

Carew Castle cafe and walled garden plan expected to get go-ahead

Big plans for castle's future

A CALL to invest up to £231,000 in a major development to increase the number of visitors to Carew Castle is expected to get the go-ahead from Pembrokeshire Coast National Park members today (Wednesday).

Members are asked to approve the construction of a café at the castle's walled garden, at a cost of £84,175.

The expenditure would come from the park's reserves.

Members are also asked to approve a possible £146,950 towards previously approved walled garden proposals, which could bring the total cost to £231,125.

Those proposals seek to develop the walled garden, providing, in addition to the café, landscaping, an adventure

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play area, an undercover tented area, a school storage area, development of a 'night garden' for Dark Sky discovery, and interpretation panels.

Development of the walled garden area of the castle was started in 2012, but never completed due to limited funding.

A report for members states a Tourism Amenity Investment Support scheme (TAIS) grant is currently being considered by Visit Wales, which would cover 80 per cent of the cost of the walled garden proposals, with £30,000 approved from park budgets to make up the deficit.

The decision date for the

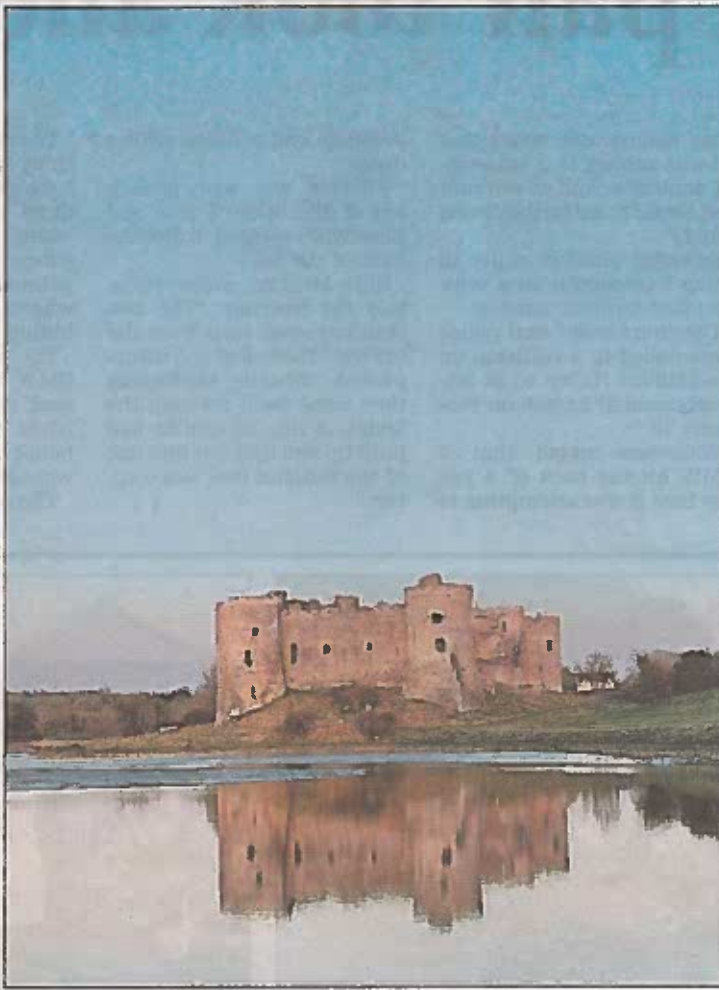
grant funding is after the national park meeting, on September 29.

If the grant is given the go-ahead, the cost to the Park for both parts would total £113,565 from a current capital receipts reserve of £280,949.

If the requests are approved, it is expected the café would be ready to open by late March of next year, and the walled garden project by winter 2018-19.

The report states visitor numbers to the castle, and nearby mill, have increased dramatically in recent years.

The report concedes there is a financial risk to running a café, but states: "Not going ahead is a risk, as our offer will remain stagnant and does not provide visitors, especially local people, a reason to return to visit Carew."



Carew Castle is likely to see a walled garden and cafe as part of future plans. PICTURE: Getty Images.