Urgent repairs to East Midlands historic places of worship

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced £782,700 of Lottery funding to help secure the future of eight of the East Midlands' most historic places of worship, including the final resting place of infamous Romantic poet, Lord Byron.

This vital money is helping congregations address a back log of urgent repairs to listed churches and chapels at risk across the East Midlands' including the St Mary Magdalene Church in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire; St Margaret's Church in Somersby, Lincolnshire; Church of St John the Evangelist in Donisthorpe, Leicestershire; and the Church of St Werburgh in Spondon, Derby.

St Mary Magdalene Church in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire – final resting place of Lord Byron and his mathematician daughter Ada Lovelace – is amongst the first 35 churches across the UK to be awarded a grant through HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship programme.

Launched in March, it supercedes the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. In addition to providing money for urgent repairs, the programme is now also funding new works that support and encourage greater community use and engagement, helping to increase the number of people who take an active interest in these historic buildings and who will care for them in the future. As well as much needed conservation work, today's grants will support the provision of new toilets and kitchens; create historical exhibitions, leaflets and guide books; commission skills training for volunteer tour guides; and develop digital marketing tools including websites and web-based tools such as apps.

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: "There is a place of worship in almost every ward, village and town across the East Midlands, providing a very powerful visual connection with our past. Not only will our awards secure the immediate future of these particular buildings, it will also empower congregations to adapt them, where necessary, so they can be enjoyed more widely throughout the community and in turn enable them be more sustainable for the future."

Anthony Streeten, Planning and Conservation Director at English Heritage, East Midlands, which provides expert advice for the programme, said: "The continuing commitment of the Heritage Lottery Fund to historic places of worship, coupled with our specialist knowledge of these buildings and their repair needs, has helped to underpin the commitment of congregations facing costly yet urgently necessary repairs. This vital work marks an important step towards ensuring a sustainable future for these cherished buildings at the heart of their communities."

Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St Mary Magdalene, Hucknall in Nottinghamshire
A grant of £133,500 has been awarded to the Grade II* listed St Mary Magdalene Church, the final resting place of the Romantic poet Lord Byron and his daughter Ada Lovelace. Dating from the 12th century, the building was considerably extended during the 19th century and includes several coloured glass windows by the renowned Victorian designer Charles Kempe. In the first instance, this grant will now enable a programme of urgent repairs to make the building secure. In addition, this grant will enable the church to maximise its historical connection to Lord Byron: new historical information and exhibition materials including a new website will be produced. Commercial opportunities and initiatives

will be explored to provide a sustainable legacy for the church; and volunteers will receive training in research, IT skills and stewarding.

St Margaret's Church, Somersby in Lincolnshire
A grant of £142,200 has been awarded St Margaret's Church, which is both Grade II* listed and a scheduled ancient monument. The poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson was born in the parish and was baptised at the church. This grant will now enable a programme of urgent repair works to the roof, rainwater goods, masonry, the south porch door as well as upgrading the building's heating and lighting. In addition it will fund historical research of the church for new historical interpretation in the church and create a website based on the link with Tennyson's birthplace.

The remaining six grants announced today are final round to be awarded under Repair Grants for Places of Worship, a joint scheme funded by HLF with expert guidance from English Heritage:

- Church of St John the Evangelist, Donisthope, Leicestershire (grant £66,000)
- Serbian Orthodox Church of St George, Leicester (grant £45,000)
- Church of St Michael and All Angels, Thorpe Satchville, Melton, Leicestershire (grant £143,000)
- Church of St Peter, Raithby Cum Maltby, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire (grant £56,000)
- Church of St Benedict, Candlesbury, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire (grant £107,000)
- Church of St Werburgh, Spondon, Derby (grant £90,000)

For more information about applying for HLF's funding for places of worship visit the Grants for places of worship programme page.

Notes to editors

New 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 Round 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.

Funding for places of worship in England
Until 2010, the Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme was jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage (EH). Since then, HLF had provided the majority of the funding whilst English Heritage had continued to administer the fund on behalf of both organisations. This scheme is now closed for new applications.

HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship programme is funded and administered solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund with the exception of Scotland; however English Heritage will continue to provide expert advice in England.

Funding for places of worship in Scotland
As with the Repair Grants for Places of Worship programme, the new Grants for Places of Worship programme in Scotland is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

Funding for places of worship in Wales and Northern Ireland
As with the Repair Grants for Places of Worship programme, the new Grants for Places of Worship programme in both Wales and Northern Ireland is funded solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Further information

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