

## Millennium

The Millennium Commission was established to assist communities in marking the close of the second millennium and celebrating the start of the third. The Commission has used Lottery money to encourage projects throughout the nation which enjoy public support and which will be lasting monuments to the achievements and aspirations of the people in the country. Initiatives supported have been put forward by communities and represent the largest single non-government investment ever made in the social and community infrastructure throughout the United Kingdom.

- By September 2001 the Millennium Commission had awarded more than 2,200 grants worth a total of nearly £2 billion.
- 550 village halls, 50 inner city regeneration projects and 100 new visitor attractions have been supported.
- 600 churches with new bells, floodlights and facilities have been funded.
- 18,000 Millennium Awards have been made to individuals.
- Over 1,400 Millennium Festival events have been funded.

The Commission's work is divided into the Capital Projects Programme, the Millennium Award Scheme, the Millennium Festival and the Millennium Experience.





## Case Study

### **Eden Project, Cornwall**

Eden Project, Cornwall was awarded a grant of £43 million. It comprises two giant biomes covering 15 hectares, the size of 35 football pitches, and housing thousands of plants from around the world, promoting environmental awareness and understanding. Since it fully opened in March 2001 1 million people have visited the project.



## Capital projects

The Commission has made awards to 27 major capital projects across the United Kingdom. It has also supported over 170 smaller one-off capital schemes with regional or local impact, and 'umbrella projects': applications which cover groups or schemes with a common theme, often including projects which individually would be too small to apply.

The Commission identified three strategic criteria for its awards to capital projects. It was decided to support projects of all sizes, and the Commission has deliberately funded a range of projects of national, regional and local significance. The Commission was also determined to achieve a good spread of projects across the country, while making grant on the basis of the merit and quality of individual projects. The final criterion was accessibility: projects funded by the Commission must be accessible to all sectors of the community.

To date the Commission has awarded 199 projects on over 3,000 sites a total of up to £1,280 million in grant. This portfolio of capital projects is incredibly diverse. They range from the widely acclaimed Tate Modern on Bankside, London and the Moss Side Youth Powerhouse providing facilities for young people in Manchester, to Millennium Greens which will create up to 250 new green spaces for communities in rural and urban areas. Other projects include the 5,000-mile National Cycle Network and the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff which hosted the final of the 1999 Rugby World Cup. The public already has access to 138 projects and this number will increase substantially by the end of 2001.

Early indications are that projects which have opened are enjoying success, with average visitor numbers 30% above target. The Commission recognises, however, that much work remains to be done to ensure their long-term viability and is in negotiation with other bodies regarding the establishment of a fund to refurbish the science centres it has supported.

## Millennium Awards

The Commission also provides grants to individuals to enable them to achieve a personal aspiration while benefiting the community in which they live. The Awards have been described as 'enabling ordinary people to do extraordinary things'. In order to ensure that Award schemes meet properly identified needs and are managed by experts in the relevant fields, the Commission makes grants to existing organisations, known as Award Partners, which then recommend grants for individuals. Award Partners include MIND, Age Concern and Raleigh International.

The Commission has now offered £100 million to 100 Award Partners running 107 schemes which will eventually benefit some 32,000 individuals; 18,000 Awards have already been made. There is no typical Award winner: the youngest is 7 years old and the oldest is 96. Another £100 million will be invested in a permanent endowment fund to ensure that grants to individuals will continue to be made in the future.

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A Fellowship has also been set up to recognise and celebrate the achievements of individual Award recipients who have completed their Awards and to encourage networking and the sharing of ideas and experience. There are already over 7,800 Fellows who can keep in touch through the new starpeople website [www.starpeople.org.uk](http://www.starpeople.org.uk), which also provides them with the opportunity of setting up their own associated websites about their projects.

## Millennium Festival

A contribution of £25.5 million was made by the Commission to the Festival fund of up to £100 million established by United Kingdom Lottery distributors. This represents the largest cross-Lottery distributor initiative ever undertaken.

Awards were split between larger grants of over £5,000 and smaller grants of between £500 and £5,000. The Commission has funded nearly 400 larger awards to a total of £20.5 million and over 1,000 of the smaller awards to a total of £5 million.

In addition, the Commission provided £5 million to fund celebrations over the First Weekend of the year 2000 in 22 towns and cities. A further £6.2 million was made available to help 32 towns and cities celebrate New Year's Eve 2000.

Over 20 million people attended or participated in Commission-funded Festival events.

## Millennium Experience

The Millennium Experience comprised both the Dome at Greenwich and a major National Programme co-ordinated by the New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC). The Commission's total contribution to these was £630 million.

The Millennium Experience at Greenwich was not the success that was hoped and the original projections of visitor numbers proved to be too ambitious. Over 6.5 million visitors did, however, attend and visitor satisfaction figures for the Dome were extremely high. The Dome has also made a huge contribution to the regeneration of the Greenwich Peninsula.

The National Programme of events and activities involved schools, voluntary groups, churches, local authorities and businesses. These initiatives were linked to the theme of the Experience: that the new millennium is 'a time to make a difference'.

Case Study

## Odyssey, Belfast

Odyssey, Belfast was awarded £45 million to provide a mixture of education, entertainment and sporting activities, helping to play an important role in the regeneration of Belfast. Odyssey's 10,000 seat Arena, the largest in Ireland, provides a new venue for international sporting events and sporting activities while the new science centre, W5, is Northern Ireland's first purpose-built interactive discovery centre.

