Cowbit St Mary Church awarded Heritage Lottery



The clock tower of St Mary's Church, Cowbit

The project, led by volunteers from the local community, will repair and improve the clock in the church tower and communicate the heritage of the church to the local community. The work will start very soon and the project will be completed by the end of 2015.

The grant will allow vital repairs to be carried out to the clock and belfry floor. It will enable new and existing volunteers to undertake research visits to relevant projects, exhibitions and institutions and to work with the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) and local school children to develop church trails. This learning will be shared with a wider audience via a display and workshop. A clock commemoration event is planned at the end of the project.

The official project launch will be held at Cowbit St Mary on Saturday 11 April starting at 14:30. This will be an opportunity to meet and share memories of Cowbit and the church. The highlight of the afternoon will be a talk by Darlah and Steve Thomas on the famous manufacturer of the clock (J B Joyce of Whitchurch, Shropshire).

The Grade I listed Cowbit Saint Mary's, founded by the Prior of Spalding in 1384, is an important local landmark at the centre of the fenland village of Cowbit. Since the opening of the much needed A16 bypass, the last pub in Cowbit, dating back to the 1500s, has been lost to arson and visitors to the village have greatly reduced. Despite a strong

campaign from the villagers, the pub site will now be developed for housing. The clock project is planned as the first of many initiatives to help revive the village, the quality of life for residents and to communicate the Cowbit heritage before it is lost to future generations.

Commenting on the award, Dr Shirley Pugh said: “We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident the project will ensure the long term future of the clock and help attract visitors back to this historic landmark.”

Vanessa Harbar, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: “The historic St Mary’s Church is the focal point of the Cowbit community and an important local Lincolnshire landmark. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s investment to restore its clock and belfry floor is a vital first step in reviving interest in the church and strengthening the sense of community within the village.”

Notes to editors

About the Parochial Church Council of Cowbit St Mary’s

The PCC is responsible for looking after Cowbit St Mary and for organising the various services and events that are held in the building. The village has few amenities and is rapidly losing its village spirit. The project will hopefully re-spark an interest in the village and its history helping residents rediscover the considerable heritage associated with their 14th-century building and making it a centre of activity again.

Further information

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