Vital £1.6m for West Midlands' most important places of worship

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The money comes from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme*, which is funded by HLF and administered by English Heritage.

Across the region these vital grants will help repair places of worship at risk including St Francis Xavier's Church in Hereford and Church of St Botolph in Newbold-on-Avon, Warwickshire

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Historic places of worship are an irreplaceable part of our heritage that continues to play a vital role within local communities today. In the last ten years, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested £155million into these wonderful buildings and I am delighted we are able to continue supporting congregations across the West Midlands to safeguard them for future generations."

Tim Johnston, English Heritage's Planning Director for the West Midlands, said: "We are delighted that these important buildings will benefit from HLF funding and English Heritage's expert advice. Many of these places of worship are only maintained through the hard work of small and hard-pressed communities. Today's grants will fund essential repairs and go some way to helping the people who care for these wonderful buildings on behalf of us all."

St Francis Xavier's Church, Hereford, Herefordshire
Grant: £35,000
St Francis Xavier's is a Grade II* listed Church. It is built in the Doric Greek fashion which was popular in the 19th century, and so thousands of trade halls and colleges follow the style. Works will comprise repair of limewash/render at high levels on the main church building and elsewhere; also repairs to stop water ingress due to poor detailing at coping stone level.

Church of St Botolph, Newbold-on-Avon, Warwickshire
Grant: £64,000
The Grade I listed Church of St Botolph dates from the 15th century but it is built on the site of an earlier church, evident by an exposed portion of early fourteenth century tiled floor near the chancel arch. The chancel was largely reconstructed in the 19th century. Works will include the replacement of the tower roof, masonry repairs to the tower parapet and wall, along with masonry repairs to the south clerestory window tracery and parapet.

Notes to editors

*The Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and administered by English Heritage on behalf of both organisations.

Until 2010, the scheme was jointly funded by HLF and EH. Since then, HLF has provided the majority of the funding to ensure that the scheme continues in its current form until 2013.

Listed places of worship in England of all denominations and faiths are eligible for grants which support urgent repairs to the fabric of the building with a focus on projects costing less than £250,000. There is a two-stage application process

with development funding available at Stage One to help work up proposals.

To be eligible for the next round of funding, applicants need to apply by 30th June for Grade I and II* and 30th September for Grade II listed places of worship. www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage is the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment. It provides advice on how best to conserve England's heritage for the benefit of everyone. While most of England's heritage is in private hands, it works with all who come into contact with it - landowners, businesses, planners and developers, national, regional and local government, the Third Sector, local communities and the general public - to help them understand, value, care for and enjoy England's historic environment.

It is also entrusted with the custodianship of over 400 sites and monuments which together form the national collection of built and archaeological heritage. These include some of the most important monuments of human history such as Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall.

Further information

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