Norfolk and Suffolk churches secure vital funding

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The Heritage Lottery Fund is today announcing a total of £881,500 in grants to secure the future of six key historic churches in the East of England that are in urgent need of repair. From Saxon round towers to octagonal parapets, painted angels to exquisite 18th century plaster ceilings, the buildings awarded funding today reveal a host of architectural delights that will now be saved for future generations.

The funding, awarded to five Norfolk churches and one in Suffolk, will allow vital works to be carried out to these important buildings, helping them to provide better facilities and make the churches more suitable for wider community use.

The grants, all made to Grade I and II* listed churches, have been awarded though HLF's Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) programme. In 1996, HLF set up a scheme to repair places of worship of all faiths. Through this targeted programme, HLF has awarded more than £274million UK-wide, including £63million to over 650 historic sites in the East of England.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: "Places of worship have many fascinating stories to tell, and are among the UK's most historic buildings. This money will pay for urgent repairs, restore historic features and help to bring these special places alive for visitors. With these GPOW grants we look forward to more of the region's fine churches being more widely used by the whole community, and properly cared for into the future."

HLF Grants for Places of Worship announced today include:

St Andrew, East Lexham, Norfolk – round tower to be restored: £79,900 grant
St Andrew's Church, East Lexham, Norfolk, has one of the few Saxon round towers to be found in the East of England. Urgent repairs are needed to the tower and roof of this Grade I listed building, as its octagonal parapet has failed to protected the wall beneath it, and the weather has resulted in damage to the tower, including the belfry and roof. Among the activities planned to engage people with the church is a proposed exhibition of Richard Forster's paintings. A nationally renowned portrait and landscape artist, the church recently acquired an oil painting of the Nativity by him to add to its collections. The church also aims to encourage more Nar Valley Way walkers to visit the church with improved publicity and signage.

St Mary, Yelverton, Norfolk - urgent repairs planned: £135,800 grant
Grade I listed St Mary's Church, Yelverton, Norfolk has 12th-century origins with 14th, 15th and 17th century additions. Further work was carried out during the 19th century but the church is largely unrestored. It also houses an important 16th-century rood screen decorated with a set of 12 painted angels in its lower panels.

St Mary's is considered to be in very bad condition, with loose brickwork on the tower parapets and eroded pointing on the flintwork. The churchyard around the tower has had to be cordoned off for the last 15 years. Heritage Lottery Fund's grant will enable urgent repairs to the tower, parapet and south aisle roof to take place. There will also be a new guide book together with a children's version, website and series of illustrated talks on the history of the church. Teachers from the village school will help to develop trails around the church and churchyard and local people will be kept up to date about the project to demonstrate the scope of work and some of the skills employed.

Holy Innocents, Foulsham, Norfolk – preventing the collapse of historic plasterwork ceiling: £209,000 grant
The 18th-century plaster ceiling of Holy Innocents church in Foulsham, Norfolk is in urgent need of repair to prevent it collapsing as a result of damage caused by rainwater. The Heritage Lottery Fund grant will enable structural work to the Grade I listed church to be completed and will allow the building to be used more flexibly to host a wider range of events, with removal of some pews and the erection of a glass screen. A temporary stage will be purchased for use at community events. New guide books and leaflets will be produced and a series of lectures, talks and school visits will be offered to the community. The church will work with the Foulsham Archive Society to develop a series of historic maps, a history of the village and a photographic record through the years, as well as working with the local primary school on art projects relating to the First and Second World Wars, that will be displayed on boards on the scaffolding.

St Ethelbert's, Alby, North Norfolk – safeguarding Alby's church: £218,500 grant
St. Ethelbert's is a Grade II* listed church in Alby, North Norfolk, in urgent need of repairs to its roof. An earlier Heritage Lottery Fund grant to the church revealed that the nave roof is in a worse condition than first thought. This new grant will ensure timbers will be repaired or replaced and stainless steel used to strengthen the roof structure, with new oak rafters inserted above the existing rafters to strengthen them. A new guidebook, leaflet and website about the history of St Ethelbert's, including research by local schools, will be available once the repair and conservation work has been completed.

Saint Peter and St Paul, Oulton, Norfolk – repairing the tower and protecting medieval wall paintings: £141,200 grant
The Church of Saint Peter and St Paul in Oulton, Norfolk, is Grade II* listed and houses medieval wall paintings that are currently concealed from view. The HLF grant will undertake urgent work to restore the church tower and install new heating, while at the same protecting the wall paintings from damage. Repairs to the tower, including rebuilding the parapets, will halt further falls of masonry and potential losses of flintwork. The church's inefficient and outdated heating system will be upgraded, and the raised pew platform, which is a trip hazard, will be removed to make the nave a more flexible space. In addition, a permanent exhibition will be created in the church, covering topics such as the men from the village who died in the First World War and the heritage of nearby RAF Oulton, as well as exhibiting the work of local artists. An interpretation board will be installed and guidebooks and leaflets created.

St Mary, Newmarket, Suffolk - Re-roofing the Nave: £97,100 grant
Urgent structural repairs to the roof of Grade II* listed St Mary's Church in Newmarket, Suffolk will be carried out, thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. New Welsh grey slate tiles will be used alongside salvaged original tiles, making the roof watertight once more. St Mary's sits in a prominent position in Newmarket and there has been a chapel on the site since the 13th century. The church was rebuilt and extended in the 15th century and further major building works were carried out in the Victorian period when the north transept was converted into an aisle, the chancel was completely rebuilt and a new vestry was added. As part of the project, guides to the history of the church will be updated, including new information about the slating process; a roof model will be made for schools and other community groups to use in workshops and talks; there will be opportunities for building apprentices to learn about roofing and slating crafts; and a public history lecture will be organised.

Notes to editors

Grants for Places of Worship scheme
The Grants for Places of Worship programme is for projects that involve urgent structural repairs to listed places of worship that are at risk. As part of a repair project HLF also funds work that will enable these historic buildings to be used more widely by their local communities. Funding can support the provision of new toilets and kitchens; the creation

of historical exhibitions, leaflets and guide books; commissioning of skills training for volunteer tour guides; or development of digital marketing tools including websites and web-based tools such as apps. Grants are available from £50k – £250,000k. Further information can be obtained at the Grants for Places for Worship programme page.

Further information

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