£7million of Grants for Grade II Listed Places of Worship

12/05/2009

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage (EH) today announced a package of grants worth £7 million for essential repairs to Grade II listed places of worship across England. The grants will help to repair 56 historic places of worship which are used by a broad range of faiths.

A Sikh temple in Nottingham, a Synagogue in London's East End and a Greek Orthodox church in Salford are among the buildings receiving grants. The largest grant of £323,000 will be given to Alderley Edge Methodist Church in Cheshire for repairs to the tower and spire.

Since 2002 more than £156m in essential repair grants has been awarded to almost 1,700 projects in historic places of worship through the joint Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme, which is the largest single funding source for work of this kind. In total this year the scheme has given £22.9m to 206 listed Places of Worship.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "These special buildings are right at the centre of community life and urgently need investment. This money will not only protect them for the future but also help to create 175 jobs**.

"Looking after our heritage is an incredibly effective way of supporting community life generally. This is recognised in today's Government strategy for improving quality of place. Serious investment like this goes well beyond looking after the bricks and mortar of a building, bringing with it substantial social and economic benefits too."

Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said, "English Heritage is delighted to be announcing these repair grants for historic places of worship – particularly on the day that the government launches 'World Class Places'. Historic buildings connect us to our past and enhance our enjoyment of the places in which we live, work and worship. These beautiful listed buildings are at the heart of our communities and they must remain in active use. We are especially pleased that buildings used by such a broad range of religious groups are being awarded grants this year."

Mr Gurcharn Singh Bhaker of the Guru Teg Bahadur Sikh Gurdwara in Nottingham said: "This fantastic old school building has been a crucial part of the local Sikh community for 32 years, providing somewhere for generations of people to come together for prayer, music and social events.

"We are delighted to receive this grant which will help us bring the building back to its former glory. The roof repair work is just the start of a wider refurbishment plan for the building which will improve facilities for people of all ages."

An Urgent and Ongoing Task

The grants fund urgent work such as roof repairs and repairs to brick, stonework or roof timbers. The Church of England currently spends £120m a year on repairs but according to English Heritage research published as part of its Inspired! campaign the backlog repair bill for all listed places of worship in England is an estimated £185m a year. Inspired! identified the need for more investment from Government and faith groups to help congregations look after their buildings.

Find Funded Places of Worship to Visit Online
One of the conditions of the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme is that the public have a right to see those buildings which have benefited from this public money. Prospective visitors can now search on the English Heritage website for details of how to visit places of worship whose repairs have been grant-aided under the scheme. The list can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.17628

Examples of how the £7m for repairs will be spent:
Guru Teg Bahadur Sikh Gudwara Temple in Lenton, Nottingham is a former church school building in Lenton, Nottingham, dating back to 1841. It is receiving one of the largest grants in the East Midlands, £171,000, for vital roof repairs. It is one of Nottingham's largest Sikh temples and is regularly used by more than 600 members and the local community for worship, teaching and social activities.

St Joseph's Catholic Church in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent is an unusual Italianate style building. The church was designed by J S Brocklesby in 1925 and is constructed in red and blue bricks originally supplied by the local Fenton Colliery Company. The sanctuary and ceiling panels are lavishly decorated with paintings. Cracks in the walls and a leaking roof are threatening this splendid internal decoration. A grant of £81,000 will be used for urgently needed structural repairs to stonework, roofs and gutters.

Alderley Edge Methodist Church was built by Healy and Son and completed in 1863. The clock in the tower, installed in 1850 by Mr Roberts, a clockmaker from Lancashire, is said to be one of only three ever made entirely from cast iron. A grant of £323,000 will fund repairs to the tower and spire. There are significant problems with corroding ironwork and splitting masonry. Full scaffolding will be needed to carry out the repairs, which will involve dismantling part of the spire and rebuilding it using stainless steel cramps and cross trees.

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Salford was built between 1860 and 1861 to designs by Clegg and Knowles. It serves a large urban congregation including many Greek students and short term residents. This grant is for £100,000 for renewal of the slating and leadwork to the west portico, repairing the stonework to the portico and two of the west bays of the nave, and timber and plaster repairs.

Sandys Row Synagogue in Tower Hamlets, London has been awarded a grant of £254,000 for major repairs to its roof along with repairs to defective brickwork and rainwater goods. The synagogue was originally built as a chapel for a congregation of French Huguenots in 1766. It was later consecrated as a synagogue in 1870 for a group of Dutch Ashkenazi Jews. The interior, with its galleries, has changed little since the nineteenth century.

NOTES FOR EDITORS
Announced in conjunction with today's Government report on improving quality of place. Today, the Government is launching its strategy for improving quality of place entitled 'World Class Places', laying out the key opportunities and challenges ahead. A joint initiative between CLG and DCMS departments, the report sets out the broad strategic objectives and actions that will be taken to improve quality of place.

A media event will be held at The Deck (3rd floor), National Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 9PX on 12 May from 4pm with presentations from 4.30pm. CABE is organising the event on behalf of Government. Contact Bianca Mathews if you wish to attend (bmathews@cabe.org.uk bmathews@cabe.org.uk).

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

In 1996, an HLF scheme was set up in partnership with EH to fund the repair of places of worship of all faiths. Before then it was difficult to secure funding on the scale required to help a place of worship facing closure or demolition because of high repair costs. In March 2009 the HLF and EH announced grants for urgent repair work to Grade I and Grade II* Places of Worship. 150 buildings across England received £15.9 million. In total this year the scheme has given £22.9m to 206 listed Places of Worship.

A copy of the application pack for Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England 2009-2010 is available from the HLF website www.hlf.org.uk or from the EH website www.english-heritage.org.uk. All grant enquiries should be directed to EH Regional Offices or EH Customer Services on 0870 333 1181.

Listed places of worship in England of all denominations are eligible to apply for a grant under the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. The programme supports urgent repairs to the fabric of listed places of worship and priority is given to single repair projects costing less than £250,000. There is a two stage application process with development funding available at Stage 1 to help work up proposals.

Major investment boost to heritage and the economy
In conjunction with the Government's report, HLF is also announcing today almost £10million of earmarked grants through its unique Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) to eight run-down historic town centres. In total, the combined RPOW and THI investment of £17million will be part of an investment boost for schemes totalling more than £47million. Together, these are expected to deliver over 345 direct conservation and construction jobs, with upwards of 300 longer term new jobs and hundreds of new skills training opportunities.

** All employment figures are based on an analysis of job creation in previous HLF funded places of worship and THI schemes. Typically, one year of short-term construction or conservation employment is created for every £60,000 of capital investment. Estimates of non-construction and conservation jobs are based on plans to use property space that have been bought back into use as part of the overall regeneration scheme.

For further information: contact Dervish Mertcan or Alison Scott, HLF press office: 020 7591 6102/6032. Out of office hours: 07973 613820 www.hlf.org.uk