

**APPLICATION FOR GRANT AID SUPPORT**  
**GILSTRAP CHARITY**

<b>1. About Your Organisation</b>			
<b>Organisation Name:</b>	Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens Charity Number: 1198387		
<b>Contact Name:</b>	Sharon Morley		
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<b>Email Address:</b>	Smorley09@hotmail.co.uk		
<b>2. Project Description</b>			
<p><b>Please describe the nature of your project and its objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Nature of Project:</b></p> <p>Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens are a well-loved and significant historic site as well as a much-needed and well-used green space. Its Romanesque gatehouse is considered by Historic England to be one of the finest examples in the country, and, for over 900 years, the castle has stood as a key part of our local history.</p> <p>The Gilstrap Centre shares its location, and The Gilstrap Charity has previously supported the castle in developing education and learning opportunities through a King John exhibition and family participation through medieval fun days.</p> <p>The Newark Castle Gatehouse Project is an exciting and unique opportunity to bring the history of the site to life for local communities and tourists alike. The project will re-establish the castle at the heart of the town, reinstating the Romanesque gatehouse as the entrance and creating five new gallery spaces to tell the stories from within its walls. A roof top deck will provide incredible views of the surrounding area and highlight the strategic location of the castle.</p> <p>Improved accessibility is a key objective, and the project will install a lift to take people up to the first-floor level. A new learning space under the entrance bridge will enable a transformational approach to school visits and community events, and activity and will bring more people into contact with this important Newark site, increasing their curiosity about features of historical interest.</p> <p>The interpretation in the galleries will focus on the castle's Medieval heyday, exploring how local people would have been involved with the castle. It will also explore the stories of Bishop Alexander and King John. The interpretation will use an accessible and family-friendly mix of interpretation techniques. This includes written panels, embroideries including a replica cope (bishop's cape) which tells the story of Bishop Alexander's life, illustration, audio-visual techniques, models, artefacts and tactile replicas.</p> <p>Groups and communities are also involved, for example, St Mary's Church Choir are workshopping and recording some medieval choral music which will form part of the castle soundscapes, and students from the School of Musical Instrument Crafts are making a vielle – a medieval stringed instrument.</p>			

The ground floor chamber of the North West Tower is not behind the pay barrier and will therefore be free for everyone, wheelchair accessible and family friendly, with a window seat overlooking the lovely view of the River Trent. It gives an overview of the castle's history, showing the development of the site from Anglo-Saxon times to the present day and encouraging visitors to learn more about Newark's fascinating story. Within this room, 10th century, 13th century and 17th century artefacts will be on display, taken from the reserve collection at the National Civil War Centre, Newark Museum. A cannonball, found at the castle, will be on open display so that visitors can touch it, enabling a younger audience to engage in a tactile way.

An audio point enables visitors to listen to oral history recordings of archaeologists involved in the excavations at Newark Castle and find out more about the exciting discovery of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground. An interactive screen will show clips of Newark people sharing their memories of the castle, and craftspeople involved in the Gatehouse Project, such as the carpenter who is making a new throne for Bishop Alexander and the embroiderers working on bespoke hangings. Finally, a playful model asks children to be like a 12th century mason and build their own castle.

The gardens, which will remain free to access and will benefit from a new landscaping scheme that prioritises accessibility, biodiversity and sustainability. Paths will be made more suitable for people with physical access needs, and the planting will be native species and wildlife friendly. The project team has worked closely with an ecologist to ensure that biodiversity is improved, and 16 trees have been planted on the Riverside Park to complement this project.

The gardens will benefit from a new lighting scheme that both improves the evening offer and provides feature lighting for the building itself, and has been designed sympathetically to include a bat corridor. There will also be new interpretation and wayfinding within the grounds, including information panels, a model, QR codes to access audio content, and a playful, multi-layered trail.

There will also be a free-to-access ground floor exhibition in the Northwest Tower that will be wheelchair accessible, dog-friendly, and will identify and explain the castle's timeline and community relevance from Anglo-Saxon burgh to Victorian pleasure ground.

