

St Mary Magdalene will become a centre for the local community

A Paddington church will throw its doors open to people of all faiths and cultures as plans to create a heritage hub gain National Lottery support.

Paddington Development Trust, alongside partners from across the community, has been awarded £3.6million by HLF to transform St Mary Magdalene Church.

Vital repairs will be made to the Grade I church and a brand new wing will be created. This will provide a place for local people and groups to meet, learning facilities for all ages, a café and a flexible space for events.

Around 200 trainees, apprentices and volunteers will have the opportunity to get involved in everything from conservation to customer service. Other locals and visitors can take advantage of a fantastic programme of events and family activities.

Bringing diverse communities together

Paddington is one of London’s most diverse communities, a fact which this project is determined to make the most of.

Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London, said: “Since the introduction of the Grand Union Canal more than 200 years ago, Paddington has been a transport hub resulting in an incredibly diverse community and a rich cultural story.

"Thanks to National Lottery players this project will secure the future of St Mary Magdalene at the heart of that community, providing opportunities and space for people of all ages, faiths and backgrounds."

[quote=Aalaa Al-Memar, Paddington resident]"It's right in the middle of the community and will bring together different cultures and religions, sharing experiences and ideas."[/quote]

Aalaa Al-Memar, a resident and parent governor at a local primary school, welcomed the news: "We need this type of project. I'm happy from my heart that it can go ahead. It's right in the middle of the community and will bring together different cultures and religions, sharing experiences and ideas. These chances to come together so that we know each other are so important."

Many people have already donated to the project and the Trust aims to raise a further £1.25m. To donate and follow the progress of the plans, visit the St Mary Magdalene website.

The new and improved facilities are expected to open in 2018.



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