# More than £670,000 for Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Somerset Historic Places of Worship

17/02/2011

The grants were awarded, across Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset and Somerset, under the organisations' joint Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme*.

Nationally, since 2002, almost £140million of grants have been awarded for more than 1,500 projects at Grade I and II historic places of worship through the joint  scheme, which is the largest single source of funds to help congregations to care for historic churches, chapels, synagogues and other historic places of worship.

Despite the challenging economic climate, HLF and English Heritage have been able to maintain the planned level of funding and support for places of worship in the current financial year. The Heritage Lottery Fund has provided an extra £9million to maintain the £25million value of the total grants budget for 2010 – 11 (further funds will be offered to Grade II places of worship in March). HLF has also confirmed that it will continue its increased level of support in future years. This means that despite English Heritage having to withdraw most of its contribution for new awards from now on, the scheme can continue in its current form. There will be no reduction in expert advice English Heritage staff and local support officers give to congregations all over the South West.

Places of worship getting grants for urgent repairs in the South West region this year include:

• **The Church of St James the Great**, in Westerleigh, South Gloucestershire, a Grade 1 listed rural Anglican parish church, of 13th century origins receiving £161,000 for porch and roof repairs.

• **St Mary's Church**, Lydiard Tregoze, Swindon, a parish church of 13th century origins containing multi-layered wall and ceiling paintings dating from the 13th-15th and 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. These were uncovered during the early 20th century restoration of the church under architect CE Ponting. St Mary's has been offered £50, 000 for repairs to the walls, roof and wall paintings.

• **Holy Trinity Church**, Cleeve in Somerset, built in 1840 in a Romanesque style has been offered £42,000 for repairs to its two-stage tower and North transept gable.

• **St Lawrence church in Folke**, West Dorset will receive £94,000 for urgent repairs to its roof. This parish church was entirely rebuilt in 1628 and was extensively restored in 1875 and the interior contains Jacobean joinery, screws and pews.

Andrew Vines, South West Regional Director of English Heritage, said: "Thanks to the generosity of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and ultimately therefore of Lottery players, our historic places of worship in direct need still have the vital safety net of the Repair Grants scheme. Without it, many brave but struggling congregations would be faced with watching their beloved churches and chapels falling into ruin. Instead, the combination of Heritage Lottery Fund money and English Heritage advice is seeing these wonderful buildings revived and restored and becoming ever more central to their communities as places of prayer and celebration and as a hub for local services."

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "Historic places of worship are one of our most treasured cultural assets. They occupy a unique position at the heart of communities up and down the country, and are a focus for

so many civil and social activities in addition to their central purpose as a place for prayer and contemplation. Places of worship are one of the most instantly recognisable features of our cultural landscape, and they continue to inspire people to get involved with and learn about their shared history. This is at the very core of what the Heritage Lottery Fund wants to achieve and the reason we have substantially increased our investment to the programme."

Revd Cannon David Harrex, the Team Rector from St James the Great in Westerleigh where a photo opportunity is being held at 11am on Friday February 18th 2011, said: "We were extremely grateful to English Heritage for considering giving a grant for the roof repairs to the church of St James the Great at Westerleigh. It is fantastic news that English Heritage have now decided to provide a full grant which enables St James Church to remain open and continue to provide a Christian witness to the community of Westerleigh and surrounding area. The Friends of St James and the Parochial Church Council will now work on gaining the legal requirement to proceed now this fantastic offer has been received. Thank you English Heritage."

**Notes to editors**

Repair grants for Places of Worship Scheme: 2010/2011
Grant offers to Grade I & II churches in the South West (Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Somerset)

**Church of St Mary**, Lydiard Tregoze, Swindon, Wiltshire - £50,000
**Church of St James the Great**, Westerleigh, South Gloucestershire - £161,000
**Parish Church of St Lawrence**, Folke, West Dorset - £94,000
**Church of St Edward**, Hawling, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire - £99,000
**Church of St Mary the Virgin**, Cowley, Gloucestershire - £84,000
**Holy Trinity Church**, Cleeve, North Somerset - £42,000
**Church of St Peter and St Paul**, Wincanton, Somerset - £52,000
**St Andrew's Church**, Aller, South Somerset - £92,000

TOTAL £674,000

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

The scheme, in a slightly different form, began in 1996. Before then it was difficult to secure funding on the scale required to help a place of worship facing closure or demolition because of high repair costs.

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.

**The Listed Places of Worship Scheme** makes payments equivalent to the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings primarily in use for public worship. In the 2009-10 financial year, 3,745 claims were paid UK-wide, with a total value of £14,963,412.67, giving an average grant of £3,996. Since last year's Spending Review, works on clocks, pews, bells, organs and professional services such as architects' fees are no longer eligible.

English Heritage is the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment. We provide advice on how best to conserve England's heritage for the benefit of everyone. While most of England's heritage is in private hands, we work 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.

We are 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. www.english-heritage.org.uk

**Further information**

Sam Rae, COI News and PR SW on 0117 917 5342 020 7591 6027 or lbates@hlf.org.uk

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