# Taking Forward Our Church Heritage

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Three heritage projects in Wales, who rely heavily on the support and dedication of volunteers have been given a total of £1.2m by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The three projects, Taking Forward our Church Heritage, the restoration of the Bonded Stores in Narberth and the Copper Kingdom Project in Amlwch and will also create invaluable opportunities for people of all ages to learn about our rich heritage.

Dan Clayton Jones, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales, said: “These three projects rely heavily on the commitment of volunteers who make a huge contribution to the preservation and celebration of our heritage here in Wales.

“Volunteering is a cornerstone of HLF projects and, according to research, on average 13 volunteers are involved in every heritage project in Wales. This £1.2 million cash boost will provide many thousands of volunteers with more opportunities to gain additional training in modern and traditional skills.

“Learning is not just about schools and children; it is about offering different opportunities for everyone to develop their understanding of heritage in a way appropriate to their needs, interests and backgrounds. As well as making a tangible impact on heritage, these grants will provide people with the encouragement to succeed in life, develop new skills, and build their confidence and self-esteem.”

A grant of £113,000 has been awarded to The Church in Wales for “Taking Forward our Church Heritage”, a project with the Church in Wales and Cadw to improve and support the maintenance and long-term management of historic places of worship across Wales.

Churches are valued by a wide range of different people, not only those who attend services regularly but for the history and architecture of the buildings which attract an estimated 2 million visitors a year in Wales.

This three-year project will develop knowledge and skills to help care for historic places of worship to ensure we and future generations can use and enjoy them.

A dedicated church heritage officer will be appointed to manage a programme of training for volunteers to learn new skills, provide guidance and develop knowledge of how to conserve and maintain historic buildings.

Rhys Jones is one of the volunteers who has contributed significant amounts of his leisure time in securing the future of Eglwys Dewi Sant Church, the only 'Church in Wales' church in the Diocese of Llandaff which conducts all its services in the Welsh language. Over the past 10 years in his role as church warden and project manager he has been able to ensure the maintenance and conservation of the Welsh Church in St Andrews Crescent right at the heart of the Capital City of Cardiff.

He said: “We have been fortunate to have already benefited from a HLF grant to help us undertake the urgent re-roofing work to the main roof of our church and secure its future. We underwent a steep learning curve to make this happen.

This project for the Church in Wales will be of immense benefit to me and other volunteers throughout the Province of Wales in providing training, support and skills development to take forward future projects via the HLF Scheme.

“Through my work as a volunteer I’ve worked closely with architects and contractors. During this process I have learnt about conservation, expanded my knowledge of the church’s history and developed my project management skills. Bringing everything together is challenging however it’s amazing what you can achieve. What’s more we know that the work we are doing now will be of benefit for years to come.”

Alex Glanville, Head of Property Services for the Church in Wales, said: “So many of us take our churches and chapels for granted and forget that they are there because of the care and attention of the local congregation. This grant will enable us to support our volunteers in their work of caring for the precious heritage of places of worship in Wales.”

To receive a HLF grant all projects must encourage people to learn about their own and other peoples heritage, and these three projects will provide a variety of informal and formal opportunities for learning and training, as well as access to our rich and diverse heritage.

Of the £200million which HLF has awarded in Wales, more than £86.3m has been awarded to projects involving volunteers and 98 per cent of grants awarded in the last year have created volunteering opportunities.

**Note to editors**

**Process**

• The full award has now been secured from HLF.
• These projects have already had development funding to help them plan their proposals.
• Projects may not start immediately. Other funders may still need to make decisions and further planning work might be required. HLF hopes that the thumbs up from our committee will provide leverage with other funders.

**Volunteering/skills/training facts**

• More than £86.3m has been awarded to over 1,484 projects in Wales that involve volunteers. More than 98% of grants awarded in the last year have created volunteering opportunities.
• Volunteering is a cornerstone of HLF projects. Our research indicates that, on average, 13 volunteers are involved in every project, providing nearly 450 hours of volunteering time per project – that’s a total of 667,800 volunteering hours across Wales!
• HLF has awarded £49.3m to 179 projects in Wales that have included delivery of taught programmes for learners of all ages.
• Over 60 projects in Wales have offered participants the chance to learn new skills such as blacksmithing, textile and paper conservation, traditional building skills and dry stone walling.
• 64 new work-based training opportunities have been created in Wales through our Training Bursary programme which aims to address specific skills shortages in the heritage sector.

**Further information**

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