Strategic support for places of worship: our impact two years in



Churchyards can be peaceful havens for nature and people. Photo: Caring for Gods Acre.

We've funded innovative and collaborative projects tackling widespread challenges for synagogues, churches and chapels through our Heritage in Need: Places of Worship strategic initiative.

Our aim was to offer targeted funding to umbrella organisations that would have the broadest impact on places of worship across the UK. It is one of four current strategic initiatives created as part of our Heritage 2033 strategy, designed to respond to pressing sector issues, from a lack of workforce and volunteer skills to listed buildings' complex repair needs.

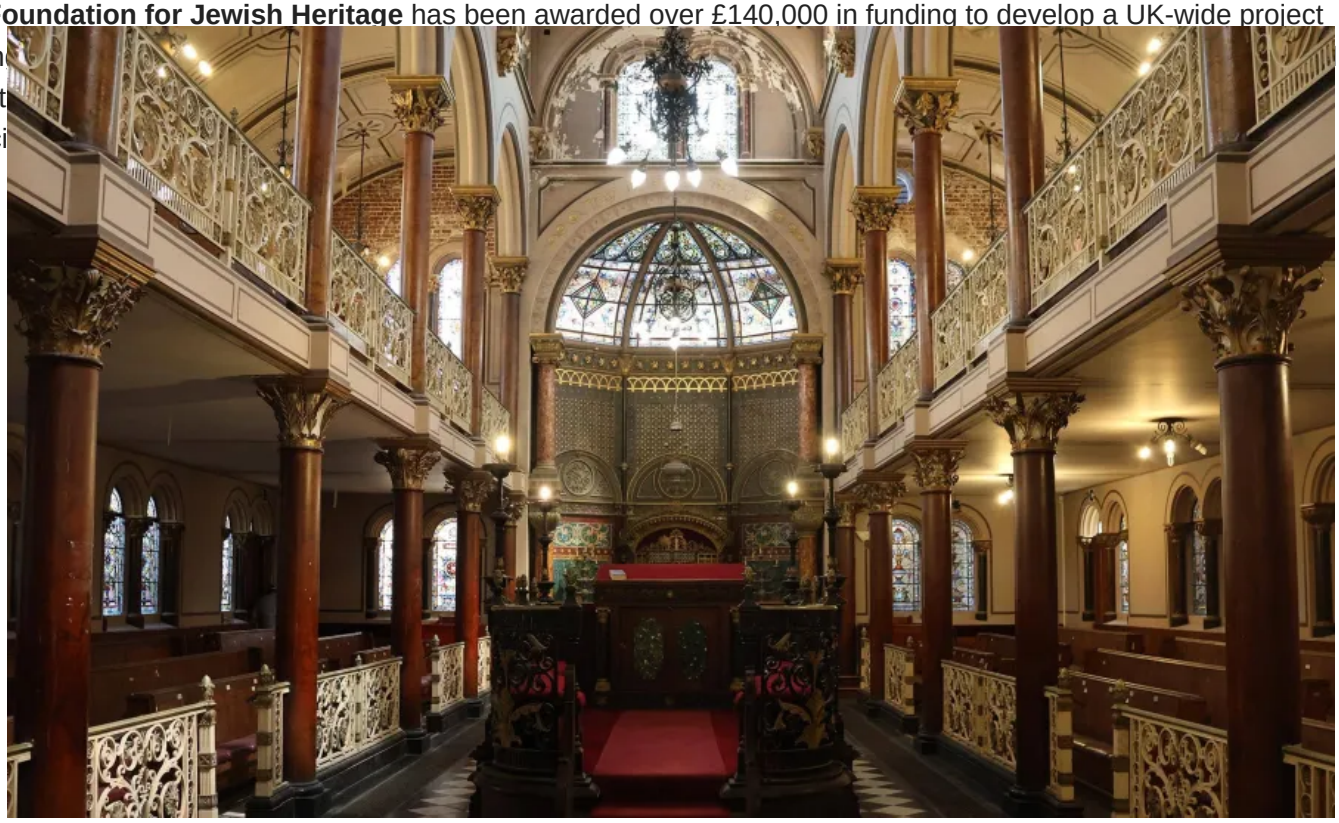
In September 2024, we announced we'd invest at least £15million over three years in these strategic projects. We've exceeded this in just two years, committing just over £17m via eight grants ranging from long-term conservation of historic church interiors to finding new futures for former places of worship.

> [These are] ambitious projects which have the potential to make a real and lasting positive impact for the future of places of worship.
>
> *Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

Discover the latest projects securing the future for religious heritage

Hafanau Heddwch or Havens of Peace, led by Caring for God's Acre, in partnership with the Church in Wales, is receiving a development grant of £325,252 to run six pilot projects involving more than 50 burial grounds. A potential delivery grant of £3.7m to deliver the full scheme would make sure the built heritage, natural habitats and social history of these Welsh burial grounds are protected for generations to come.

The Foundation for Jewish Heritage has been awarded over £140,000 in funding to develop a UK-wide project offerin test ways t capaci



Middle Street Synagogue in Brighton. Photo: Foundation for Jewish Heritage.

