

St John's "Securing the Future" project wins National Lottery support

St John's, Glastonbury, has received a confirmed National Lottery grant of £465,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its Securing the Future project, it was announced on December 11.

Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the project aims to celebrate the heritage of St John's, a Grade I listed building, by providing a better welcome and interpretation of our long and significant history, and building closer relationships with different communities in Glastonbury, including disadvantaged groups and young people.

The Securing the Future project has several objectives, including

- Providing permanent interpretation about our heritage and activities programmes involving a wider audience, including local schools, historical societies, adult learners, visitors and tourists,
- Providing heritage and learning opportunities within the church and with other historical sites, such as Glastonbury Abbey,
- Conserving the nave floor and installing up-to-date underfloor heating, thus establishing a clear, level and stable floor,
- Installing modern glazed draught-resistant porches at the west and south entrances,
- Installing flexible, multi-function lighting and audio-visual facilities to support a wide variety of activities, including concerts, productions, and history and heritage displays, as well as worship,
- Improve our catering capabilities to permit hosting proper hot meals as well as casual refreshments,
- Improving the operating efficiency of the building.

St John's is a living building, which has changed and evolved over the centuries along with the ever-changing town of Glastonbury. Over the centuries, the changing needs of the congregation and the town, as well as normal wear and tear and weathering, most recently requiring the restoration of the clerestory windows, are part of the continuing life of the fabric. Significant subsidence of the nave floor, with partial collapse of the centre aisle, now require extensive restoration and conservation work. National Lottery support for this project will ensure and secure the future of St John's and its central place in the life of Glastonbury.

Commenting on the award, St John's project manager Larry Schenck said: "We're jubilant that we've received this support thanks to National Lottery players. This award, plus a substantial award from Viridor Credits, other significant gifts and grants, and funds raised by the congregation, allows the work to begin in January 2019. While the church will be closed for most, if not all, of 2019, we are already planning a variety of activities and events in addition to our regular services, as well as sharing our history and heritage with all who visit or live in Glastonbury."

Nerys Watts, head of HLF South West, said: "Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players we're delighted to support this project which will secure the future of St John's and create some fantastic opportunities for people to explore the heritage of the church and their community."

Notes to editors

About St John's Glastonbury

St John's is a Grade I listed building, centrally located in the town of Glastonbury, on the High Street, and within easy walking distance of the Abbey, Glastonbury Tribunal, Lake Village Museum and Rural Life Museum, St Margaret's Chapel and Almshouses, Chalice Well, Wearyall Hill and the Tor.

Orbach and Pevsner, in their book *The Buildings of England, Somerset: South and West*, describe St John's as "A c15 church, rebuilt, with hardly noticeable exceptions, from the 1420s to c.1500." Further on, they write, "The tower is the second tallest of any Somerset parish at 134 ft (41 metres) high." This tower replaced the central crossing tower, which collapsed around 1465. The north and south nave walls date from 100 to 200 years earlier. In 1534, John Leland described St John's as "a fair lightsome church".

St John's is rich in stained-glass windows and medieval artefacts. Most notable to many people will be the window of Joseph of Arimathaea holding the cruets of the blood and sweat of Christ that he brought with him, and accompanied also by the Holy Grail, or the cup of the Last Supper. Alongside him are windows depicting Aristobulus, Simon Zealotes and King Arviragus.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about — from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLottery

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