£650,000 to repair Wales' historic churches this Christmas

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The £16,800 grant awarded to the church will fund urgent repairs required to ensure the building's sustainability. In addition, the project will provide research opportunities on the church's graves and will enable the development of a new website.

The grant comes at a particularly poignant time for the church at the end of 2013. This year has marked the centenary of R.S. Thomas' birth, which has already been celebrated by a number of activities in the church, including the hosting of a literary festival in his name earlier this year.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said: "Places of Worship are a powerful, visual connection with our past and can be found in almost every town and village across Wales. Not only will our awards secure the immediate future of these particular buildings, it will also give the congregations the opportunity to adapt them, where necessary, so they can be enjoyed more widely throughout the community and in turn enable them be more enjoyed by many, for many more years to come."

Welcoming the award announcement, Archbishop of Wales, Barry Morgan, who recently gifted the R S Thomas crucifix to St Michael's Church, Eglwysfach, said: "At this time of year, we are particularly thankful for the support given to our places of worship in Wales and the HLF continuously provides this financial support. The eight churches are all grateful for the investment, but I am especially delighted that St Michael's Church has received a grant award during a year of centenary celebrations marking the life of R.S. Thomas."

Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St. Illtyd's Church, Llanharry
A grant of £144,200 has been awarded to the Grade II listed St Illtyd's Church in Llanharry, near Pontyclun. Although believed to be established around 1173, there is thought to have been a church on this site since the 5th century. The church was rebuilt in 1868 by the architect, David Vaughan and a vestry added in 1930. The grant will go towards stabilising the church's stone bellcote, re-slating the nave roof and the undertaking of stonework repair. In addition, the installation of a new, energy efficient heating system has been proposed.

Trinity Methodist Church, Penarth
Trinity Methodist Church has been awarded a £46,100 grant for urgent repair works required. The Grade II listed church dates back to 1899 when the foundation stone was laid on 27 September 1899 and the church which was opened on January 2, 1901, designed and built in the Victorian Gothic-revival style. Plans by project volunteers include conducting historical research to produce a Trinity heritage website, printed guidebooks, exhibition displays, DVD guide and guided tours of the church.

St. Peter's Church, Llanbedr
St. Peter's Church is a Grade II listed 11th century building in the village of Llanbedr, near Crickhowell in the Brecon

Beacons National Park. A £131,700 grant has been awarded towards urgent repair works to the stone tiled roofs of the porch in addition to the vestry and chancel. The installation of photovoltaic (PV) panes has been proposed to increase the energy efficiency of the building and to ensure its future sustainability.

St. Michael's Church, Troedyraur

A £55,500 grant to St Michael's Church, Troedyraur in Newcastle Emlyn will enable urgent repairs needed to windows and the roof of the building. The Grade II listed church in its current form was built in 1850 but churches have been situated on the site since the 8th century. It is listed as an exceptional example of Gothic architecture and the churchyard contains the graves of a number of famous non-conformist priests.

St Michael's Church, Eglwysfach, Ceredigion

St. Michael's Church is a Grade II* listed church in Wales building in Eglwysfach, Ceredigion. Their vicar from 1954-67 was the controversial poet R.S Thomas who radically changed the interior of the church during this period. It is now known as the 'black and white church'. In 2013 the church hosted an R S Thomas literary festival as well as a flower festival. Project plans include urgent repairs to the church's parapet and windows as well as the establishment of a partnership with the local historical society to research graves in the graveyard and to create a new website.

Tabernacle United Reformed Church, Pembrokeshire

The Tabernacle is a Grade II listed United Reformed Church and requires urgent repairs. A grant of £96,500 has been awarded to the 19th century church and will go towards roof repairs, new rainwater goods, re-pointing and dry rot treatment.

All Saints' Church, Oystermouth

A £125,000 grant has been awarded to All Saints' Church located in the Mumbles on the Gower peninsula and will go towards urgent repairs required to the roof of the building. Parts of the Grade II listed building date back to the 12th century and the church has been adapted a number of times in the intervening period.

St Bridget's Llansantffraed, Talybont-on-Usk

The Grade II listed St Bridget's Church in Llansantffraed has been awarded a £31,300 grant by the HLF which will be used in the re-flooring of the building. The church can be dated back to the 9th century with links to Ireland and the Irish Church with the dedication of the church to St Bride, the Mary of Ireland. Among the memorials within the parish, is one erected in the memory of the poet, Henry Vaughan, who died in 1695.

Notes to editors

Grants for Places of Worship scheme

Listed places of worship in the UK of all denominations and faiths are eligible for HLF 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.

Under the new programme, applications can now be submitted for new capital works but these costs should cost no more than around 15% of the total overall budget.