

Hearts unveil Maroon Mile heritage trail plans

Plans for a mile-long trail to celebrate the history of Heart of Midlothian Football Club (HMFC) and the local area have been backed by funding from The National Lottery Fund.

The Maroon Mile project has been confirmed as the club celebrate their 150th anniversary and The Foundation of Hearts are involved.

The Jam Tarts have enjoyed iconic status in Gorgie and neighbouring Dalry area since the late 19th century and the club's history is interwoven with that of the local community.

The Maroon Mile project will highlight, capture and share the history of this diversely rich and vibrant working-class area and it will also explore the role the club has played in the lives of multiple generations.

Previously untold stories from Hearts' history will be featured and a critical part of the project will be to restore the dignity of the War Memorial at Haymarket which is dedicated to the citizens of Edinburgh and to the Battalions who served. The roll of honour includes Hearts players who enlisted for McCrae's Battalion.

The memorial will be the starting point of the Maroon Mile and the trail will end at Hearts' Museum in Tynecastle where multi-media equipment will be deployed to highlight the

history and heritage of the club.

The trail will be created jointly with local community groups with physical signage and interpretation as well as an audio walking tour and new heritage assets will be created by local pupils who receive free digital skills development in the club's Innovation Centre.

The 18-month project starts now and the completion date is scheduled for February October next year and Gerry Mallon, chair of the Foundation of Hearts, said: "Heart of Midlothian is a club born out of this community 150 years ago. It is deeply rooted in Gorgie/Dalry and was saved from oblivion by its supporters.

"We're incredibly proud of the role the club and the community have played in supporting each other for a century and a half and the Maroon Mile is an appropriate celebration of that enduring relationship."

Ann Budge, chairman of Hearts, said: "It is fitting that funding has come through collaboration between the Foundation of Hearts without whom Heart of Midlothian could never have reached the milestone of 150 years."

The joint vision of the Federation of Hearts and the club's Heritage Department, she said, will create a memorable and enduring legacy for the communities of Gorgie and Dalry and for generations of Hearts supporters now and in the future."

Caroline Clark, The National Lottery Heritage Fund Director for Scotland, said: "In addition to the heritage walk from Haymarket to the stadium, it will create new opportunities to involve supporters and the wider local community in exploring, recording and sharing the heritage of Heart of Midlothian Football Club."

PICTURE: Gerry Mallon and Ann Budge at the 150th anniversary gates.