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07.09.10 – Visitor Centre at Prawle Point Lookout officially opens

The newly refurbished Visitor Centre at National Coastwatch (NCI) Prawle Point was officially opened on Tuesday, September 7th by NCI Chairman, Jon Gifford, and Sam Hunt of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Also present were representatives from many local organisations which have supported the impressive transformation of the Visitor Centre.

Visitors will now be able to gain a wide view to seaward through the new observation window, follow progress of shipping on a radar screen, on the chart table and through a newly installed telescope and even consult a weather station for current local conditions. Display panels - professionally produced by Devon Wildlife Enterprises and Freeline Graphics - provide a wealth of information on the role of NCI watchkeepers, search and rescue services, the vessels likely to be observed, history and geology of the coastline, walking activities and the abundant wildlife of the area. Stunning photography, highly informative text, new lighting and décor have created a very attractive facility for coastal walkers and an inspiring learning resource for young visitors.

All this has been made possible through an award of £16,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which recognised the unique natural, cultural and historical importance of this beautiful southernmost point of Devon. HLF's Head of Region for the South West, Nerys Watts commented: "We have been delighted to support the work to transform the visitor centre at Prawle Point Lookout. The spectacular coastline of South Devon is important to local people and visitors alike, particularly for its rich maritime and natural heritage, and this project provides the opportunity for everyone to better understand and enjoy this wonderful area." Local organisations offering support and visual material include the National Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, Devon Birdwatchers, Devon RIGS, South Devon AONB, Brixham Seawatch, Salcombe Lifeboat, Start Point Lighthouse, SW Maritime Archaeological Group, SW Coast Path Association, Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre and Salcombe Maritime Museum.

The refurbishment of the former Second World War generator building was undertaken by local builders D.R. & P. Thuel backed up by a team of volunteer NCI watchkeepers led by Deputy Station Manager Derek Venables. The Friends of Prawle Point raised £2,000 to support the scheme.

The Visitor Centre is open, free of charge, whenever the adjoining lookout is manned by the volunteer watchkeepers of NCI Prawle Point – 365 days a year during most daylight hours after 9am.

19.02.10 – Prawle Point Lookout Receives Lottery Funding

Visitors to the National Coastwatch (NCI) Station at Prawle Point will be able to learn about the outstanding natural, cultural and historical heritage of the beautiful South Devon coastline thanks to a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), it was announced today. The award of £16,600 will allow the existing visitor centre to be completely refurbished with professionally designed displays, an observation window and radar and weather monitoring equipment.

The NCI Station at Prawle Point occupies a dramatic cliff top location on Devon's southernmost point. Built around 150 years ago as a Coastguard Signal Station, the Lookout is now manned 365 days a year by volunteer watchkeepers who look out for the safety of people at sea and along the coast.

The Visitor Centre, adjacent to the Lookout, is a popular attraction for coastal walkers but is currently in a poor state of repair. With the aid of the generous HLF grant, the NCI will

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create a first class information centre for visitors and a valuable learning resource for schools and youth groups.

Through the new observation window to be inserted on the seaward side of the building visitors will be able to view shipping and wildlife from a telescope to be provided by the Friends of Prawle Point. A radar monitor will also be installed to provide information on passing ships and a weather station will display current weather data.

A large number of local organisations have agreed to assist by providing ideas and material for the displays to help raise awareness of the heritage of the area and the need to conserve it. They include the National Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, Devon Birdwatchers, South Devon AONB, Brixham Seawatch,

Salcombe Lifeboat, Start Point Lighthouse, SW Maritime Archaeological Group, SW Coast Path Association, Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre, and Salcombe Maritime Museum. In addition, a number of local schools have expressed support for the project and are proposing to take part in a programme of educational visits and guided walks. Chivelstone Parish Council is also backing the scheme.

Commenting on the award, Prawle Point Station Manager, Roger Barrett, said: 'We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled this work to take place. Although the safety of coast users is our top priority, we are always keen to welcome visitors to show them what we do and provide them with information about this magnificent section of coast. The re-vamped centre is sure to be a very popular attraction and a great learning resource for schools and youth groups' HLF's Head of Region for the South West, Nerys Watts, said: 'We are particularly pleased to be able to support this project at Prawle Point which focuses so closely on the rich natural and maritime heritage that the South West region has in such abundance. The newly refurbished visitor centre will provide local people and visitors alike with a wonderful opportunity to understand the environment of this spectacular coastline and to ensure that it can be conserved for future generations to enjoy'.

30.11.08

NCI Prawle Point watchkeepers set the standard high

On 30 November 2008, a team of NCI Prawle Point Watchkeepers successfully took part in a live exercise and the annual Declared Facility Status Review. In the morning, four Watchkeepers took part in an exercise involving the Salcombe RNLI Lifeboat and Brixham Coastguards. The Salcombe Inshore Lifeboat acted as the casualty with a buoy also being used as a 'man overboard'. The four Watchkeepers took it in turns to 'con' (i.e. guide) the Lifeboat to the 'casualty'. The feedback from the DFS assessor, the Lifeboat crew and Brixham Coastguard was very positive. In addition to the above, the four Watchkeepers and two more Watchkeepers in the afternoon were assessed on various aspects of watchkeeping – all came through with flying colours with the assessor describing their level of knowledge as 'universally excellent'. Station documentation, equipment, procedures, training arrangements etc., were also assessed successfully and the station was judged to be 'operating to the highest standards'.