Lottery money to address urgent repairs to UK’s historic places of worship

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced more than £12million of Lottery funding to help secure the future of 96 of the UK’s most historic places of worship including the final resting place of infamous Romantic poet, Lord Byron.

From Fife to the Isles of Scilly, Belfast to Dartford, this vital money is helping congregations address a backlog of urgent repairs to listed churches and chapels at risk across the nation.

St Mary Magdalene Church in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire – final resting place of Lord Byron and his mathematician daughter Ada Lovelace – is amongst 35 churches to be the first to be awarded grants totalling £5million through HLF’s new Grants for Places of Worship programme.

Launched in March, it supercedes the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme. In addition to providing money for urgent repairs, the programme is now also funding new works that support and encourage greater community use and engagement, helping to increase the number of people who take an active interest in these historic buildings and who will care for them in the future. As well as much needed conservation work, today’s grants will support the provision of new toilets and kitchens; create historical exhibitions, leaflets and guide books; commission skills training for volunteer tour guides; and develop digital marketing tools including websites and web-based tools such as apps.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the HLF, said: “There is a place of worship in almost every ward, village and town across the UK, providing a very powerful visual connection with our past. Not only will our awards secure the immediate future of these particular buildings, it will also empower congregations to adapt them, where necessary, so they can be enjoyed more widely throughout the community and in turn enable them be more sustainable for the future.”

Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, which provides expert advice for the programme said: “I applaud the HLF's continuing commitment to our historic places of worship. These funds will help all 96 beneficiaries to remain viable buildings reflecting our past and contributing to our future. There is so much more to this project than just making the physical structures safe and sound. By providing money for visitor facilities, exhibitions, books and tour guides, the grants are going to help the public enjoy and appreciate these buildings. This is a vital part of keeping our heritage alive.”

Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St Mary Magdalene, Hucknall in Nottinghamshire
A grant of £133,500 has been awarded to the Grade II* listed St Mary Magdalene Church, the final resting place of the Romantic poet Lord Byron and his daughter Ada Lovelace. Dating from the 12th century, the building was considerably extended during the 19th century and includes several coloured glass windows by the renowned Victorian designer Charles Kempe. In the first instance, this grant will now enable a programme of urgent repairs to make the building secure. In addition, this grant will enable the church to maximise its historical connection to Lord Byron: new historical information and exhibition materials including a new website will be produced. Commercial opportunities and initiatives will be explored to provide a sustainable legacy for the church; and volunteers will receive training in research, IT skills

and stewarding.

St Charles Borromeo, Kingston-Upon-Hull
A grant of £246,000 has been awarded to the Grade II* listed St Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Church in Hull. As one of the first major Catholic churches to be built at the time of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, this church is hugely significant. Designed by local architect John Earle in 1829 in a classical style, it has one of the most opulent and dramatic interiors of any English 19th-century church. The building is essentially Baroque Roman in design but with a heavy touch of the Austrian Rococo and much of the internal painting focussing on icons of English saints. Its roof will now undergo major repairs to prevent water ingress and damage to the interiors. In addition to repairs, a new guidebook is being produced about the history of the building alongside a website.

St Barrwg's Church, Bedwas, Caerphilly
A grant of £180,300 has been awarded to St Barrwg's Grade II* listed church in the village of Caerphilly. The vast majority of the building dates from the medieval period, including its tower and its church yard cross, which is a scheduled ancient monument. This grant will eradicate an infestation of Death Watch Beetle; repair the roof structure and in addition install new facilities, including a toilet and kitchen to enable the building to play an increased role in the life of the community.

Anstruther Parish Church, Anstruther, Fife
Built in 1634 with later additions, Anstruther Parish Church is a Category A listed building. This grant of £83,700 will enable a programme of urgent repairs to the church tower and walls, which are suffering from water ingress. Repointing will replace historic cement-based repair work that is now damaging the building. The church is already used widely by the local community with coffee mornings, craft classes and schools recitals; however there are plans to use the buildings as a performance venue for the East Neuk Festival and commercially provide lunches for people travelling the Fife Costal walk.

St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, Belfast
A grant of £98,900 has been awarded to St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church. Category B+ listed, it is situated in a Belfast inner city parish recognised by government agencies as being in need of regeneration. This grant will enable an initial programme of external stonemasonry repairs to the four elevations of the church tower below the main spire including works to the louvres, balconies and upper section of the front elevation. The proposals forms one phase of a much larger scheme of stonemasonry repairs to the entire spire, tower and front elevation to be undertaken over the next 1-3 years.

The remaining 61 grants totalling just over £7million announced today are the final round to be awarded under Repair Grants for Places of Worship, a joint scheme funded by HLF with expert guidance from English Heritage (full details available).

For more information about applying for HLF's funding for places of worship visit our Grants for Places of Worship programme page.

Notes to editors

New 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 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.

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

HLF press office: Natasha Ley on 020 7591 6143, out of office hours mobile: 07973 613820.

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