Brighter future for Scottish churches

21/02/2013

From the first Roman Catholic church to be built after the Reformation to one of the best examples of a Modernist church built after the war, over £1.3million of funding will ensure that these fine buildings are once again wind and watertight providing a venue for worship and a hub for community activity.

The grants are the last to be awarded under the Repair Grants for Places of Worship. A new programme, Grants for Places of Worship, has just been launched to replace the former programme. The new scheme is designed not only to help address the backlog of urgent repairs, but also allows applicants to apply for funding for new works, such as kitchens and toilets, improvements to heating and electrical systems, and improved energy efficiency, so that these historic buildings are fit for the future and can be used and enjoyed more widely as community spaces.

Commenting on today's announcement, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, said: "Places of worship are such a key component of our rich cultural and architectural heritage across the country. It is important that we invest in their conservation and upkeep to ensure they continue to play a vital role for the congregations they serve and communities in which they are based.

"I am delighted that both Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund are making this funding available for these projects which will breathe new life into these churches through essential repairs and maintenance. I look forward to seeing the results this investment will deliver."

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "HLF is delighted to be able to help these congregations secure the future of their church. Scotland has an amazing variety of churches, each one reflecting the social history of its community as well as the architectural influences of the time. They are often the most distinctive building in the area providing a focus for civil and social activities as well as providing wonderful opportunities for people to get involved and learn about local history and heritage.

"We know that places of worship need money for vital repairs, but we also know that much can be achieved with relatively modest investment to help them reach out to new generations and become truly flexible places for communities. Our new joint places of worship programme will help people do just that."

Key changes to the programme include:

- Grants of £10,000 to £250,000 will be available across Scotland
- Alongside urgent repairs, funding will be provided for new physical works to extend community use such as toilets, kitchens, lighting and heating
- Further money will be made available to help people find out more about the fascinating history of these buildings and their local significance – for example, by funding guide books, websites, tours or phone apps.
- The programme will be funded jointly by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

This vital investment marks a renewed commitment from HLF and Historic Scotland, which since 2002, have together invested more than £34million in Scotland's churches.

St Gregorys Church, near Buckie
HLF first-round pass for grant of £46,400
Historic Scotland funding £46,400

Dating from 1788, St Gergory's is the first Roman Catholic place of worship to be built in Scotland after the Reformation which did not attempt to disguise that it was a church. With an elegant Italian Baroque façade, the church was designed to reflect the pride that Catholics took in their faith.

The main repair works will take place to the church roofs to strengthen parts of the structures; resolve problems of water ingress and initiate beneficial natural ventilation.

Dalry St Margaret's Parish Church
HLF first-round pass for grant of £86,400 with development funding of £11,000
Historic Scotland funding £75,400

A prominent landmark in the town centre of Dalry, the church was designed by David Thomson and constructed from 1871–73. In 1951 a fire destroyed much of the original interior but with vision, hard work and the procurement of fine hand-crafted Beith furnishings, it was repaired.

Repairs will be made to the roof, spire and tower.

Govan & Linthouse Parish Church, Govan
HLF first-round pass for a grant of £124,300
Historic Scotland funding £124,300

Located in the Govan Conservation Area at Govan Cross, Govan and Linthouse Parish Church is an extremely popular and well-used church by the community. It is growing in popularity with tourists as they visit the nearby Govan Stones and the river crossing for the Transport Museum and it has benefitted from public realm work carried out through the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Roof slating and leadwork, gutters and downpipes and high level stonework will be repaired as part of the project. The church also plans to produce an exhibition telling the story of the area's rich heritage.

The Friary, Dundee
HLF first-round pass for grant of £133,100 with development funding of £8,500
Historic Scotland funding £124,600

Constructed in 1958 as an addition to the St Frances Friary complex, the church has on its façade a 20 foot-long tympanum designed and carved by Hew Lorimer OBE. Working in situ as the church was built, it depicts St Francis returning to Assisi at the end of his life.

As well as regular services, the building, which is now owned by City Church, Dundee, hosts several community groups and provides work opportunities for offenders from Castle Huntly Open Prison and volunteers from the Salvation Army hostel. Extensive roof repairs will be carried out to stop leaks and broken and decaying windows will be refurbished.

Trinity and Alvah Church, Banff
HLF first-round pass for grant of £113,000 with development funding of £18,000
Historic Scotland funding £95,000

Built in 1844 to the designs of James Raeburn for the Free Church of Scotland, Trinity and Alvah Church has lain vacant for the last 20 years with church services and a wide range of community activities taking place in its hall since 2002.

The stained glass windows, many of which are broken and boarded up, will be repaired, the electrical system replaced, the interior walls replastered and the exterior reharled.

St Andrews Episcopal Church, Ardrossan
HLF first-round pass for a grant of £67,400 with £12,500 development funding
Historic Scotland funding £54,900

The beautiful stained glass windows of St Andrews Episcopal Church, two of which are at risk of collapse, will be repaired thanks to today's funding.

Designed by David Thomson and built in 1875, the church sits overlooking the River Clyde. It holds services for its own Episcopal congregation as well as for a Church of Scotland congregation whose own building is currently unsafe.

Brucefield Church, Whitburn
HLF first-round pass for a grant of £144,500 with development funding of £19,500
Historic Scotland funding £125,000

With its diagonally cut corners and rounded edges, Brucefield Church represents the best of post-war church design in Scotland. Spearheaded by the forward-thinking Rev W B McMartin, Brucefield Church is one of a select number of commissions for the Church of Scotland which was modernist in its conception and is A-listed because of this architectural interest.

A programme of predominantly roof repairs will be carried out with minor works to walls, windows and doors.

Notes to editors

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. For more information visit: Historic Scotland's website.

Further information

- Heritage Lottery Fund: Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142 890 or Jon Williams on 020 7591 6035
- Historic Scotland: John MacNeil on 0131 668 8714 / 07854 366 827 or johnmacneil@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
- St Gregory's: Cyril Smith on 01343 870 007, email: cyrilsmith@futureplans.co.uk
- Dalry St Margarets: Lindsay Paterson on mobile 07826 863 261 or home 01294 833 464
- Govan and Linthouse: Rev Dr Moyna McGlynn on 0141 445 2010 or 07908 860 997
- The Friary, Dundee: Craig Stocks on 01382 660 274
- Trinity and Alvah: Michael Kitchen on 01261 818 855
- St Andrews Episcopal: Eveline Gray on 01294 462 653
- Brucefield Church: Rev John Collard on 01501 748 666