£450,000 vital funding for South 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 South West's places of worship at risk including the Church of St Michael, Teignmouth and Christ Church, Parracombe in Devon; St John the Evangelist in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire; and the Church of St Mary Magdalen in Magdalen, North Dorset.

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."

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: "Historic places of worship are an irreplaceable part of the South 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."

Andrew Vines, South West Planning Director for English Heritage, said: "Thanks to the generosity of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and ultimately Lottery players, the future of these architectural gems has now been safe-guarded. The combination of HLF investment and English Heritage expertise will continue to prevent these places falling into ruin."

Christ Church, Parracombe
Grant: £155,000
This church was built by W. Oliver in 1878 on a scenic steep south facing slope near the centre of the village, after the Church of St Petrock was abandoned over safety doubts. The funding will see urgent repairs undertaken on the north isle, vestry and nave roofs, including gutter repairs, internal plastering and repointing the church tower.

Church of St John the Evangelist, Coleford
Grant: £88,000
Designed by F.S. Waller this church was built in 1878-80 to replace the original church, which now remains as just a tower in the town centre market place. Urgent retiling will be carried out on the nave, chancel and porch roofs. Repairs will also be carried out on internal plasterwork and decorations along with timberwork and 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 English Heritage. As a result of Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, English Heritage'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 and will fully fund the repairs scheme from 2013. 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 26th 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 30th June for Grade I and II* and 30th September for Grade II listed places of worship.

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. Visit the English Heritage website for more information

Further information

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