Cherished churches and cathedral’s choral street



Members of Wells Cathedral’s Vicars’ Choral stand outside their homes on Vicars’ Close. Photo: © Mark Pickthall.

From restoring buildings with centuries of choral heritage to championing environmental sustainability, these heritage gems will thrive again thanks to National Lottery players.

In the heart of England’s smallest Cathedral city, Vicars’ Close is the oldest intact exclusively residential street in Europe.

This street has been the home of Wells Cathedral’s adult choir members for over 650 years, but its historic buildings are in poor condition. We’ve awarded £4.4m to address a backlog of much-needed repairs.

Vicars’ Close, together with five beloved places of worship, will receive a total of £7.4m in National Lottery support.



Vicars' Close seen from the roof of Wells Cathedral. The project will engage people from all walks of life with the heritage of choral music, inspiring new generations to take part. Photo: Wells Cathedral.

Saving heritage and connecting communities

This funding will reconnect people with beautiful buildings, celebrate local history and realise the potential of the natural heritage these places of worship steward.

We’re supporting organisations and communities to reimagine and revitalise cherished parts of the UK’s religious heritage into community hubs.

And for five of these six projects, our investment will also enable buildings to come off, or move towards coming off, Historic England’s ‘At Risk’ Register.



St Mary's has consulted the community on activities to run between 2024 and 2027, from helping young people make a film about the history of Totnes to a pop-up wellbeing café. Photo: Adam Glennon.

Projects receiving funding

In addition to Vicars' Close, during our committees' recent meetings across the UK we awarded funding to:

St Peter's Church in Forncett, South Norfolk (awarded £580,000) will use our funding for urgent repairs of weather-induced damage and to develop activities and resources with the community to celebrate the church's architectural and ecological heritage. St Peter's is also aiming to become an 'Eco Church' which includes committing to reduce the church's impact on the environment.

St Hilda's Church, **Hartlepool** (awarded £587,000) will make a range of extensive repairs and run heritage events and creative activities to engage the community. Their vision is to reposition the church as a sustainable hub for social and civic life in Hartlepool.



St Mary's Church in Totnes will power their new heating system using renewable energy. Photo: St Mary's Totnes.

St Mary’s Church in Devon (awarded £965,000) will become an inviting, lively and accessible hub for the local Totnes community. The project will repair the building, install a new heating system and create a flexible space for community activities. A three-year activity programme will welcome people into the church and provide training opportunities like WEA employability courses.

Development funding will help two Essex organisations advance their plans to restore their historic buildings and build greater links with local communities, in preparation for applying for a larger future grant from us. **St Osyth Priory and Parish Trust near Clacton-on-Sea** has been awarded £618,000 and will develop sustainable sources of income. **St Andrew’s Althorne Parochial Church Council in Althorne** has been awarded £145,000 to make major repairs to save the church from permanent closure.



Built on the site of a sixth-century century monastery on a dramatic headland, the history of St Hilda's Church harks back to Northumbria's earliest Christian history. Photo: Ian Pounder.

A sustainable future for places of worship

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Places of worship, and the buildings associated with them, are some of our oldest and most cherished historic buildings and many play a key role as a gateway to our heritage and communities.

"Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, these six fantastic projects will take vital steps towards securing a brighter and more sustainable future for places of worship and reimagine how they can connect with and benefit their communities.

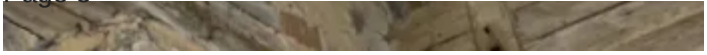
"We are delighted to invest in these places of worship, ensuring that their heritage will be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future."

Get funding for a place of worship

Take a look at our places of worship page for information on what we can fund and case studies of projects we've supported.



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A Natterer's bat flying inside the roof of St Lawrence church, Radstone. Credit: Chris Damant, Bernwood Ecology.



communities care for their bats

The new public green space welcomes visitors to Gloucester Cathedral. Credit Gloucester Cathedral.



hedral

Detail from a Burne-Jones stained glass window at Birmingham Cathedral. Credit: Birmingham Cathedral.

Divine Beauty: restoring Birmingham Cathedral's stained glass treasures