

## Press Release

26th January 2016

### **Burslem is open for business - HRH The Prince of Wales opens Middleport Pottery's Prince of Wales Studios and sees plans for the £7m transformation of the Wedgwood Institute into a vibrant centre for business, employment and training**

The Prince's Regeneration Trust is pleased to announce that HRH The Prince of Wales will be visiting Middleport Pottery and the Wedgwood Institute in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent on Tuesday 26th January.

The Prince of Wales, founder and patron of The Prince's Regeneration Trust, will officially open the new Prince of Wales Studios and receive the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award, Europe's highest honour in the field, conferred to the Trust for the restoration of Middleport Pottery in 2015.

The Pottery's old packing house - where pottery was once packed up ready for transport by canal boat - has undergone a stunning £155,000 conversion to create the beautiful two-storey Prince of Wales Studios. The Studios have been specifically designed to accommodate a range of activities for local businesses, including up to seven open-plan work desks for artists and craftspeople, two kilns for artists' use, a unique lecture and events facility, and a gallery to display the artists' work to buyers.

The Studios were recently used for the filming of the BBC 2 series, *The Great Pottery Throw Down*, and during the visit The Prince will meet the winner of the first series, Matthew Wilcock, the three other finalists, broadcaster Sara Cox, and the two judges, Keith Brymer Jones and Kate Malone.

During his tour of Middleport Pottery, The Prince will meet with some of the tenants occupying the new offices and workshops created by The Prince's Regeneration

Trust at Middleport Pottery. He will also see the restoration work being carried out by The Prince's Regeneration Trust on the William Boulton Steam Engine. The only remaining steam engine within its original factory setting the engine is being restored to its full steam functionality following a very successful fundraising campaign by The Prince's Regeneration Trust. The steam engine will be a 'must-see' part of the factory tours and visitor experience when it opens to the public in the Spring.

The Prince will conclude his tour of the Pottery with a reception in the Prince of Wales Studios, where he will receive, on behalf of The Prince's Regeneration Trust, the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2015, won by Middleport Pottery. The award recognises the work of the charity to save and restore Britain's last working Victorian Pottery.

At the reception, Joan Walley, Chair of Burslem Regeneration Trust, will present The Prince of Wales with a painting of Middleport Pottery by world-renowned Burslem-born watercolour artist, Geoffrey Wynne RI, as a thank you to The Prince of Wales for his long-standing belief in the determination of local people to make Burslem a great place to live, work and visit.

The Prince will continue his visit to Burslem at the Grade II\* listed Wedgwood Institute -one of England's 'most at risk' Victorian buildings - to see the completed first stage in the Institute's restoration, and to hear how The Prince's Regeneration Trust and Stoke City Council are working together to revive the Institute as a creative and vibrant centre for enterprise, employment and training in Stoke-on-Trent. The Prince will be shown the Institute's ground floor, which is now open for temporary public use, such as office space, community events and exhibitions. The initial stage of the project has been made possible thanks to funding from the European Regional Development Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and Stoke Council.

The charity hopes that once fully restored the Institute will provide space for around 20 to 25 start-up businesses, creating up to 150 jobs for local people, as well as

room for business meetings, professional training and mentoring and community facilities. The Heritage Lottery Fund has recently pledged £2.6m to the project, and The Prince's Regeneration Trust will be launching a fundraising campaign this month to raise the remaining £4.2million. It is hoped the main works can start in Spring 2017 and that the Institute can be fully open in 2018-19.

**Ros Kerslake OBE, Chief Executive of The Prince's Regeneration Trust**, said:

*"His Royal Highness's visit demonstrates his unfailing support and commitment to a better future for Burslem. Without his belief in the project we wouldn't be here today creating the right environment and opportunities needed for local business to grow and flourish.*

*We complete the restoration of Middleport Pottery after years of careful and painstaking work, and at the same time, we begin work to bring back into use another one of Burslem's most distinctive buildings, the Wedgwood Institute.*

*Our work has been and continues to be a major impetus for economic change in Burslem and the Potteries. By making Burslem's past part of its future we are making Burslem once again open for business."*

**Speaking of the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra 2015**, Ros said:

*"It's a huge honour to accept this most prestigious of awards, and to welcome the delegation to Middleport Pottery on this incredibly special day.*

