

St John the Baptist Peterborough



News Release

Peterborough Parish Church – St John the Baptist receives £79,900

Embargoed until 00.01 Wednesday 6 July 2016

Peterborough Parish Church in Cathedral Square, Peterborough will benefit from £79,900 to address *urgent roof repairs*.

Church archivists – June & Vernon Bull - successfully applied for the grant through the Government-funded Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund.

The project will achieve a complete new roof covering on the north aisle and will make the north aisle water tight enabling the area below to be fully utilised for exhibitions, as well as protecting our early 20th century organ built by Harrison and Harrison of Durham during the Great War. The congregation will enjoy the choir coming forward into the north aisle (during services) with music being played on the City Council's grand piano. The community will benefit through the church hosting regular musical events, exhibitions, and illustrated talks.

The original church stood east of the Cathedral, built in c1078. Flooding meant it was cut off from the centre and it was pulled down in 1402 with Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Lincoln's (son of John of Gaunt, half-brother to King Henry 1V) agreement.

The rebuilding and relocation of the present church to the heart of the town began in 1402 and ended in 1407. It's a large stone building, Perpendicular in style, originally with a spire, funded entirely by parishioners; with Chapels east of the north & south aisles with screens and stalls. Mediaeval coloured glass windows, elaborate murals, gold embellishments & ornamental works adorned it.

For nearly 610 years the present church has seen many changes including those under an Act of Parliament 1819; along with refurbishment in 2011 of the interior to match the exterior. The latter enabled reordering of the west end – with toilets, crèche, Sunday School room, new kitchen/servery, a welcome area, parish office, plus glazed south and west doors. The exterior public realm works provided a new grassed area, St John's Square, where the city's Holocaust Memorial stands.

Many notable people are associated with St John's including Sexton Robert Scarlett – who buried Katherine of Aragon and Mary, Queen of Scots. Others include Symon Gunton, Vicar of Peterborough, and Recorder of the Civil War and Plague; Thomas Worlidge who is best remembered as an early Rembrandtist; Dr Thomas Walker, eminent surgeon and physician and the first native of Peterborough to be granted the Freedom of the City; Sir Malcolm Sargent was church organist and choir master; and the Victorian architect John Loughborough Pearson and the renowned 19th century builder John Thompson (responsible for the extensive restoration works undertaken between 1881-1883).

An impressive memorial to Matthew Wyldbore (twice elected MP in the 18th century) can be seen in the Lady Chapel as well as the John Flaxman RA monument to the Squire family (Messrs William Squire and Wright Thomas Squire - merchant bankers and founders of Squires Bank, Peterborough, in 1818) can be seen on the north wall.

Revd Canon Ian Black, Vicar of St John the Baptist, Peterborough; Canon Residentiary Peterborough Cathedral and Rural Dean of Peterborough said:

“This is fantastic news. We are delighted to say that we have been successful in our grant application. We can put the buckets away!

The Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund have agreed to fund 71% of the total cost of £111,867.

St John's is in the heart of the city and a focus for many people and events. This money will help ensure it is able to serve the people of the city for generations to come.

We need to raise the balance (£31,967) and if anyone would like to contribute toward this we will be extremely grateful for whatever they can give. Donations can be sent to the Church Office, St John's Church, Church Street, Peterborough PE1 1XB.”

This money is part of a wider funding package of £22.9million to 401 historic places of worship across the UK. The fund was launched by the Chancellor in his Autumn Statement in December 2014 and the funding package has now seen a total of 903 places of worship across the UK receive a share of £55million.

The Fund is administered by the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) on behalf of the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

A full list of awards across the UK can be found at www.gov.uk/dcms or www.lpowroof.org.uk

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Notes to editors

Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund

The Fund was open to organisations, trusts and congregations of all faiths and denominations with the responsibility of looking after a listed place of worship. To be eligible for funding buildings were required to be listed and used for public worship. Places of worship that had received a previous repair grant from English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Cadw, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Heritage Lottery Fund and/or other National Lottery distributor, and where that project is not yet finished, were not eligible to apply.

The total funding package for the Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund is £55million. This includes grant awards, a grant increase contingency fund and the cost of administering the fund.

More information on the fund can be found at www.lpowroof.org.uk

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) was set up in 1980 to save the most outstanding parts of our national heritage, in memory of those who have given their lives for the UK. It is to receive £20m Government grant in aid between 2011-15 allowing for an annual budget of £4m-£5m. More information can be found at www.nhmf.org.uk

Peterborough Parish Church – St John the Baptist

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See www.peterborough-stjohns.org.uk for more information on the church