

The star roof of Southwell Minster's late 13th-century Chapter House Southwell Minster

The renowned heritage of Grade I listed Southwell Minster is to be celebrated, thanks to the National Lottery.

The medieval 'Leaves of Southwell' have inspired artists and writers from J.M.W. Turner to Hilary Mantel, and now they are to be celebrated, following news of National Lottery funding.

The ‘Leaves of Southwell’, as they are collectively known, are a set of incredible late 13th-century stone carvings of plants, animals and green men that decorate the roof of the Chapter House at Southwell Minster in Nottinghamshire.

Sadly, they are at serious risk due to leaks in the main east roof of the Minster. However, their future is looking brighter and drier following news of an initial green light for a £3million project to protect, interpret and better present them to more visitors.

The project

The first step will be to undertake new research and necessary structural work to secure the building and make it watertight. In addition, appropriate heating and environmental auditing will be undertaken to ensure the Leaves’ preservation.

This project will also enable more people to learn about and enjoy ‘The Leaves of Southwell’. They will be digitally recorded, conserved and illuminated and better interpretation will enable future generations to understand their international significance. Access to the Chapter House itself will also be vastly improved.

The National Lottery and places of worship

Places of worship are amongst the oldest and most precious buildings in the UK. That’s why, since 1994 HLF has invested more than £850m of National Lottery money, across a number of its grant programmes, to secure the future of these much loved buildings. This money has been awarded through HLF’s Heritage Grants programme, which provides grants between £100,000 and £5m.