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Thames Steamers Limited Awarded Lifeline Funding

Vital financial backing received from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund

Following a successful application to the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage, Thames Steamers Limited has been awarded a grant to cover essential costs for the Steam Launch 'Alaska' to continue steaming into 2021.

Part of the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage was managed by Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aimed at securing the future of Britain's heritage sites.

The 1883 Steam Launch 'Alaska', operated by Thames Steamers Limited, acts as a focal point on the River Thames. A family-owned business, 'Alaska' is the oldest working steamer on the Thames, part of the National Historic Fleet alongside vessels such as HMS Victory. Unsurprisingly 'Alaska' was chosen to participate in the 2012 Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant, and has acted as the Royal Barge, carrying

Her Majesty the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Princess Royal and other members of the Royal Household.

As a rare historic vessel, 'Alaska' sustains significant upkeep costs. However, forced to be laid up since March due to COVID-19 restrictions – with staff furloughed – there has been no opportunity to generate revenue.

Thames Steamers Limited is now planning a viable and enjoyable return to the River Thames for next season – through the running of new events, implementation of appropriate protective measures, and collaboration with other local businesses and communities.



Peter Green, *Captain & Company Director*

“The future is still highly uncertain due to COVID-19, yet this funding – alongside the kind generosity of our community over the past few months – has secured the financial backing to allow ‘Alaska’ to continue steaming through to 2021 and hopefully beyond.”

“I had previously reached out to many media outlets following the announcement of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme – as a business with no rateable premises, it did seem a bleak reality that Thames Steamers Limited, and the 1883 Steam Launch ‘Alaska’, would soon become unviable.”

“It has been immensely encouraging to see so much support – from private individuals donating through our GoFundMe since March, to senior Government figures and media lobbying for our industry to establish the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Scheme and the Culture Recovery Fund.”

“The support today from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is invaluable – without them showing that they are ‘Here for Culture’, there was a very real risk that ‘Alaska’ could have degraded to the extent that she was entirely lost.”

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Notes:

- A full press release from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/445-heritage-organisations-saved-by-103-million-investment-from-government>