*To receive Europe-wide recognition is particularly wonderful for everyone involved in the regeneration work."*

**Joan Walley, Chair Burslem Regeneration Trust and patron of the Haywood Academy Sixth Form**, said of the visit by The Prince of Wales:

*We are hugely indebted to The Prince of Wales not just for The Prince's Regeneration Trust's commitment to Middleport Pottery but for his continued interest in our ambition to restore and improve Burslem. The opening of the Sixth Form in the Old Town Hall, and ongoing restoration of the School of Art and*

*Wedgwood Institute is proof of this. How better to say a heartfelt thank you than with an actual painting of Middleport Pottery by world renowned and Burslem-born watercolour artist Geoffrery Wynne RI. I hope it will be a constant reminder of our appreciation of his belief in us and of the determination of local people to make Burslem once again a place of quality for people to live, work and visit."*

**Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Secretary General of Europa Nostra,** said:  
*"The Prince's Regeneration Trust has become the leading charity in the UK and beyond, in Europe, to champion heritage-led regeneration projects - projects which matter to people and which bring hope and positive change to their lives. Our European Heritage Award honours not only the exemplary restoration of Middleport Pottery but also all the stakeholders who have made this project such a success: The Prince's Regeneration Trust, the pottery company Burleigh, various public bodies and, of course, the local community. We are delighted that this Award has encouraged the Trust to embark upon new exciting ventures, such as the restoration of the famous William Boulton Steam Engine and the rehabilitation of the Wedgwood Institute.*

*Europa Nostra advocates cultural heritage as Europe's largest and mostly untapped reserve. We strongly believe that our numerous heritage sites could be the drivers and the carriers of a true creative Renaissance that Europe so desperately needs. A future and better Europe in which the United Kingdom has a vital and leading role, especially in the field of heritage."*

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## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### **The Prince's Regeneration Trust**

The Prince's Regeneration Trust is a world-leading regeneration charity working in hard-hit areas of the UK to rescue and re-use local buildings in order to transform lives.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust is a separate charity from The Prince's Trust. Over the past 19 years we've worked on projects saving about 1.4 million square feet of buildings - enough to fill almost 32 football pitches - and have created about 1,800 jobs.

The charity is committed to:

- focusing on the most deprived communities in the UK, on buildings where other efforts have failed and on projects that are far too complex for communities to undertake themselves
- calling on communities to apply to us for expertise to get regeneration underway
- running a national roadshow touring 36 locations over 3 years that will give world-class advice and practical guidance for communities who want to rescue buildings themselves

The Prince's Regeneration Trust is leading on the development of social investment in regeneration and we'll provide hard evidence of the effect of our work in areas like training for young people, welfare of elderly people and new business start-ups. All of the charity's work draws upon its unique 'knowledge bank' made up of our own team of experts working in partnership with other leading specialists.

Find out more about The Prince's Regeneration Trust today by going to [www.princes-regeneration.org](http://www.princes-regeneration.org); [www.facebook.com/princesregeneration](https://www.facebook.com/princesregeneration); or follow [@PrincesRegen](https://twitter.com/PrincesRegen) on Twitter.

### **Middleport Pottery**

Middleport Pottery is one of the oldest working Victorian potteries in the UK, and the home of world-famous Burleigh ware.

The Grade II\* listed Pottery was almost lost forever through disrepair, but in 2011 The Prince's Regeneration Trust began to put together a £9 million funding package to buy and fully restore it.

In June 2014, HRH The Prince of Wales, founder and patron of The Prince's Regeneration Trust, opened the refurbished Middleport Pottery, containing the Burleigh factory, a visitor centre, cafe, shop, activity areas and workshops and offices for creative businesses.

The charity has leased approximately half the site back to Burgess & Leigh Ltd, so Burleigh pottery is still made there, just as it has been since 1888, and local jobs have been saved. Empty parts of the site have been adapted as workspaces and leased to craft businesses to make the site a centre of local creativity.

There is also a visitors' centre showcasing the history and restoration of the site and we are running tours of the Burleigh factory.

As a result of The Prince's Regeneration Trust's intervention, 50 jobs were saved and a further 70 have been created since 2011.

Throughout the construction work, we ran apprenticeships in conjunction with The Prince's Trust and held training days for local people in heritage construction techniques.

