Lottery funding breathes new life into historic places of worship

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As well as helping to address the backlog of urgent repairs, HLF funding will also help provide new facilities to ensure these important historic buildings can be used and enjoyed more widely by their local communities.

The money will be available through HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship programme which supersedes its Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. Whilst priority will continue to be given to urgent structural repairs, applicants can now apply for funding for new works that will improve the functionality of listed places of worship making them fit for the future. Works could include the provision of toilets and kitchens, improvements to heating or electrical systems and measures to improve energy efficiency which will enable these special buildings to be used as community spaces.

Responding to the news of HLF's new programme Crispin Truman, Chief Executive of the Churches Conservation Trust, said: "I'm delighted that this vital programme for historic places of worship in urgent need of repair and improvement has been relaunched by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The new scheme responds clearly to the needs of 21st-century communities and puts important emphasis on extended use and sustainability."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the HLF, said: "HLF has a long and proud history of helping to look after places of worship. There is at least one place of worship in almost every village, ward or neighbourhood throughout the country; they are often the most distinctive building in an area, the focus for many civil and social activities and they provide a powerful visual connection with our past 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 these much-loved buildings reach out to new generations and become truly flexible places for communities to use in a wider variety of ways. Our new places of worship programme will help people to enjoy and revitalise these buildings, enabling them to become the bustling hubs they deserve to be for the future."

Key changes to the programme include:

- Grants of £10,000 to £250,000 will be available across the UK
- 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.
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the programme is fully funded by HLF. Prior to 2011, places of worship grants in England were jointly funded by HLF and English Heritage. In Scotland, grants continue to be funded jointly with Historic Scotland.

This vital investment marks a renewed commitment from HLF, which since 1994 has invested more than £400million in over 3,700 places of worship across the UK. Places of worship that have benefited from HLF funding include:

Church of the Most Holy Redeemer, Belfast
Built in the Gothic style in 1907, the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer is one of Belfast's best-loved landmarks. Stabilising the turrets and repairing the stonework, roof and rose window have ensured the church can continue to welcome worships and visitors seven days a week.

Guru Teg Bahadur Gurwara, Nottingham
Repairing the listed school building that houses the Guru Teg Bahadur Gurwara in Nottingham has helped make this Sikh temple more welcoming, while works to improve energy efficiency have reduced the cost of heating. Private donations are now used for educational activities and services for the growing congregation.

St Edward's Church, Knighton in Wales
An ambitious conservation project was an opportunity for more local people to discover and support St Edward's Church in Knighton, Wales. New volunteers have joined the congregation to develop the church as a cultural centre offering concerts, school visits and activities for the wider community.

Falkirk Old and St Modan's Parish Church, Scotland
With the help of grants from HLF and Historic Scotland, the local community of Falkirk Old and St Modan's Parish Church were able to carry out urgent repairs to the roof, windows and stonework of their Category A listed building, one of Falkirk's key landmarks and an important venue for a variety of community social events. The project also provided local residents with opportunities to learn traditional skills and to explore the fascinating 1,200-year story of this historic site.

HLF's new Grants for Places of Worship scheme opens on 14 December 2012. Applications will be assessed four times a year. The application deadlines for the first round of funding closes 25 February 2013 in Northern Ireland, 28 February 2013 in England, 8 March 2013 in Scotland and15 March 2013 in Wales. First decisions will be announced in the summer 2013.

For more information can be found at the GPOW website.

Notes to editors

Listed places of worship in the UK of all denominations and faiths are eligible for 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.

Funding for Places of Worship in England
Until 2010, the *Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme* was jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage (EH). Since then, HLF has provided the majority of the funding whilst English Heritage has continued to administer the fund on behalf of both organisations. This scheme is now closed for new applications, however grants will continue to be awarded under this programme in two batches until June 2013.

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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