



Who are we?

The Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens are a group of volunteers who work to promote and raise money for the 12th Century castle for future generations. We have been established for more than 20 years and meet regularly. We are a registered charity (charity number 1198387).

In the past, we have helped at events, organised fundraising, created exhibitions (John Mountney, Knights Templar, and Lady Manners displays) and bought educational tools for castle tours. Our latest project is to support Newark and Sherwood District Council with its exciting and ambitious Castle Gatehouse Project. We have already held castle open days and a talk to raise money for the project and other events are in the pipeline.

Castle Gatehouse Project



Newark Castle and Gardens are a well-loved and much-used significant historic site. Its Romanesque gatehouse is considered one of the finest examples in the country. Indeed, it was one of the first entries to be added to the national Schedule of Ancient Monuments when it was established.

The project establishes Newark Castle and Gardens at the heart of the town, creating an important new heritage venue which makes Newark a better place to live, work and visit.

The project centres around capital works to reinstate the Romanesque gatehouse, which will be joined by a bridge from the new entrance at street level. The project will:

- Continue conservation on the fabric of the building, create unique access to currently inaccessible parts of the castle interior, and provide sustainable visitor facilities for the Castle, along with improvements to the external environment. Five new gallery spaces will be developed.
- Create and deliver interpretation for the Castle and Castle Gardens that is meaningful to local people and makes accessible the local and national heritage story.
- Develop the gardens as an inclusive, vibrant community space through sustainable interpretation, lighting and landscaping, creating a daytime and night-time economic and cultural offer.
- Build partnerships with local communities and education establishments.
- Work with local communities to deliver an extensive activity and outreach programme that will diversify audiences, placing diversity of participation, inspiration, enjoyment, wellbeing, and inclusivity central to its ethos.
- Provide an engaging and playful resource for local families where children can learn about their local history whilst enjoying one of Newark's most central and attractive green spaces.



Why we need extra funding?

The majority of the money for this project has been provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Newark Towns Fund and Newark and Sherwood District Council, with a recent grant from the Doris Bainbridge Bequest courtesy of Newark Town Council, towards the restoration of the bandstand.

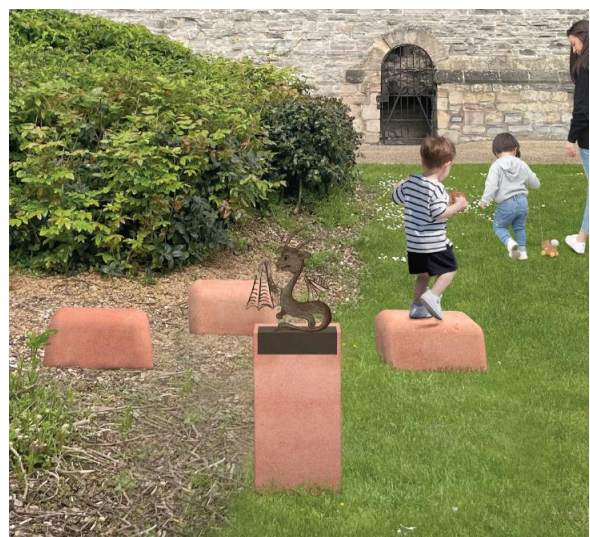
Newark Castle will be elevated beyond the typical castle offer, with the highest quality tourism and educational experience. We want to deliver a scheme that local people can be proud of, and which helps our communities to understand the special place that Newark holds in England's history. To achieve that, we are looking for additional funding to support the plans.

The Castle Friends feel strongly that Newark's families need free places to spend time outdoors, and Newark Castle is a great place to enjoy the green space whilst learning about our local history.

What we would use the money for

We are asking for £50,000. This will enable the Friends of Newark Castle and Gardens to purchase a playful and educational trail. Quotes have been received ranging from £48,000 to £60,000. The trail highlights key architectural features of Newark Castle in a fun and accessible way, helping people of all ages to imagine what the castle looked like 900 years ago. This includes:

- An accurate replica of the 12th century chapel arch, which is in the Gilstrap and not easily accessed by the public
- A replica of one of the gothic windows
- A play feature inspired by the Debtors Dungeon, incorporating Templar graffiti
- Stepping stones made from the reclaimed riverside pathway steps
- Horse steps, to tell the story of knights and other people who lived in medieval Newark





This playful approach to historical storytelling is informed by a lengthy consultation process carried out between 2018 and 2023 by Newark and Sherwood District Council. They spoke with visitors, non-visitors and local groups, and observed how children play at Newark Castle. Families want play opportunities but not play equipment. We think this scheme provides those opportunities, whilst also educating and inspiring them to learn more.

The business plan produced by NSDC states that around 29,000 visitors are expected to visit the exhibition called 'The Castle Story' in its first year. The gardens, which will remain free to enter, will encourage far higher numbers of visitors both from the local area and further afield. The gardens will be more colourful and attractive than previously, with more benches and places to relax and enjoy the surroundings. Visitor numbers are expected to reach around 135,000 per annum.

How does our request satisfy the aims of The Gilstrap Charity?

You are considering this application as trustees of The Gilstrap Charity.

According to the Charity Commission, the main aim of this charity is 'the advancement of public knowledge and understanding of features of historical interest in the area of benefit' (which is Newark)

- a) This is a request for funding by a Newark group that will benefit Newark Castle so certainly covers the area of benefit.
- b) Newark Castle is also, without doubt, a feature of historical interest in the area of benefit.
- c) The money that we are requesting will be used to enhance the interpretation of Newark Castle's history and help bring it to life for thousands of visitors. We believe this definitely satisfies the aim of advancing public knowledge and understanding of features of historical interest.

This huge and ambitious project is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put Newark on the map. Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens are excited to be involved and want to make sure, as guardians of the castle for the future, that this project is the very best it can be. We are asking for £50,000 from The Gilstrap Charity, which we know is a lot of money, but it will provide long-term educational value to the site and benefit thousands of visitors to the castle in the coming years.

We believe our application meets all the criteria for The Gilstrap Charity and your grant would make a significant investment in the educational offering at Newark Castle.

Sharon Morley
Chairman, Friends of Newark Castle and Victorian Gardens