

St Leger 250

Micro Commissions

As part of the celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of the St Leger Stakes, Heritage Doncaster is offering micro commissions (from £250 up to £1,500 each) to support local heritage, community, and voluntary groups. These small grants will enable groups to deliver pop-up heritage activities that widen participation, celebrate local identity, and connect communities to Doncaster's rich horse racing heritage.

Closing Date – Monday 13th July 11AM

Fee – From £250 up to £1,500

Heritage Doncaster – Who are we?

Heritage Doncaster is a [Doncaster Council](#) service. We operate the Council's heritage sites and services including the Danum Gallery, Library and Museum (in partnership with Doncaster Libraries), Cusworth Hall & Park, City of Doncaster Archives, and a heritage learning and outreach service.

Background

The St Leger 250 project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, marks the 250th anniversary of the St Leger Stakes, the world's oldest classic horse race. The project celebrates Doncaster's unique heritage, engaging local communities, schools, and visitors through events, exhibitions, and learning activities.

Horse racing in Doncaster has centuries of tradition, with roots stretching back to Roman cavalry exercises and medieval horse trading along the Great North Road. By the 18th century, local estates and aristocratic patrons elevated the town's racing profile, with Doncaster Mansion House becoming a centre for race-day hospitality.

Competition with York spurred Doncaster to create prestigious prizes, most notably the St Leger Stakes in 1776. Founded by Anthony St Leger, its innovative format – a single decisive race for younger horses - redefined the sport. The first winner, owned by the Marquess of Rockingham, anchored the race in Doncaster's Georgian heritage.

Through the 19th and 20th centuries, the St Leger grew into a major social and economic event, drawing wealthy patrons and later thousands of visitors via special trains. In modern times, its prestige has endured, with Queen Elizabeth II among its regular attendees. Today, it is the oldest of Britain's five Classic races and a cornerstone of Doncaster's identity.

Beyond sport, the St Leger embodies intangible heritage - customs, oral histories, and equine trades - while its four-day festival continues to define the town's atmosphere. Celebrating its 250th anniversary offers a chance to honour Georgian origins and 250 journey, safeguard heritage, and highlight Doncaster's enduring cultural and international reputation.

What are we looking for?

The micro commissions aim to:

- Celebrate Doncaster's horse-racing heritage, with a particular focus on the St Leger Festival and its 250-year legacy.
- Encourage community-led creativity, storytelling, and participation.
- Support inclusive and accessible activities that engage diverse audiences.
- Strengthen local pride and highlight Doncaster's role as a centre of horse racing and cultural vitality.

Scope of Activities

Projects should deliver pop-up heritage activities that:

- Explore Doncaster's racing history, traditions, and community stories.
- Connect to the themes of the St Leger Festival (sport, celebration, civic pride, equine culture).
- Be designed for public participation in accessible community settings (e.g., libraries, schools, community centres, outdoor spaces).
- Be creative, flexible, and achievable within the grant value and timeframe.

Examples might include:

- Storytelling sessions, oral history recordings, or community performances.
- Creative workshops (art, craft, music, poetry) inspired by Doncaster's heritage.
- Pop-up exhibitions or displays in community venues.
- Heritage walks, talks, or interactive demonstrations.

Deliverables

- A pop-up heritage activity delivered in Doncaster before 31/10/2026.
- Evidence of community participation and engagement.
- Short evaluation report (including photos and participant feedback).

The grant will not pay for:

- Activities promoting religious or political beliefs
- Professional fundraisers
- Activities outside of Doncaster
- Holidays, prizes or food (other than light refreshments)
- Uniforms
- Goods or services that have already been bought or ordered
- Volunteer expenses.

All digital outputs will meet the requirements of the Heritage Fund [Digital good practice guidance | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#). Environmental considerations will be adhered to. The deliverer will also be responsible for clear down and tidy up after the commission.

We are looking for imaginative, thoughtful proposals and want to work with community group who will take inspiration from, gather and share Doncaster stories with care, flair and creativity.

The successful proposals form part of a programme of activity that will celebrate the St Leger and its impact on Doncaster.

Eligibility

Applications are welcomed from:

- Community and voluntary groups.
- Local heritage organisations.
- Schools, libraries, and cultural groups.
- Culture and art practitioners working with community groups.
- Informal community collectives (with a lead applicant organisation).

Timetable

- Tender issued – 1st July 2026
- Deadline for submissions – 13th July 11am
- Decision communicated to applicants – 17th July
- Delivery – 20th July – 31st October 2026

Payment and terms

A grant of £250 up to £1,500

Payable for the delivery and planning of this activity.

The budgets quoted are inclusive of all fees, travel, materials, expenses and production costs.

Additional points to consider:

- Think carefully about the aims of the project and ensure they are realistic
- Apply early – please be aware there is a limit to the number of applications that funding will be able to support and therefore we recommend submitting applications as early as possible in case of high demand to avoid disappointment
- Include evidence where you feel it would strengthen the application
- It must be demonstrated that the project demonstrates good value for money
- During and following the project Heritage Doncaster will require successful applicants to complete monitoring forms and engage with evaluation.
- The guidance above should not be considered as exhaustive and if you are unsure of your projects eligibility please contact Rachel.blake@doncaster.gov.uk

Submission details

Please submit the following:

- A completed application form.
- A cost breakdown within the allocated budget.

Your submission will be assessed on community engagement, relevance to St Leger heritage, creativity and value for money in a ratio of 40:20:20:20

To Rachel Blake, Partnership and Engagement Manager rachel.blake@doncaster.gov.uk by 11am, Monday 13th July 2026.

The invitation to submit does not constitute an offer. Your quotation will be assessed on quality, fit with the theme, experience and approach.