£3.24million vital funding for North West Churches

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The money comes from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme*, which is now funded by HLF and administered by English Heritage.

The grants are offering much needed funds to the North West's places of worship at risk including Bolton Methodist Mission; the Church of St Michael with St Batholomew, Great Lever, Bolton; the Parish Church of St Thomas & St John, Radcliffe, Bury; St Thomas' Church, Bury; Alderley Edge Methodist Church, Cheshire; St Thomas' Church, Stockton Heath, Cheshire; St Nicholas' Church, Halewood, Knowsley; the Church of All Saints, Newton Heath, Manchester; Christ Church, West Didsbury, Manchester; St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Oldham; Preston Seventh Day Adventist Church; Saint Peter's Church, Rochdale; the Church of the Ascension, Salford; the Church of St Clement, Ordsall, Salford; Wycliffe Congregational Chapel, Stockport; Christ Church, Tameside; St Catharine's Church, Wigan; and St Paul's Church, Seacombe, Wirral.

The Bishop of London, Dr. Richard Chartres, said: "This is extremely welcome news. Congregations across the UK are the custodians of some of our most important historic buildings and while they provide much joy and inspiration, maintaining them is a heavy financial burden. This vital investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund delivered with the benefit of English Heritage's conservation expertise, means that local people can continue to safeguard these precious places."

Sara Hilton, Head of HLF North West, said; "Historic places of worship are an irreplaceable part of the North West's heritage and sit at the very heart of our local communities. Both the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage are delighted that in these difficult times, these vital repairs can still be done, ensuring these wonderful places are secured for future generations."

Henry Owen-John, English Heritage's Planning Director for the North West said; "Places of worship are among are most impressive and inspiring buildings in the North West. Their importance cannot be underestimated but undoubtedly, they face some very real challenges. These grants will fund urgent repairs so that these wonderful buildings, so central to this country's shared heritage, can remain in active use. The combination of HLF investment and English Heritage expertise will continue to help prevent these places falling into ruin."

Preston Seventh Day Adventist Church
Grant: £188,000

This church was constructed to the designs of Bellamy and Hardy in 1857-59 as a Congregational chapel and became a Seventh Day Adventist Church at the start of the 21st century. This grant will make possible urgent repairs to the church's spire, extensive repairs to roof and repairs to high level masonry.

Bolton Methodist Mission
Grant: £186,000

Replacing an earlier chapel and incorporating other existing buildings purchased at the end of the 19th century, Victoria Hall of Bolton Methodist Mission was built in 1935. Including a 90 foot terracotta tower, the building has the appearance

not of a church but of a music hall of the period and today is regularly used by the local community for music events, lectures, meetings and graduation ceremonies. This grant will enable urgent repairs to the roof and renewal of rainwater guttering.

Making a difference

Today, it has been announced that a total of £8million has been awarded to 67 Grade II listed churches, chapels and synagogues across the country. Since 2002, HLF and English Heritage have worked together to award almost £200 million to help repair more than 2,000 listed places of worship, the largest single source of funds to help congregations care for their buildings.

Notes to editors

The Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England Scheme is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and administered by English Heritage on behalf of both organisations. English Heritage gives some funding to Grade I and Grade II places of worship.

Until 2010, the scheme was jointly funded by HLF and EH. As a result of Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, EH's budget was cut and it was unable to continue funding the scheme. In 2011, HLF agreed to provide an additional £9million needed to ensure the scheme is protected in its current form until 2013.

HLF is committed to supporting the urgent repair needs for places of worship. From 2013, the scheme will be fully-funded and administered by HLF. HLF launched a three- month consultation at the end of January 2011, inviting views on how best to help urgent repairs for places of worship. The consultation closed on 26 April 2011 and we are now considering the views expressed in the large volume of responses. HLF's strategy on funding places of worship will be announced in due course.

Listed places of worship in England 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.

To be eligible for the next round of funding, applicants need to apply by 30 June for Grade I and II* and 30 September for grade II listed places of worship. Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund
Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported over 30,000 projects, allocating £4.5billion across the UK.

English Heritage
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. Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Further information

• Please contact Natasha Ley or Alison Scott, HLF Press Office, on tel: (020) 7591 6141/6035 mobile: 07973 613820 email: natashal@hlf.org.uk

• A full list of grants and grantee contact details is available along with 22 England-wide case studies