The Friends of Newark Castle are working closely with Newark and Sherwood District Council Culture Team and are applying to The Gilstrap Charity for match funding towards the interpretation in the Castle and Gardens, which will enable us to promote education and understanding of one of Newark's most significant historic buildings and to tie together the historic landscape of the town.

#### **Objectives:**

- To enhance and better reveal the significance of Newark Castle, for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the area
- To engage more people with Newark Castle's rich history and the importance of Newark in the medieval world
- To conserve and maintain the remains of Newark Castle for future generations



- To ensure the sustainability of the castle through the implementation of a viable business that is appropriate to the heritage context of the building, and which generates income for the conservation and repair of the structure

**Expected  
Start Date:**

Summer 2025

**Expected Finish  
Date:**

Autumn 2026

**Where will your project/event take place?**

Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens

### 3. People who will Benefit from this Project/Event

**Please provide details of who will benefit from this event and which area of Newark the project/event will cover.**

In line with The Gilstrap Charity's governing document, inhabitants across the area of benefit would benefit both directly, through use of the site, and indirectly through an improved environment and an increase in tourism, having a positive impact on the local economy.

The Friends of Newark Castle aim to support stakeholders to deepen engagement and increase the volume of visits from existing audiences whilst welcoming new audiences and creating new engagement opportunities. People who will benefit include:

- Local families with children, including those from lower socio-economic areas who may not ordinarily feel they can easily engage with features of historical interest
- Local older adults and couples
- Tourists and day trippers, also providing a broader positive impact on local businesses
- Primary and secondary school students, and students from Newark College
- People with disabilities and well-being needs
- Local community groups and adult learner groups (including hard-to-reach groups)
- Young people (aged 11-25)
- Speakers of other languages

The Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens interpretation will be based entirely on-site at the castle, although the National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported activity plan will have a wider reach.

**How many people will participate in the project?**

All visitors to Newark Castle and Gardens will benefit from the new interpretation, regardless of their age, interest, language or disability. Anticipated visit numbers to the ticketed experience are expected to level out at 25,500 in the first stable year after a peak in the initial period after opening. This amounts to an average of around 50 visitors a day at off-peak, 110 visitors a day during peak season, and 150 visitors a day during the ultra-peak summer months (June-August).

	Annual visits
Tourists and non-residents	16,900
Newark and Sherwood residents (initial visit)	4,300
Free return visit within 12 months*	4,300
<b>Total annual visitors</b>	<b>25,500</b>

\* Assumes each initial visit generates an additional 1.0 repeat visits within the following 12 months.

Anticipated visitor numbers, given in the project business plan, are based on penetration rates into the local area population and tourist visits, comparison to other castles and local sites, and assumptions around repeat visiting.

Visitor numbers to the gardens are expected to increase to 135,000 per annum, including some crossover with castle visitors.

Given the interpretation will have a positive impact on visitors for many years to come, the grant will potentially benefit hundreds of thousands of people in total, from all walks of life.

### **What links does the project have to existing arts or cultural related events and programmes both locally and nationally?**

Newark Castle is managed by NSDC as part of a cultural portfolio with the Palace Theatre Newark, the National Civil War Centre, Newark Museum, and the Arts Council England-funded Open Doors programme. The Heritage and Culture team at Newark and Sherwood District Council work closely with other partners in Newark and Sherwood such as Inspire, Newark Town Council, St Mary Magdalene Church, Newark Book Festival and Newark College as part of the Cultural Consortium who produce the Newark Creates programme which offers high-quality, fun, free creative events throughout the town. The Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens is a Charity Incorporated Organisation whose volunteers work closely with the NSDC culture team, supporting public appreciation of the history of Newark Castle and gardens and encouraging further study or enquiry into its buildings.

The Learning and Participation Team holds a Sandford Award for excellence in heritage education and was the 2024 recipient of the Kids in Museums Best Small Museum Award at the National Civil War Centre. As such, staff are involved in delivering sessions at conferences and training programmes for museum and heritage learning and engagement teams in other museums across the UK.

### **Why is the project needed?**

The project is a unique opportunity to invest in Newark Castle's future, preserving the historic fabric of the building for future generations and improving the gardens.

