£4.6m Heritage Lottery Fund success for the

Guildford Cathedral viewed from the air Richard Symonds

The People's Cathedral Project, a term coined in response to the 200,000 ordinary people who 'bought a brick' to pay for the completion of Guildford Cathedral, is an ambitious 30-month initiative combining urgent building repairs with an exciting community engagement programme to capture and reveal the rich heritage and history behind this stunning 20th-century building.

The cathedral's application to HLF was only made possible by the generosity of people and organisations from across Surrey and beyond. Their contribution through the MAKE YOUR MARK appeal enabled the cathedral to secure the £1.3m partnership funding necessary to submit the application.

The Dean, the Very Reverend Dianna Gwilliams, said: "We are delighted by the decision of the Heritage Lottery Fund to support the People's Cathedral project. The award is another crucial step towards saving the cathedral and transforming the Stag Hill site. We are so grateful to the many people and organisations that have given so generously and MADE THEIR MARK to keep the People's Cathedral open."

"This award is a recognition of the value of modern, 20th-century heritage and that Guildford Cathedral is an important piece of our modern heritage. If you have never been inside the Cathedral, I would urge you to come along and experience its unique atmosphere."

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, added: “Guildford Cathedral is a remarkable building with its history deeply rooted in the surrounding community. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s investment is a direct response to the urgent need to save this rare example of a modern cathedral. The project will also help to capture and reveal the wonderful story behind ‘The People’s Cathedral’."

Preparatory work will commence in March 2015 with building works beginning in October to remove the acoustic plaster, containing asbestos, throughout the cathedral vaults and ceiling. A new lighting and sound system will also be installed and disabled and family access improved to help welcome an additional 9,000 visitors annually.

An oral history project will be launched to capture over 200 memories of the brick-givers and those involved in the construction of Guildford Cathedral. This unique story will be complemented by a programme to digitise the cathedral’s extensive and comprehensive archive containing approximately 140 boxes and 53 folders of fascinating items.

Through the project, a series of apprentice and volunteering opportunities will be available to enable 350 local people of all ages to develop the necessary skills to conserve and protect the heritage of Guildford Cathedral for future generations.

Guildford Cathedral will remain open throughout the project and visitors are encouraged to come and explore the transformation in action and take part in any of the 40 specially organised heritage activities.

The project forms part of a wider ongoing £7m Cathedral Appeal to raise urgently needed funds for repairs and improvements to the site. A further £800,000 is needed to complete the appeal.

Notes to editors

About Guildford Cathedral
Built in 1961, Guildford Cathedral is one of the great ecclesiastical buildings of the modern era. Designed by Sir Edward Maufe, it combines Gothic tradition and 20th-century construction techniques with a simple aesthetic of space and light. Its construction, funded by ordinary people who ‘bought a brick’ for 2s 6d (12.5p) in times of austerity, was in an extraordinary demonstration of modern community spirit. Primarily a centre of Christian worship and mission, the cathedral also hosts a great variety of cultural and educational activities, and serves as a venue for civic and county events. A building for everyone, the cathedral is ‘a place of welcome, beauty, engagement and inspiration’.

About the Make Your Mark Appeal
MAKE YOUR MARK is a major fundraising campaign to help save Guildford Cathedral. People of all ages are invited to make their mark on the future of the cathedral by making a donation or organising a fundraising event. 89% of the appeal target has been secured with a final £800,000 needed to complete the appeal. To donate, visit Guildford Cathedral's Make Your Mark page or TEXT MARK02 £10 (or any amount) to 7070, or send donations (payable to Guildford Cathedral) to Guildford Cathedral, Stag Hill, Guildford GU2 7UP.

Further information

For further information and images on the People’s Cathedral project, please contact: Helen Ellis, HLF Project Manager on 01483 547 888 or email: helen@guildford-cathedral.org.

To arrange an interview, please contact: Emma Law, Dean’s PA on 01483 547 862 or email deanspa@guildford-cathedral.org.

For further information and images on the appeal, please contact: Siân Newton, Fundraising and Appeal Director on 01483 547878 or email sian@guildford-cathedral.org.

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, contact Tom Williams on tom.williams@hlf.org.uk or 020 7591 6056.