£8m vital funding for England’s places of worship

16/06/2011

The money comes from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme*, which is now funded by HLF and administered by English Heritage.

From Newcastle to Teignbridge, the grants will help repair places of worship at risk across the country including the Church of St Augustine in South London and Bolton Methodist Mission.

The Bishop of London, Dr. Richard Chartres, said: “This is extremely welcome news. Congregations across the UK are the custodians of some of our most important historic buildings and while they provide much joy and inspiration, maintaining them is a heavy financial burden. This vital investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund delivered with the benefit of English Heritage’s conservation expertise, means that local people can continue to safeguard these precious places.”

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the HLF, said; “Historic places of worship are an irreplaceable part of our heritage and sit at the very heart of local communities. Both the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage are delighted that in these difficult times, these vital repairs can still be done, ensuring these wonderful places are secured for future generations.”

Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said; “Thanks to the generosity of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and ultimately Lottery players, the future of these architectural gems has now been safe-guarded. The combination of HLF investment and English Heritage expertise will continue to prevent these places falling into ruin.”

The grants are offering much needed funds to places of worship. £199,000 has been awarded to the Church of St Augustine in Honor Oak Park, South London. Set within a nature reserve, the Church is a local landmark and an example of Gothic Revival in the Early English style. It was built in 1872-3 by William Oakley and was later added to by Vincent John Grose in 1894 and 1900. This grant will now enable essential repairs to the stonework at the nave chancel and transept along with work to the degrading drainpipes and guttering.

£186,000 has also been awarded to the Bolton Methodist Mission. Replacing an earlier chapel and incorporating other existing buildings purchased at the end of the 19th century, Victoria Hall of Bolton Methodist Mission was built in 1935. Including a 90-foot terracotta tower, the building has the appearance not of a church but of a music hall of the period and today is regularly used by the local community for music events, lectures, meetings and graduation ceremonies. This grant will enable urgent repairs to the roof and renewal of rainwater guttering.

Making a difference

Since 2002, HLF and English Heritage have worked together to award almost £200million to help repair more than 2,000 Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II listed places of worship, the largest single source of funds to help congregations care for their buildings.

Notes to editors

__The Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme__ is funded by the HLF and administered by English Heritage on behalf of both organisations. English Heritage gives some funding to Grade I and Grade II places of worship.

Until 2010, the scheme was jointly funded by HLF and English Heritage. As a result of Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, English Heritage's budget was cut and it was unable to continue funding the scheme. In 2011, HLF agreed to provide an additional £9million needed to ensure the scheme is protected in its current form until 2013.

HLF is committed to supporting the urgent repair needs for places of worship and will fully fund the repairs scheme from 2013. HLF launched a three-month consultation at the end of January 2011, inviting views on how best to help urgent repairs for places of worship. The consultation closed on 26 April 2011 and we are now considering the views expressed in the large volume of responses. HLF's strategy on funding places of worship will be announced in due course.

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.

To be eligible for the next round of funding, applicants need to apply by 30 June for Grade I and II* and 30 September for Grade II listed places of worship. Visit the English Heritage website.

Heritage Lottery Fund
Using money raised through the National Lottery, the HLF sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK.

English Heritage
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. Visit the English Heritage website.

Further information
Please contact Natasha Ley or Alison Scott, HLF Press Office, on telephone: 020 7591 6141/07973 613 820 or email: natashal@hlf.org.uk. A full list of grants is available along with 22 case studies. Images available upon request.