Many local people are not aware of the importance of Newark Castle: it was built by one of the most famous bishops of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, King John died there of dysentery in 1216, King James I and Charles I often visited, and the castle was the first monument ever to be restored at public expense. The gardens were landscaped in celebration of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee and donated to the town in perpetuity. The new



interpretation scheme for Newark Castle and Gardens will make a huge difference to both local people and visitors to the local economy, highlighting the rich history of the site and its communities and enabling a new sense of pride in the town.

#### **How will you promote and publicise your project?**

The marketing and communications plan is formulated by Newark and Sherwood District Council and includes many different methods for promotion. Discussion is in the early stages about how the Friends of Newark Castle can potentially support this further.

NSDC will:

- Keep local people informed of progress through mailshots and newsletters
- Develop a new website that will include project blogs and a gallery of Newark Castle paintings and photographs
- Produce marketing releases at key points in the programme, to encourage engagement from the print and digital media sector
- Develop cross-promotion opportunities with partners including rail and bus providers, other heritage sites and experiences in the local area
- Through historical talks, activities and events
- Discussion is taking place with the Friends of Newark Castle to put in a joint bid to see if it is possible to secure a Royal visit for an official opening of the castle

#### **What longer term benefits will be derived from the project?**

Improving the interpretation in Newark Castle and Gardens will bring sustainable benefits to the site and the town, such as:

- A better understanding of the historical significance of Newark Castle, both locally and further afield
- Increase in visitor numbers, which will provide economic sustainability for local shops, restaurants and businesses
- More attractive and wildlife-friendly green space, for longer-term wellbeing and environmental benefits
- Improved event space to draw more visitors into the town

#### **4. Project/Event Budget**

**Please provide details of the project/event budget, including the amount requested from the Gilstrap Charity. If the total cost is more than the grant requested, where will the rest of the funding come from?**

The total cost of the interpretation scheme is £580,000. A grant in the region of £50,000 from the Gilstrap Charity would provide a significant contribution to the interpretation, and would enable the Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens to purchase key items and donate them to the project.

These could include:

The Bishop's cope embroidery

Bespoke embroidered hangings

A 'build a castle' model in the free to access gallery

Replica furniture – for example a bishop's throne or King John's bed

Replica architectural features, for example a replica rose window that would have been in the Audience Chamber

The remainder of the interpretation funding has been secured from The National Lottery Heritage Fund thanks to National Lottery players, and the capital build elements of the project are funded by The Towns Fund.

Both NSDC and The Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens will be acknowledging all funders appropriately within the design of the interpretation and would work directly with The Gilstrap Charity to agree that acknowledgement.

**Is your organisation VAT registered?**

**If yes, please provide your VAT Registration Number:** Not currently

**Will there be any income generated from the project/event? If yes, please provide estimates.**

Ticket income is anticipated to be around £98,000 per annum.

#### **5. Have applications been made for other sources of third-party funding?**

The capital project is funded by the Towns Fund (£3.3 million) and Newark and Sherwood District Council (£2 million). The National Lottery Heritage Fund has provided a grant of £1.4 million to fund interpretation, landscape, lighting and a 5-year activity plan

#### **6. Other Supporting Comments and Information**

**BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS** (If your application is successful, we will pay the award through a BACS transfer).

Bank: TSB Bank plc

Account Number: 00900667

Sort code: 30-9588

#### **DECLARATION**

I confirm that I am authorised to sign this application on behalf of .....

I undertake that any grant awarded will be used solely for the purpose outlined in this application. I also understand that the Gilstrap Trustees reserve the right to withhold the payment of the

whole or any part of the grant or to require repayment if any information contained herein is false or misleading.

Signed



Print Name

SHARON MORLEY

Date

11/6/25

**CONDITIONS OF GRANT FUNDING**

1. Approval must be sought for any changes to the submitted project outline.
2. If any grant awarded is surplus to requirements this should be returned to the Charity.
3. If funding is awarded the applicant will be required to provide progress reports to the Trustees and a post event/project evaluation report.
4. The applicant will ensure that all necessary licences and consents are obtained.
5. The grant must be spent within 12 months of being awarded.

Please return this form to:

Clerk to the Gilstrap Charity  
Castle House  
Great North Road  
Newark  
Notts. NG24 1BY