**PRESS RELEASE [insert date OR for immediate release]: National Lottery Heritage Fund Supports Next Steps to revamp Jacobs Wells Baths**

Charity, Trinity Community Arts, have been awarded a Development Grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to continue the restoration of Jacobs Wells Baths, a Grade II former Victorian bathhouse in Hotwells, Bristol. This grant will build on works in progress and help advance plans to restore the building as well as developing a programme of engagement and learning activities for delivery in 2026.

Made possible by National Lottery players, this grant will ensure the community can play a more active role in shaping the next stage in the reimagining of the site, which served as the City’s only dedicated dance space for over 30 years. The development grant will enable Trinity to work collaboratively with local groups - prioritizing the voices of young people, city-wide arts networks and local residents - before submitting a delivery stage application to National Lottery.

Through this next phase, Trinity will be collaborating with local groups and heritage learning and participation specialists to create a new programme of learning opportunities. This will build on past community-driven projects such as *Washing In The Well*, a Lottery funded project delivered in 2017 with support from Local Learning.

Jacobs Wells Baths, built in 1889, has a rich history, from serving as a public swimming bath to becoming Bristol’s only dedicated professional dance centre in the 1980s. The next step of the project will include design work for the North Wing of the building, which will support plans to apply for a £2m+ Delivery Stage grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This grant will help complete the transformation of the site into a vibrant hub for Hotwells, providing space for arts, education and community activities.

To facilitate this exciting development, Trinity is now hiring a *Heritage Project Manager* to lead the development phase of the project. The full-time, 12-month role will focus on managing community engagement, overseeing stakeholder relationships, supporting the design team consultation, and creating a learning and participation activity plan to be delivered alongside phase 2 capital works in 2026.

For more information and to apply, visit Trinity Community Arts' website.

In addition to the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, Trinity Community Arts must secure further match funding to fully realise the next phase of the Jacobs Wells Baths restoration. To support this effort, a **Fundsurfer appeal** has been launched, providing an opportunity for the community to contribute directly to the project. Donations of any size will help restore the historic building and secure its future for public use. Those wishing to support the campaign can visit the **Fundsurfer www.fundsurfer.com/crowdfund/jacobs-wells-baths** to make a pledge and be part of the effort to save this much-loved community space.

## Quotes

**Councillor Tony Dyer, Leader of Bristol City Council, said:** “*It’s fantastic to see the restoration of Jacobs Wells Baths take another big step forward thanks to this new round of funding. The baths hold immense historic and cultural value, not only for the people of Hotwells but for Bristol as a whole, having served the community in various forms for over a century.*

*“This investment acts as a vital next step toward reviving this cherished Bristol asset, and I’m thrilled with the progress Trinity Community Arts has made on the project since being awarded the lease to the building. As work continues, I look forward to collaborating with them further as we strive to protect the baths’ legacy and invest in its future”*

**Fidel Meraz, Trustee, Trinity Community Arts, said:** "*We are delighted to have received initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, a pivotal milestone in our mission to revitalise Jacobs Wells Baths as a dynamic community-centred heritage building. Backing from The National Lottery Heritage Fund at this crucial stage strengthens our efforts and highlights the cultural and social significance of preserving and repurposing architectural heritage for community benefit."*

Here's a more structured and factual version of the editors' notes:

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About Trinity Community Arts**

Trinity Community Arts is a civic arts organisation dedicated to empowering communities through the arts. Its mission is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access and shape arts and culture in Bristol.

Based at the Trinity Centre, a historic Grade II\* listed building, Trinity is one of the few remaining grassroots venues in Bristol. The venue has a rich music heritage and is known as the "home of the Bristol Sound," having hosted artists such as Gorillaz, The Prodigy, Young Fathers, Ishmael Ensemble, Self Esteem, and Loyle Carner.

Each year, Trinity welcomes over 73,000 people through a diverse programme of arts, heritage, and cultural activities. Its work is guided by three core values: Respond, Empower, and Amplify. The Trinity Centre serves as a space for people to come together, create, connect, learn, share, and celebrate.

#### **About the Saving Jacobs Wells Project**

Jacobs Wells Baths, built in 1889 to serve Bristol’s working poor, is a Grade II listed building with significant architectural, social, and cultural heritage. Originally a public swimming baths, it later became Bristol’s only dedicated professional dance centre for over 30 years.

The site remains largely intact, featuring original Victorian engineering, including cast-iron tanks that still fill with 60,000 gallons of water from natural springs at Jacob’s Well—an ancient ritual bathing site dating back to 1100.

Derelict since 2018 after plans to reinstate it as a pool fell through, the building was listed for disposal by Bristol City Council. It was previously the only secular community space in the area, and its closure led to the formation of the Jacobs Wells Community Steering Group and a decade-long campaign to save it. Despite the area's relative affluence, hidden pockets of deprivation highlight the ongoing need for accessible community spaces.

Following an extensive Community Asset Transfer process, Trinity Community Arts was identified as the only viable organisation to lead the restoration of Jacobs Wells Baths. In 2023, Trinity secured a 35-year lease from Bristol City Council, ensuring the building’s preservation and future community use.

With over £1.8 million secured—including funding from the former Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities’ Community Ownership Fund, and contributions from local trusts such as the Nisbet Trust and John James Foundation—Trinity is working to raise the additional funds needed for the building’s full repair and restoration.

This project aims to transform Jacobs Wells Baths into a multi-purpose community, civic arts, and heritage hub, demonstrating the importance of preserving public spaces in a multicultural Britain.

**About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

\*Grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. Saving Jacobs Wells Baths has initially been granted round one development funding of £252,877 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to progress with its plans. Detailed proposals are then considered by the Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £2,241,986.

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That’s why as the largest funder for the UK’s heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, [Heritage 2033](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/heritage-2033-our-10-year-strategy). Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

[heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/)

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**Further information**

For further information, images and interviews please contact Emma Brown at Trinity Community Arts on [emmab@trinitybristol.org.uk](mailto:emma@trinitybristol.org.uk) 0117 935 1200