Lottery money to address urgent repairs to East of England’s historic places of worship

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced £899,000 of Lottery funding to help secure the future of six of the East of England’s most historic places of worship.

This vital money is helping congregations address a back log of urgent repairs to listed churches and chapels at risk across East England including St Christopher’s Church in Essex; St Ethelbert’s Church in Alby, Norfolk; St Mary’s Church in Burston, Nofolk; and St Martin’s Church, New Buckenham in Norfolk.

St Christopher’s Church in Willingale in Essex is amongst the first of 35 churches across the UK to be awarded a grant through HLF’s new Grants for Places of Worship programme.

Launched in March 2013, it supersedes the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. In addition to providing money for urgent structural repairs, the programme will fund new works that support and encourage greater community use and engagement, helping to increase the number of people who take an active interest in celebrating these historic buildings and who will care for them in the future. As well as conservation work, today’s grants will help to fund historical exhibitions, leaflets and guide books; train volunteers as tour guides; and develop digital information, such as websites and apps for smartphones.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: "There is a place of worship in almost every village and town across the eastern counties of England, providing a very powerful visual connection with our past. Not only will Lottery player’s money help to secure the immediate survival of these remarkable buildings, it will also encourage congregations to adapt these buildings so they can be enjoyed more widely throughout the community and in turn enable them to be more sustainable for the future."

Greg Luton, East of England Planning and Conservation Director, English Heritage, said: "The continuing commitment of the Heritage Lottery Fund to historic places of worship, coupled with our specialist knowledge of these buildings and their repair needs, has helped to underpin the commitment of local people facing costly yet urgently necessary repairs. This vital work marks an important step towards ensuring a sustainable future for these cherished buildings at the heart of their communities."

Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St Christopher’s Church, Willingale, Essex
A grant of £116,600 has been awarded to the Grade II* listed St Christopher’s Church in Willingale. Dating from the medieval period, with later 19th-century alterations, the building will now undergo a programme of urgent structural repairs including work to masonry features. As well as the installation of heating this grant will also fund work with Building Crafts College students who will research, design and produce detailed stone features for incorporation into the building. New interpretive material about the heritage of the church will also be produced, including a church leaflet and website, and talks and visits will be arranged for local schools and history societies.

Other grants awarded through Grants for Places of Worship scheme and announced today include:

- St Ethelbert's Church, Alby, Norfolk (grant £195,400)
- St Martin's Church, New Buckenham (grant £155,100)
- St Mary's Church, Burston, Norfolk (grant £169,500)
- St Peter and St Paul, Swaffham, Norfolk (grant £250,700)

The remaining grant announced today is from the final round to be awarded under HLF's Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme:

- Church of St Andrew, Layham, Babergh in Suffolk (grant £42,000)

For more information about applying for HLF's funding for places of worship visit our Grants for Places of Worship programme page.

Notes to editors

New Grants for Places of Worship scheme
Listed places of worship in the UK of all denominations and faiths are eligible for HLF grants which support urgent repairs to the fabric of the building with a focus on projects costing less than £250,000. There is a two-stage application process with development funding available at Stage One to help work up proposals. Under the new programme, applications can now be submitted for new capital works but these costs should cost no more than around 15% of the total overall budget.

HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship programme is funded and administered solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund with the exception of Scotland; however English Heritage will continue to provide expert advice in England.

Funding for places of worship in Scotland
As with the Repair Grants for Places of Worship programme, the new Grants for Places of Worship programme in Scotland is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

Funding for places of worship in Wales and Northern Ireland
As with the Repair Grants for Places of Worship programme, the new Grants for Places of Worship programme in both Wales and Northern Ireland is funded solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Further information

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