

Scottish Churches Harvest Heritage Lottery Funding

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With three in Edinburgh and one in Ayrshire, each is of important architectural merit but in desperate need of repair.

The seat of Episcopalian worship in Edinburgh to be restored:

Old St Paul's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh

Stage One pass*: £92,600

Development funding: £6,000

Situated between two medieval closes in Jeffrey Street, Edinburgh, Old St Paul's stands on the site of the original home of Episcopalian worship in the city. People have worshipped there since 1689 when a breakaway group from the Old Cathedral of St Giles, led by Bishop Alexander Rose, left the Cathedral after refusing to renounce on oath James VII and II, following the joint accession of William and Mary and the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland.

Instead the Bishop and much of his flock found a new place of worship in an old wool store in Carrubber's Close (this stood on the present site of Old Saint Paul's) where they remained staunchly Jacobite, loyal to James and his descendants. Designed in 1880 by Hay and Henderson, Old St Paul's is a fascinating architectural gem as, situated between two narrow, steep closes, only its main chancel end with three simple windows are visible from Jeffrey Street resulting in a magical 'tardis' effect when entering the church.

The building is used regularly for worship as well as a venue for the Edinburgh Festival and choral and orchestral concerts. The Heritage Lottery funding has been earmarked for urgent roof, masonry and window repairs.

Crosshouse Parish Church to get its steeple back

Stage One pass: £93,700

A prominent feature in the village of Crosshouse and a venue for many community gatherings, the Parish Church was built in 1882 by Bruce Sturrock & Co. Last year, however, the four pinnacles which completed its 60ft tower had to be removed as they had become insecure and posed a serious risk to public safety.

The incomplete tower still remains unstable and in urgent need of repair. Today HLF gave the church the green light for a project to carry out those repairs and reinstate the four pinnacles.

A guide across the marshes.

Corstorphine Old Parish Church

Stage One pass: £90,900

Development funding: £24,200

Corstorphine Old Parish Church was originally built in the 1429 and started life as a modest family burial chapel for Adam Forrester, a burgess and provost of Edinburgh who was knighted for his services. As the population of Corstorphine grew the Church was remodelled and extended many times, most significantly by William Burn in 1828 who re-orientated the church internally.

Today the building retains much of its pre-Reformation character. It has a distinctive low tower and on the east gable is a niche which held a light used to guide people through the marshland which once existed between Corstorphine and Edinburgh. However, perhaps its most notable feature is the chancel's roof of heavy stone slabs. This is in need of urgent repair as 11 of these slabs slid off the roof last year and although temporarily safe require additional work. Urgent repairs to the stained glass windows will also be undertaken.

Polwarth Parish Church

Stage One pass: £87,800

Development funding: £6,300

Sitting adjacent to the Union Canal, Polwarth Parish Church is the cornerstone of local activity. Dancing classes, toddlers, fitness classes, neighbourhood watch, community council, youth club, choir club as well as regular worshippers see the church as an integral part of community life.

Designed in 1899 by Sydney Mitchell & Wilson, it was originally built as the Candlish Memorial Free Church and completed in 1913. It is now in poor condition and requires urgent repair works to the roof, windows and masonry.

Commenting on the announcement, Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: The Heritage Lottery Fund is pleased to be able to help secure the future of these fine buildings. They are part of our history; their architecture telling the story of the times, their records telling the story of our ancestors. They are importantly also part of our future, providing a space for young people in a community to come together and share interests."

Notes to editors

A 'Stage One Pass' means that money has been earmarked by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while a Stage One Pass does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support, and money for the scheme is set aside. The applicant can then progress to Stage Two and submit a further, fully developed application to secure the full grant. On occasion, at Stage One, funding will also be awarded towards the development of the scheme.

Further information

HLF Press Office, Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142 890 or Sam Goody on 020 7591 6033 / samanthag@hlf.org.uk

Lisa Nicholson, Historic Scotland on 0131 668 8852 / 07500 065 438 or lisa.nicholson@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

James Wynn-Evans, Old St Paul's Episcopal Church on 07710 269 474.

John McHarg, Crosshouse Parish Church on 01294 601 723.

Kenneth Harrower, Corstorphine Parish Church on 07720 841968.

Dr Linda Dunbar, Polwarth Parish Church on 0131 441 5335.