Vital £1.5m Lottery funding for East Midlands churches

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The grants are offering much needed funds to the East Midlands' places of worship at risk including the Church of St Wulfram, Grantham; Church of St Swithum, Leadenham; Church of St Giles, Cropwell Bishop; and the Church of St Michael and All Angels in Bolsover.

This money comes from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme, which is currently funded by HLF and administered by English Heritage. In June 2013, it will be superseded by HLF's new £30million, UK-wide Grants for Places of Worship programme. This new initiative will continue to prioritise urgent structural repairs; however it will also enable applicants to apply for funding to support new works - such as the provision of toilets and kitchens - that will improve the functionality of these precious buildings making them fit for the future.

Vanessa Harbar, Acting Head of HLF East Midlands, said: "Historic places of worship form prominent and much loved landmarks within the East Midlands' cities, towns and villages. They are unique buildings that bring local communities together for a variety of reasons from worship through to culture and leisure. Since 1994, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested more than £500million into these precious buildings across the UK and with these new grants we aim to ensure even more are secured for future generations to enjoy."

Anthony Streeten, English Heritage Planning Director for the East Midlands, said: "Listed places of worship make up an elemental part of the historic fabric of England. They are familiar and much loved landmarks for our villages, towns and cities and it is crucial they are cared for and repaired. Thanks to the joint working between the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage these wonderful buildings, which mean so much to so many, will remain part of our story for years to come."

£272,000 has been awarded to the Church of St Wulfram in Grantham. Grade I listed, St Wulfram's is rightly called the Glory of Grantham. Its magnificent steeple rises to 86m and is one of the most famous Lincolnshire landmarks. The original Norman church was the subject of an ambitious building project in the 13th century following a fire and the tower and spire were built during the 14th century. This grant will enable urgent repairs to the spire, as its iron cramps have rusted and expanded, causing the top of the spire to become displaced. The top 16ft (which was the subject of repairs in 1947 and is in good condition) will be removed and set aside for re-use, then the next 24ft which displays the recent problems will be dismantled and rebuilt.

£16,000 has been awarded to the Church of St Giles in Cropwell Bishop. Grade I Listed, this church dates from 13th century with an added 14th-century chancel (restored in the 19th century). This building is now suffering from a structural fault to the chancel wall and the external leaf is separating from the inner leaf / core. This grant will address the structural repairs to the chancel in addition to enabling repairs to drainage channels and rainwater goods.

Notes to editors

The *Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England* scheme was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and administered by English Heritage on behalf of both organisations.

Until 2010, the scheme was jointly funded by HLF and EH. Since then, HLF had provided the majority of the funding to ensure that the scheme continued in its current form until June 2013.

Listed places of worship in England of all denominations and faiths were eligible for grants which support urgent repairs to the fabric of the building with a focus on projects costing less than £250,000. There was a two-stage application process with development funding available at Stage One to help work up proposals. This scheme is now closed to new applications.

HLF's *Grants for Places of Worship programme* is now open to applications. It is funded and administered solely by the Heritage Lottery Fund in England, Wales and Northern Ireland although English Heritage continues to provide expert advice in England.

In Scotland, the new programme is jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland.

English Heritage is the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment. It provides advice on how best to conserve England's heritage for the benefit of everyone. While most of England's heritage is in private hands, it works with all who come into contact with it - landowners, businesses, planners and developers, national, regional and local government, the Third Sector, local communities and the general public - to help them understand, value, care for and enjoy England's historic environment.

It is also entrusted with the custodianship of over 400 sites and monuments which together form the national collection of built and archaeological heritage. These include some of the most important monuments of human history such as Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall. English Heritage website.

Further information

HLF press office: Natasha Ley or Alison Scott on 020 7591 6143 / 6035, mobile: 07973 613 820, email: natashal@hlf.org.uk.

A full list of grants is available along with case studies.

Images available upon request.