Funding of £570,000 to restore South West's

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is today announcing £570,000 of funding for the South West's historic churches, securing the future of three places of worship that are in urgent need of repair.

The funding will allow vital repair works to these important buildings, help them provide better facilities and make the churches more suitable for wider community use.

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: "Places of worship are among the UK's most historic buildings, with fascinating stories behind them. This money will pay for urgent repairs, whilst also helping to tell the stories of these special places to visitors. As a result the buildings themselves will be more used by the whole community, and properly cared for into the future."

HLF Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St Mary's Church, Alton Barnes, Wiltshire
This grade I listed church that has Saxon origins has been awarded £181,700 to undertake urgent repairs to the roof, walls and conserve the timber floor, panelling and memorials. They hope to engage the wider community in discovering more about the church and its past.

Emmanuel Church, Weston-Super-Mare
This grade II* listed church sits adjacent to Dolphin Square in Weston-Super-Mare which is currently undergoing a substantial redevelopment. They have been awarded £177,700 for high level turret/pinnacle repairs to the tower together with creating improved access at the west end of the building.

St Petroc's Church, South Brent
This grade I listed church that dates from the 12th century has been awarded £211,900 for repair works to its tower, which is the oldest part of the church and has been described as one of the most important Norman towers in Devon.

Notes to editors

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 the first-round to help work up proposals.

Under the programme, applications can now be submitted for new capital works but these should cost no more than around 15 per cent of the total overall budget.

Funding for Places of Worship in England
Until 2010, The Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme was jointly funded by the HLF and English Heritage (EH). Since then, HLF had provided the majority of the funding whilst English Heritage had continued to administer the fund on behalf of both organisations. This scheme is now closed for new applications.

HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship programme is funded and administered solely by the HLF 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 HLF 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 HLF.

Further information and images
HLF press office, Natasha Hughes or Tom Williams, tel: 020 7591 6143/6056