Guildford Cathedral secures Lottery support

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The grant has been awarded for repairs to the cathedral fabric and development of its project: Securing Guildford Cathedral's future: treasures, memories and stories revealed.

A grant of £329,100 will fund development work towards submitting a full application next year with a view to starting work in 2015.

The project aims to carry out urgent repairs, removing acoustic plaster throughout the ceiling containing asbestos and to protect the cathedral for current and future generations. The cathedral will remain open throughout the works.

Through the help of volunteers the project will also record the unique story of the 200,000 brick-givers, whose generosity completed the building of 'The People's Cathedral'. An educational programme and improved archives will enable more people to learn about and engage with the cathedral and its story. In addition, upgraded access, facilities and information are planned to transform the experience of the 100,000 people who we welcome to the cathedral each year.

The project is part of a wider £7m cathedral appeal to raise urgently needed funds for repairs and development. In addition to the HLF full application, a further £2.2million is needed – of which £1.3m is partnership funding for the HLF project. The appeal is a crucial aspect of the cathedral's vision, Guildford Cathedral 2020, which was launched last week. The appeal has already attracted backing from supporters including Penelope Keith.

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: "This building has a real community story to tell but is in great need of urgent repairs. Proposals will not only protect its future but also reveal the remarkable story of how it was built. We look forward to working closely with the Cathedral as they develop their plans."

The Dean, the Very Reverend Dianna Gwilliams said: "We're absolutely delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. The building is at risk and this is a vital first step towards both its repair and to secure its future. There is a long journey ahead but this initial grant is a real boost to us and represents the start of a new chapter in the exciting story of 'The People's Cathedral'.

"It is now our turn to do our bit to raise the remaining £2.2 million. We hope the public will be supportive - if you think you can help please get in touch."

Penelope Keith CBE DL, Appeal Vice-President and member of the cathedral community urged people to back the appeal, saying: "We are all guilty of taking landmarks for granted and yet the stark truth is that Guildford Cathedral, this remarkable feat of 20th century perseverance, is struggling to survive.

"For me it is so much more than a landmark. It is a place of beauty and light, peace and life. I would urge you to take time out and instead of walking or driving past next time, make a short diversion and visit your cathedral. It is a precious place, built by everyone for everyone and it urgently needs your help. Through the Cathedral Appeal we hope to be able to secure its future and equip it to serve its community, so it can form not only part of the landscape but part of people's lives, now and in the future. Please support us."

Built in 1961, Guildford Cathedral is one of the great ecclesiastical buildings of the modern era. Designed by Sir Edward Maufe, it combines Gothic tradition and 20th century construction techniques with a simple aesthetic of space and light. Its construction, funded by ordinary people who ‘bought a brick’ for 2s 6d (12.5p) in times of austerity, was in an extraordinary demonstration of modern community spirit. This remarkable feat of local engagement is reflected in the new appeal logo with its brick-like graphic.

Primarily a centre of Christian worship and mission, the cathedral also hosts a great variety of cultural and educational activities, and serves as a venue for civic and county events. A building for everyone, the cathedral is ‘a place of welcome, beauty, engagement and inspiration’.

Notes to editors

Guildford Cathedral is a sacred space and an open community of people who together engage with God and the wider world, for the common good. The cathedral is a focus and resource for the whole community: a place of daily choral worship, a space for stillness and prayer, a place of pilgrimage and a venue for concerts, art and education.

To find out how you can help the Appeal please email appeal@guildford-cathedral.org or visit the Guildford Cathedral appeal website.

Further information

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