

Foundations are now being laid for the new building to house the new Learning and Production Centre which will enable more classes and workshops to be provided and increase pottery production.

The museum, shop and gallery remain open and unaffected during the project.

“This is a hugely important investment for the town” said Linda Taylor. **“It's vital that the legacy and the heritage of the Leach Pottery lives on for future generations. This new facility will help to ensure this and when, up and running, could help find our next Bernard Leach. And that's going to be amazing.”**

“This project is going to be a real boost to the economy of St Ives” added Louis Gardner. **“We know that the pottery is a real visitor attraction, but what we want to do is open it up more to the local people. The new building will offer more training opportunities on the site, with more apprenticeships and the ability for the pottery to increase capacity. This will drive jobs and drive revenue for the pottery to ensure its economic success into the future.**

“It's great to have diggers on site - to see things actually happening. We know that in a few short months the development here will be finished and that's absolutely fantastic.”

Leach Pottery was awarded £5 million from St Ives Town Deal and Andrew Baragwanath is very proud of the part the Board has played in the development and delivery of the project. **“While many people from across the world know about the Leach Pottery, this is not just another tourist attraction.**

“When finished this project will provide jobs for local people as well as expanding the arts offer in the town. It is really exciting to see the work well underway and I look forward to coming back in two years time to see what has been accomplished.”

Director Libby Buckley is very clear about the importance of the support from St Ives Town Deal. **“Our project definitely wouldn't have happened like this without the Town Deal funding”** she said. **“It provided a catalyst for us to take that opportunity and be really brave.**

“The grant from the Board gave us the match funding we needed to secure funding from other partners – enabling us to do everything we wanted to do.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

About the UK Government Town Deals programme

Part of the government's plan for Levelling Up the UK economy and the wider Towns Fund, the Town Deals programme aims to regenerate towns and deliver long-term economic and productivity growth. This is through investments in urban regeneration, digital and physical connectivity, skills, heritage and enterprise infrastructure. As of July 2021, DLUHC have offered Town Deals to all 101 places that submitted proposals, committing over £2.35bn of investment across c.700 projects nationwide. [See the press releases associated with Town Deals on gov.uk.](#)

About the St Ives Town Deal

In June 2021, St Ives secured a Town Deal of up to £19.9 million following the successful submission of its [Town Investment Plan](#) for a range of regeneration

projects. For more information about St Ives Town Deal visit www.stivestownddeal.org.uk

Cornwall is the only area invited by the Government to submit proposals for four of its towns: Camborne, Penzance, St Ives and Truro. After conducting extensive public consultations, each Town Deal Board submitted their Town Investment Plan in collaboration with Cornwall Council. As a result, the Government announced in spring 2021, that Cornwall will receive up to £88.7 million from the Town Deals programme.

Cornwall Council is the Lead Authority for the Town Deals in Cornwall. Cornwall Council supports the governance role of St Ives Town Deal Board and is responsible for administering the Fund on behalf of the Board.

For more information visit: www.cornwall.gov.uk/business-trading-and-licences/economic-development/towns-fund