

Canterbury Cathedral is delighted at the earmarked funding including a development grant announced today by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its £19.4million Canterbury Journey project.

The Canterbury Journey will radically transform the accessibility of Canterbury Cathedral. It will safeguard an iconic building which embodies England's story, increase the number and broaden the range of those who journey to it, and enrich their experience.

- A new Welcome Centre will offer improved learning, hospitality and public space
- New trails will guide visitors through the Cathedral and its newly landscaped Precincts, interpreting their journey and revealing unseen treasures from Canterbury's past
- New visitors (including children and families) will be able to join the journey as a programme of outreach to schools and communities unfolds
- A new Pilgrim Pass scheme will swell the company of contemporary pilgrims and deepen the Cathedral's relationship with its neighbours
- The fabric of the Cathedral's western end, currently endangered, will be restored and enhanced, allowing Canterbury's journey to continue

Canterbury Cathedral was founded by St Augustine in 597AD. Lord Hattersley has called it 'England in stone' and it has been a world-famous centre of pilgrimage since the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket within its walls on 29 December 1170. It is part of Canterbury's World Heritage Site, and is famous for its Romanesque and Gothic

architecture, mediaeval stained glass, and iconic Bell Harry tower. It is the mother church of 85m Anglican Christians across the world, the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a destination for one million visitors every year.

The Very Revd Dr Robert Willis, the Dean of Canterbury, said: "This initial support from the HLF is a public endorsement of the cathedral's plans both for maintaining its wonderful architecture, as well as enabling even more people to be a creative part of the cathedral's community and enjoy all that it has to offer. We are hugely grateful to the Trustees of the HLF for their very generous support. Now we have two years to crystallise our plans – and to raise the £7.4 million of matched funding that is required! That will be an immense challenge, but it is one that my colleagues and I accept with relish."

Angela Dean, Trustee Heritage Lottery Fund, added: "Canterbury Cathedral is an extraordinary part of our collective heritage; regardless of faith, its magnificent structure cannot fail to impress. Proposals for the conservation of the site will ensure a resilience for the future but will also be a catalyst for much wider community involvement. This is just the beginning of a long but exciting journey for the cathedral and those who work there, and we will be supporting them as they continue to develop the project."

Bernard Donoghue, Director, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, added: "We are delighted with the news of this significant grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund; Canterbury Cathedral is one of the most important, most visited and most loved attractions in the UK and this grant will enable the Cathedral to provide a deeper and richer visitor experience for its visitors from around the world."

Colin Carmichael, Chief Executive of Canterbury City Council which supported the bid, said: "We're delighted at this marvellous news which will benefit not only the cathedral but the whole city. The cathedral is the heart of the Canterbury journey, on which our universities, businesses and the council are also travelling. The fact that this journey is recognised with such a significant award gives the whole city even more confidence in our future."

Notes to editors

Canterbury Cathedral is the Mother Church of the Anglican Communion and seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The cathedral is both a holy place and part of a World Heritage Site. For further information please see the Canterbury Cathedral website.

Further information

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Canterbury Cathedral celebrates!