Vital £2m Lottery Funding for West Midlands Churches

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The grants are offering much needed funds to places of worship at risk across the West Midlands including St Milburga's Church in Stoke St Milborough, Shropshire; St Laurence Church in Shotteswell, Stratford-upon-Avon; Church of St Thomas in Butterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire; Church of St Peter, Pirton, Wychavon, Worcestershire; Collegiate Church of St Mary in Warwick.

This money comes from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme*, which is currently funded by HLF and administered by English Heritage. In June 2013, it will be superseded by HLF's new £30million, UK-wide Grants for Places of Worship** programme. This new initiative will continue to prioritise urgent structural repairs; however it will also enable applicants to apply for funding to support new works - such as the provision of toilets and kitchens - that will improve the functionality of these precious buildings making them fit for the future.

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Historic places of worship form prominent and much loved landmarks in our villages, towns and cities across the West Midlands. They are unique buildings that bring local communities together for a variety of reasons from worship through to culture and leisure. Since 1994, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested more than £500million into these precious buildings across the UK and with these new grants we aim to ensure even more are secured for future generations to enjoy."

Tim Johnston, English Heritage Planning and Conservation Director for West Midlands, said: "Listed places of worship make up an elemental part of the historic fabric of England. They are familiar and much loved landmarks and it is crucial they are cared for and repaired. Thanks to the joint working between the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage these wonderful buildings, which mean so much to so many, will remain part of our story for years to come."

£324,000 has been awarded to the Collegiate Church of St Mary in Warwick. A Grade I Listed church, it was originally founded in 1123 by Roger de Newburgh, the Earl of Warwick. Much of the medieval fabric of the church was lost in the fire of Warwick in 1694, however the Beauchamp Chapel built 1443 – 1464 and containing the tomb of Elizabeth I's favourite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester survived. The chapel also contains the tombs of Dudley's brother Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and Robert's four-year old son the 'Noble Impe'. This church will now undergo vital repairs including the dismantling and reassembly of the flying buttresses and pinnacles of the chapel, adding support, anchoring and repairs to stonework and damaged stone mullions.

£123,000 has been awarded to the Church of St Peter in Kineton, Stratford-upon-Avon. This Grade II* listed church's tower is late 13th century with amendments in the 14th and 15th century. The west doorway is a fine example of Early English, and the top of the tower has a pierced parapet and crocketed pinnacles of the 15th century. The rest of the church is a rebuild of 1873-89 possibly by John Belcher. The Victorian work is in the Perpendicular style. This grant will be used for repairs and conservation of masonry and is at imminent risk of total or partial collapse.

Notes to editors

*The Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme was 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 had provided the majority of the funding to ensure that the scheme continued in its current form until June 2013.

Listed places of worship in England of all denominations and faiths were eligible for grants which support urgent repairs to the fabric of the building with a focus on projects costing less than £250,000. There was a two-stage application process with development funding available at Stage One to help work up proposals. This scheme is now closed to new applications.

**Grants for Places of Worship

HLF's Grants for Places of Worship Programme is now open to applications. It is funded and administered solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund in England, Wales and Northern Ireland although English Heritage continues to provide expert advice in England.

In Scotland, the new programme is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

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. English Heritage website.

Further information

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