£585,000 vital funding for West Midlands churches

16/06/2011

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 West Midlands places of worship at risk including the Assemblies of the First Born Church, Lozells, Birmingham; St Michael's Church, Handsworth, Birmingham; Holy Trinity Church, Arrow, Warwickshire; St Peter's Church, Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby; Cradley Heath (Four Ways) Baptist Church, Sandwell; the Church of All Saints, Bromsgrove; and the Church of the Ascension, Malvern.

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."

Anne Jenkins, Head of HLF West Midlands, said; "Historic places of worship are an irreplaceable part of the West Midlands' 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."

Tim Johnston, English Heritage's Planning Director for the West Midlands, said: "Places of worship are among are most impressive and inspiring buildings in the West Midlands. 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."

Assemblies of the First Born, Lozells, Birmingham
Grant: £171,000

Situated on the crest of a hill, this church was originally built in 1880 as the Anglican Church of St Paul. Designed by J A Chatwin in a Perpendicular style, the church is now used by the Assemblies of the First Born Church of God. Constructed with a rock-faced Bath stone west front, the church also features a brick back, a slate roof and a square north-west tower. This grant will enable high level window repairs to the south aisle and north vestry, including masonry repairs, and releading the windows, among other work.

Holy Trinity, Arrow, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire Grant: £69,000

The nave of this parish church dates from the late 13th century, and the chancel from the mid 14th century. The tower has a datestone declaring: "Built at the expense of the Rt Hon the Earl of Hertford 1767." The grant will be used for the repair or replacement of roof valley gutter cladding and timbers; and to cut out, treat, and replace sections of the roof and valley gutter timbers and wall plaster affected by dry rot.

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 £200million 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 (EH) 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. Visit the English Heritage website.

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.

Further information

Please contact Natasha Ley or Alison Scott, HLF Press Office, on 020 7591 6141 / 6035 or 07973 613 820 or email: natashal@hlf.org.uk. A full list of grants and grantee contact details is available along with 22 England-wide case studies.