Our on-site Visitor Centre Manager has also organised a range of activities and open days to engage the wider community and volunteers.

The restoration project was made possible through funding from several public and private sources, including English Heritage (£1.2m), the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.5m), the Regional Growth Fund (£1.7m), and the European Regional Development Fund (£1.1m).

The following firms and individuals contributed to the restoration project: contractor William Anelay Ltd; architect Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios; services engineer E3 Consulting Engineers; structural and civil engineers Integral Engineering Design; heritage interpretation Marion Blockley; conservator Halahan Associates; and cost/risk by Gleeds.

For more details on Middleport Pottery, go to [www.middleportpottery.co.uk](http://www.middleportpottery.co.uk), or [www.facebook.com/MiddleportPottery](https://www.facebook.com/MiddleportPottery)

### **EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award**

Middleport Pottery was chosen by the judges from 270 entries from 33 countries to win an EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award. The awards scheme is run by the European Commission and Europa Nostra, the European federation of heritage non-governmental organisations, and celebrates outstanding achievements in 1) conservation, 2) research, 3) dedicated service to heritage, and 4) education, training and awareness-raising.

The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award is one of eight awards won by The Prince's Regeneration Trust for the restoration work at Middleport Pottery. The other awards include a RIBA National Award for architectural excellence, three RIBA West Midlands Awards and a Placemaking Award for heritage.

### **The Steam Engine**

Middleport Pottery's William Boulton Steam Engine, a key feature of the original 1888 factory and a unique piece of historic machinery. Built in Stoke-on-Trent specifically for Middleport Pottery, it is the last surviving example of its kind still within its original factory setting rather than in a museum. It powered most of the factory from the Victorian era until the 1970s, driving the production of Burleigh pottery from clay to cup.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust raised £171,000 through individual donations and a very successful 100-day crowdfunding campaign to be able to restore the engine.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust is restoring the engine to full steam functionality so that visitors can see the engine working and observe at close-hand the intricate workings of the mechanical heart that once powered the Pottery and drove Staffordshire's ceramics industry. The restoration will help to confirm Staffordshire as an international centre of industrial heritage.

The project has benefited the community by providing training for eight volunteers and six students in professional conservation techniques.

The William Boulton Steam Engine will be a working and an integral part of the Middleport Pottery visitor experience by late Spring.

### **The Wedgwood Institute**

The Wedgwood Institute is a landmark historic building in the centre of Burslem that is Grade II\* listed. It measures approximately 20,000sqft and is situated in the Burslem Conservation Area. The regeneration of this building should have a catalytic effect on the regeneration of the wider town.

Funded entirely by public subscription, the Institute was built between 1863 and 1869 as a philanthropic establishment providing classes in science, business and the arts to the working men of Burslem. It was named after legendary 18<sup>th</sup> century Stoke potter and anti-slavery campaigner Josiah Wedgwood, who played a key role in the industrialisation of the pottery industry. Burslem-born Wedgwood once rented a pottery works on the site of the building.

The Institute has a highly decorative terracotta façade featuring mosaics and sculptures, including a full-size statue of Wedgwood above the main entrance. The exterior also features 10 bass relief terracotta panels depicting the pottery manufacturing process.

In its early days, the Institute was home to Burslem School of Art and Science before that moved into the building opposite in 1905. The Institute also provided a free library. Later in the twentieth century, Staffordshire University took over the running of the building, but the space became unsuitable for modern higher educational use and it was abandoned by the university in 1993. The final tenant, a branch of Stoke-on-Trent City Council library, left in 2007, since when the decline of the building has significantly accelerated. By the beginning of 2015, the condition of the roofs, internal and external walls, and windows, particularly at the rear of the building, was very poor.

Over the previous ten years, a number of schemes were put forward to conserve and reuse the building but none have materialised.

The long-term regeneration project aims to revive the Institute as a creative and vibrant centre for enterprise, employment and training. It seeks to deliver this vision in the context of the work of The Prince's Regeneration Trust which specialises in saving historically and locally important buildings at risk, and investing in their renovation to bring regeneration to areas of social and economic deprivation.

The first phase works on the Wedgwood Institute were made possible by funding from the Department for Communities & Local Government (£296,349), the Heritage Lottery Fund (£222,325), Stoke Council (£112,396) and Historic England (£180,039).