

27th January

## £348,000 grant to preserve Tone Works, in Wellington

By [Phil Hill](#)



**A UNIQUE 225-year-old textile site in Wellington has been awarded a £348,420 grant by Historic England as part of the government's Culture Recovery Fund.**

Tone Works is the well-preserved cloth finishing works of the Fox Brothers textile company, where the final stages in the production of fabrics such as serge were carried out.

Fox Brothers was founded by Thomas Fox in 1796 and grew to dominate the textile industry in the South West, with Tone Works completing the finishing stages on cloth sent from across the country.

When the site closed in 2000, most of its traditional textile working machinery and equipment remained in place, some with part-finished pieces of cloth left in the machines.



Tone Works

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Believed to be the only surviving example of its kind in England, Tone Works reveals stages in the development in the textile industry, with machinery from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as manufacturing power sources including a water wheel in use after the Second World War.

Ross Simmonds, regional director for Historic England South West, said: "Tone Works is of great historical importance for many reasons.

"It's a really well preserved example of a finishing works and as such helps us understand the evolution of the stages and processes involved in the textile industry, which had such an impact on Britain's economy.



"It also has great local significance as the major employer in Wellington for over a century.

"Generations of people in the town will have worked here or been related to someone who did and will have strong memories associated with it."



Tone Works

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The grant has been awarded to the owners, Somerset West and Taunton Council, and will be used for the first phase of work to bring the Tone Works site back to life and give it a new role in the community.

The long-term vision is to build on its unique heritage, turning it into a resource for local groups and harnessing its proximity to the River Tone to create a wildlife-rich environment.

The grant, for the first stage of work, is from part of the Culture Recovery Fund called the Heritage Stimulus Fund and is administered on behalf of the government by Historic England.

As well as rescuing the nation's precious heritage sites and buildings, like Tone Works, the injection of cash will protect livelihoods for some of the most vulnerable heritage specialists and contractors working in the sector.

At Tone Works, specialist conservation contractors will be employed, along with engineers, ecologists and joiners.

Heritage Minister Nigel Huddleston said: "Wellington's Tone Works is an important example of our country's industrial past and how it continues to define culture in our towns and cities today.

"I am pleased that through the Culture Recovery Fund we are protecting heritage, saving jobs, and ensuring these places are preserved for generations to come."

Duncan Wilson, Historic England chief executive, said: "Historic places which have played such an important role in our nation's past are being supported by the government's Culture Recovery Fund, so that they can remain part of our collective future.

"This funding is a lifeline, allowing essential work to take place and providing employment for skilled craft workers who help keep historic places alive and the wheels of the heritage sector turning."

Cllr Marcus Kravis, executive member for assets at SWT, said: "Tone Works is an important part of our industrial heritage which has great local and national significance.

"We are delighted to receive this funding from the Culture Recovery Fund which will enable us to take the first step in our journey towards the preservation of this historic site, restoring and protecting this extraordinary asset for the community."