

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST

Church website www.alnwickanglican.com

Christmas funding boost for St Michael's church, Alnwick

A much-loved North East church is to share in a £463,000 funding payout from the National Churches Trust.

A £10,000 National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant will help fund tower repairs at the Grade I listed Church, making the church watertight and preserving its historic fabric.

Broadcaster and journalist Huw Edwards, Vice President of The National Churches Trust, said:

“The UK's historic churches and chapels are a vital part of our national heritage and have done so much to help local people during the COVID-19 lockdown. But to survive, many need to carry out urgent repairs and install modern facilities. The cost of this work is far beyond what most congregations can pay for themselves.”

“So I'm delighted that St Michael's in Alnwick is being helped with a £10,000 National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant. The repairs are an early Christmas present for the historic church and will facilitate the project and will help secure the future of this historic building.”

A total of 56 churches and chapels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will benefit from the latest grants from the National Churches Trust, the charity supporting church buildings of all Christian denominations across the UK.

This is the third-round of grants made by the National Churches Trust in 2020. In 2020 the Trust has awarded 260 grants totalling £1,723,000, including recommendations on behalf of other funders, with £200,000 of the funding provided by the Wolfson Foundation.

Grants will be available in 2021 to projects at churches, chapels and meeting houses and applications can be made by Christian places of worship in the UK that are open for regular worship. From repairing a roof to helping to install an accessible toilet - and many other projects - the National Churches Trust's grants help keep churches open for worship and community activities and allow them to continue to serve local people and communities.

The church

St Michael's church has been a place of worship for over 1,000 years. Much of the current building dates back to the 15th century, and replaced earlier Norman and Saxon churches. The church is dedicated to St Michael the Archangel; in earlier times it was also dedicated to St Mary as well. A Grade I

listed building, it is considered to be one of Northumberland's architectural gems, and is included in Simon Jenkin's "England's Thousand Best Churches" as one of top 100 churches of England.

The church was largely built in 1464 during the reign of Henry VI, incorporating fragments of an earlier Norman chapel, and restored in 1862-3. It is perpendicular in style and a rare example of church building in Northumberland at a time when conditions allowed little church building in the county.

The project

To prevent further water penetration and damage, the project will focus on tower repairs including renewing the lead roof and making good the masonry.

Canon Paul Scott (Vicar of St Michael's) said: "This Cornerstone Grant from the National Churches Trust is a huge boost to our fundraising efforts to ensure that St Michael's can continue to be kept in good order for the people of Alnwick now and in years to come. The last major repairs to the tower roof were carried out 256 years ago in 1764 so we're used to good workmanship in this part of Northumberland! Now, with the generous help of the National Churches Trust, we hope to leave a similar legacy in the care and maintenance of this ancient much-loved place of worship.