

Grant to restore the birthplace of Methodism

14/07/2010

The money will see the church conserved and improved to provide a sustainable building and visitor centre for the community of Epworth and its many visitors.

St Andrew's Parish Church is of great historical and architectural interest. John and Charles Wesley, founders of World Methodism were born and grew up in Epworth, North Lincolnshire when their father, Samuel was Rector from 1695 to 1735. This connection attracts visitors to Epworth from many parts of the world. The past fifteen years has seen extensive restoration of the fabric of the church which dates back to the late 12th century.

The generous grant of £457,500, for the project 'Conserving and Sharing St Andrew's Church, Epworth,' will enable the final phase of this work to be undertaken. The church will be reordered with enhanced facilities including a new limestone floor with under floor heating. At the same time a new visitor centre is to be created in the base of the tower with a ringers' gallery above, along with a new kitchen and toilet. The whole church will be rewired with a new lighting scheme and this will include photo-voltaic cells, for generating electricity, hidden on the church roof which will reduce our carbon footprint not to mention our electricity.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire and the Humber, said "The market town of Epworth and its Grade I listed St Andrew's Church are internationally recognised as the birthplace of Methodism. We are delighted that this investment will go towards completing such an important restoration, both conserving the church for future generations and bringing benefits to the town, its local community and visitors alike."

Focussed activities will feature in the project allowing the community to participate in and learn about this unique heritage. Facilities will be provided for schools to develop their out of classroom learning requirements. The font is to be moved to a different position within the nave and around its base a heritage pavement will be introduced which will comprise of clay tiles depicting the local history in the form of motifs. Community groups and local schools will be invited to participate.

Memories and photographs of the area will be collected and shared with the community.

The Reverend Ian Walker, Priest in Charge of the Epworth Group of Parishes, said: " We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the interior of St Andrew's enabling it to have a wider ministry both to our local community and to the many visitors drawn here by Epworth's part in the history of christianity".

It is envisaged that site works will commence in Spring 2011.

Notes to editors

* The HLF grant to the project Conserving and Sharing St Andrew's Church, Epworth is for £457,500 (66% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £341million to more than 2,500 projects across the Yorkshire and the Humber region alone.

To date, HLF has made 85 awards in North Lincolnshire amounting to just over £4.7million

Further information

The Reverend Ian Walker, Priest in Charge - Epworth Group of Parishes on 01427 873790 or irsw@stgilesrec.fsnet.co.uk

Melvyn Rose, Chairman, St Andrew's Restoration Committee on 01427 872080 or melvynrose@tiscali.co.uk

Vicky Wilford, HLF Press Office on 0207 591 6046 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk