



WEST LAKES RENAISSANCE



PRESS RELEASE

The eyes of some of the country's top architects could be turning to Egremont when a national competition is launched this week (June 15-22) to design an innovative and contemporary structure to go inside historic Egremont Castle, to improve the site as a venue for live events.

The competition is being launched in Architecture Week, by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), as part of the plans being put forward by the Egremont Regeneration Partnership to help revitalize the town.

The lawned area within the castle, which dates from the early 12th century, is already used for concerts, theatre and other performances, providing a spectacular arena for live events. But the lack of facilities, and uncertain weather, limit its uses.

The new competition is to find an architect who will design a structure that will provide a stage and cover for an audience, creating a permanent venue for outdoor events. The structure will be temporary, in that it can be taken down and stored without difficulty.

Ann Morton, a member of both the Regeneration Partnership, and Friends of Egremont Castle, said: "The Friends of the Castle have worked with Copeland Borough Council over a number of years to achieve and retain the Green Flag Open Spaces and Heritage Awards. Illuminating Egremont's fine Norman Castle has been part of the Friends' plans from the beginning and the opportunity to do this with the Regeneration Partnership has really helped to move this on. A temporary performance space for the castle keep will help to ensure that theatre performances, like this year's Seat in the Park can take place on the castle whatever the weather and lead to more people enjoying the castle more often."

Ann-Marie Cowperthwaite, project manager for West Lakes Renaissance which is one of the partnership's funders, said: "We hope that holding a national competition will attract considerable attention to the project, and result in some really innovative and unique designs. We want the winning design to be one which will capture the public's imagination, and help attract further funding, so we can optimize the potential of this wonderful venue, right in the heart of Egremont."

The competition has the support of the Arts Council and English Heritage, as well as Grizedale Arts, Lord Egremont and Copeland Council.

As well as the competition, there are also plans to enhance the castle with an artist-led lighting project. A recent competition encouraged local children to come up with their ideas for the lighting. The winner of the competition, Jason Hayton, will be working alongside consultants to incorporate his design into the new lighting scheme.

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Editors Notes:



West Lakes Renaissance is the Urban Regeneration Company for Furness and West Cumbria. The company is a public-private partnership that was formed in 2002 with the aim of stimulating the economic regeneration of the main urban centres along the west coast of Cumbria. The boundary of operation extends from Barrow to Silloth. The company operates from offices in Barrow and Westlakes Science and Technology Park (near Whitehaven).

West Lakes Renaissance has a Board of 13 non-executive directors and is chaired by Bob Watson, formerly Managing Director, Iggesund Paperboard and Managing Director (Europe) Fujifilm Sericol. The partners behind the company include the Northwest Development Agency, English Partnerships, the Government Office for the North West, the Borough Councils of Allerdale, Barrow and Copeland, together with the County Council, and local business leaders.

The company has put together a 10 year £200+ million investment programme. The company's mission is:

"Renewing the economy of Furness and West Cumbria through the co-ordinated delivery of infrastructure, new skills and sustainable communities."

Further details of the main projects and proposals being promoted by WLR can be found on the following website: www.westlakesrenaissance.co.uk



The Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) is responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of England's Northwest and has 5 key priorities: Business Development, Regeneration, Skills & Employment, Infrastructure and Image.