HLF spreads some Christmas cheer to Vale of Glamorgan church

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The grant will safeguard its nationally important medieval interior and train volunteers to share its heritage, including depictions of the seven deadly sins, with visitors.

The Grade 1 listed church is home to a unique collection of medieval artefacts and wall paintings integral to the story of early Christianity in south Wales.

A number of wall paintings that were limewashed out during the reign of Edward VI, and had remained hidden since 1547, were rediscovered during repair work at the church in 2007. One of the most important discoveries is the wall painting of ‘St. George and the Dragon’, thought to be the largest known painting in Wales to portray the legend, and possibly the largest and best preserved in Britain.

The volunteer-led Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St. Cadoc will use the money to conserve the wall paintings as well as its carved timber ‘reredos’ canopies and ornate wooden painted screens.

The grant will also fund modern technology such as digital displays and a sequenced narrative using LED lights, to tell the story of the church’s medieval history in a fun and interactive way. A programme of training opportunities will also be offered to volunteers to provide them with the skills needed to give talks and guided tours to visitors.

The PCC also plans to create educational packs and activities to encourage school groups to get involved in the project. A placement will also be offered for university students in specialist conservation techniques for fine art. Through involving local people in gathering information and research about St. Cadoc’s Church, it is hoped that the project will appeal to the wider community.

Dan Clayton Jones, announced the award to the PCC as his final public appearance as Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales. He said: “St. Cadoc’s Church’s medieval heritage is hugely important to the story of Christianity in Wales and it is vital that it is properly interpreted and conserved for future generations to explore. This project will help tell the story of this fascinating building in a way that will appeal to young people and visitors alike, while ensuring that the site remains a focal point for the whole community.

“I’m delighted that this project is helping to conclude my time with HLF as it embodies everything I like to see in a project. It is inspiring to see local volunteers so passionate about playing their part in taking our heritage forward and in doing so learning new skills. I look forward to returning to the church as a visitor once the project is complete and seeing the difference the funding has made.”

The Venerable Peggy Jackson, Priest-in-Charge of Llancarfan, said: The PCC are privileged to be entrusted with the care of these wall paintings, which appeared so suddenly as treasures in our midst, and also of the reredos, which has yet to reveal its true colours. We are very aware of the responsibility that we carry for completing the work, and of the great confidence placed in us by the HLF, in making this grant, for which we are very grateful. As a community we are also excited by the prospect of what is still to come, and look forward to learning more, and sharing more, with the many visitors who will be finding their way to Llancarfan in the years ahead.

*HLF awarded an initial grant of £24,600 to develop the proposals in March 2010. This announcement confirms that the full grant of £541,900 has been secured. The project will also complement urgent repair work completed at the church through an Repairs to Places of Worship grant awarded by HLF back in 2009.