UK’s smallest ancient cathedral rejoices at National Lottery windfall

03/07/2017

St Asaph Cathedral in the Vale of Clwyd has been awarded over a quarter of a million pounds (£255,800) to protect and promote its important Welsh heritage.

With its origins dating back to c560 AD and the Grade I building itself to the 14th century, St Asaph is one of the oldest cathedrals in Wales. Thanks to National Lottery players, the cathedral can now modernise its displays and share its history with all its visitors, including those who would not normally be able to enjoy a museum visit.

What’s new?

Using the National Lottery grant, St Asaph will welcome visually and hearing impaired visitors with new tactile displays and British Sign Language tours, as well as offering closed ‘quiet’ sessions for those with dementia.

New digital and interactive displays – including a new smart phone app – will also mean the museum’s artefacts are brought into the 21st century for younger visitors.

Centuries of history

As well as housing a Book of Common Prayer from 1621 containing the Edmund Prys Psalter - which allowed Psalms to be sung in Welsh in church for the first time – St Asaph is also home to one of only 20 known copies of the 1588 William Morgan Bible.

Representing the first full translation of the Bible into Welsh, the manuscript will now be better protected so it can stand the test of time.

The journey begins

The National Lottery award will kick-start a three year project at St Asaph, complemented by ongoing work to create a new café, gift shop and toilets.

Fifty volunteers will receive training, ready to welcome visitors to the revamped cathedral in 2020. Local schoolchildren can also get involved as part of their Welsh Baccalaureate qualification, while members of the community will be able to share their memories and photos of the cathedral so its important local role can be remembered for years to come.