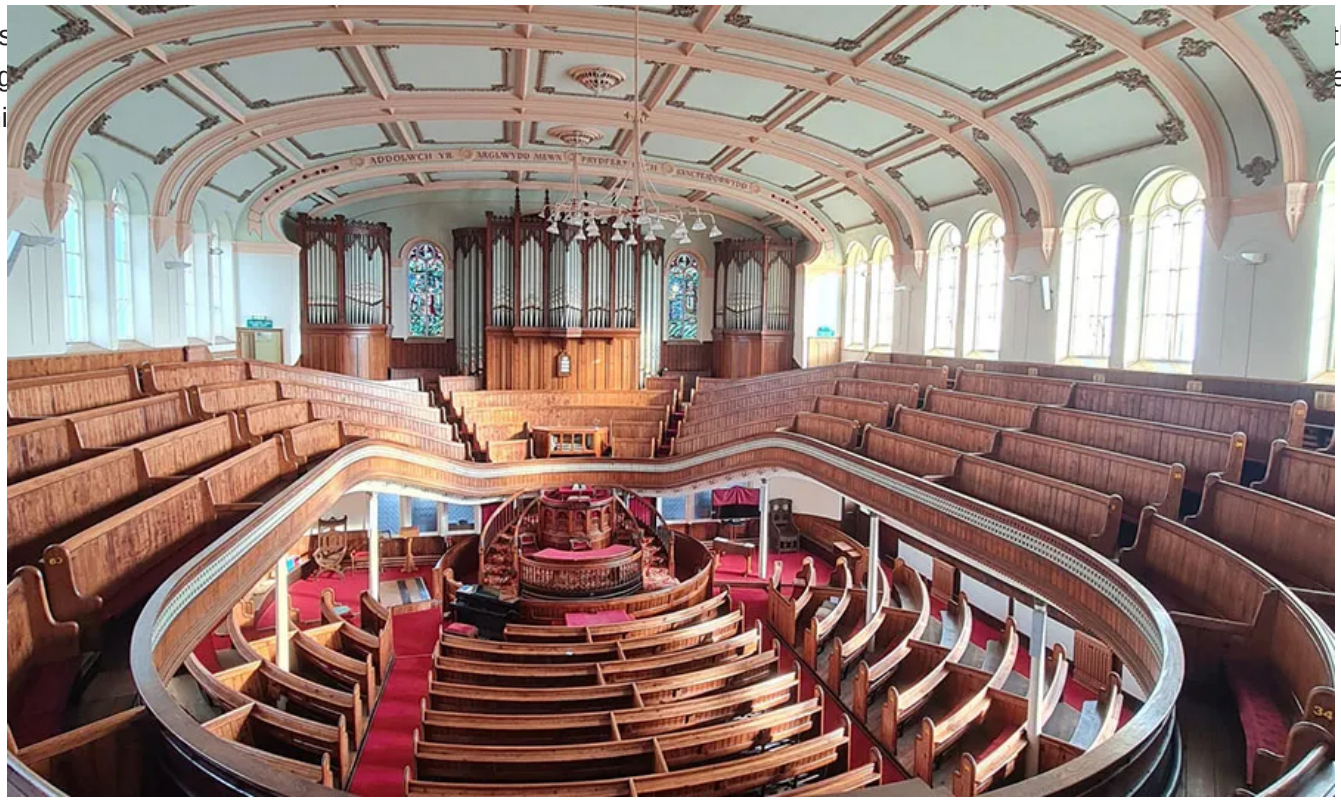
We've awarded **Natural England** nearly £550,000 in development funding for its Nature in Sacred Spaces project, ahead of a potential delivery grant of £4.2m. Building on the success and insights of its National Lottery-funded Bats in Churches project, the four-year scheme will work with around 150 religious buildings across England to provide the awareness, resources and skills custodians need to help their buildings and nature thrive together.

We've previously announced £4.68m for the **Church of England's Conservation Grants Scheme**, which supports long-term conservation of churches' historic stained glass, wall paintings, clocks, bells, paintings and monuments. Elsewhere, **Development Trust Association Scotland** is 18 months into a project supporting communities to find new futures for former places of worship.

Informed by data, we've changed how we support places of worship

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: “We have been encouraging the sector to explore partnerships, innovative ways of working and strategic interventions to proactively address those challenges. The response has been fantastic, and we have so far supported eight ambitious projects which have the potential to make a real and lasting positive impact for the future of places of worship and support our vision for heritage to be valued, cared for, and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.”

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The Tabernacle chapel in Morriston, Swansea.

Grounded in research into the needs and challenges in different areas and nations of the UK, we’ve targeted key locations and redeveloped guidance and resources to refresh how we support places of worship to make strong funding applications.

Get support for your place of worship

We want to remove buildings from the UK’s ‘at risk’ registers, boost biodiversity, support the volunteers who care for places of worship and help these sites reach their potential as valued community hubs.

No matter the religion,?faith?or denomination, you can apply to us for funding. Start at our places of worship hub to find out more about what we support.

You might also be interested in...

Heritage in Need: Places of Worship



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The Tabernacle chapel in Morriston, Swansea.

Transforming Tabernacle for community and culture