

St Michael's, Kirkby Thore



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St Michael's, Kirkby Thore, wins Heritage Lottery Fund support for Church Restoration

St Michael's Kirkby Thore PCC has received initial support* from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the first part of a major project to repair and renovate this historic parish church. The full project aims to secure the building and its heritage for the foreseeable future and to present it as a fitting resource to support the church's continuing mission of care for all who live and work in the village of Kirkby Thore.

Development funding of £9,000 has been awarded to help St Michael's PCC to progress plans for this essential repairs project in order to apply next year for the main grant of £60,900 to complete the work.

This first stage of the full project is to carry out essential and urgent conservation work: to stabilise the South and East walls of the church; to mend cracks in the masonry, rebed and repoint; to complete maintenance on the roof structure and ceiling; to repair some windows; and to improve drainage on the North side of the church. This will achieve the first aim to secure the building for the future. Then will follow a project to repair and redecorate inside the church, and to reorder so that the church can better serve the spiritual and social needs of the village. Running alongside the repair work will be a programme to engage the community, and visitors to the village, more closely with St Michael's and its heritage.

St Michael's is the Parish Church of Kirkby Thore. The present building dates back to 1150 but was largely rebuilt towards the end of the 14th century following the destruction wrought by the Scottish raids into Northern England. Until the 19th century the Parish of Kirkby Thore was one of the wealthiest livings in the Carlisle Diocese, extending from the River Eden in the West across the Pennines to the River Tees in the East. For most of its history St Michael's was the Mother Church of chapels in Temple Sowerby, Newbiggin and Milburn. Throughout its existence, St Michael's has been the focal point of its community. The Rector, currently the Priest-in-charge, holds the living, and the church on behalf of the parish, in respect of her 'cure of souls' for all in the community. Under her, the Parochial Church Council are responsible for the upkeep of the building and the church wardens for the care of its contents. This is therefore a very significant moment and development for the whole village.

Margaret Davidson, long serving churchwarden of St Michael's, comments: "We are tremendously grateful for the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Without this support we could not have dared to embark on such a major project and the church would have been greatly at risk. Now, with a lot of hard work, we are determined to secure this special church for future generations and to make it fit for purpose in Kirkby Thore in the 21st century."

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West said, "England has such a diverse range of churches, each one reflecting the social history of its community as well as the influences upon the country's architecture. St. Michael's stamps a sense of identity on Kirkby Thore while providing a venue for worship and many other community activities so HLF is delighted to give it support."

ENDS

Notes to editors

***A first-round pass** means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and HLF believes the project has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

On occasion, an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.3bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.

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