

## **Heritage Lottery Fund support for Norwich's 'other' Cathedral**

Norwich's Roman Catholic Cathedral – Norwich's 'other' cathedral has received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for an exciting project to improve access and provide essential new facilities at the grade-1 listed church.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral Church of St John the Baptist has been fundraising for some time for a new Narthex and the project received a major boost this week with the announcement by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) that it has earmarked a grant of just under £1 million for the project. HLF has awarded a Stage One Pass\* to the cathedral's application.

The Narthex will provide much-needed amenities for visitors and for the cathedral's expanding education programme as well as generally improving access to the 100-year-old neo-Gothic church.

St John's Cathedral – which together with its Anglican sister cathedral was the joint focus of the city's magnificent Two Cathedrals' Flower Festival last month – is recognised as one of the city's finest buildings.

"This project is so important for St John's, if we are to achieve our aim of bringing more and more people into this wonderful place," said Cathedral Dean, Fr James Walsh. "So many visitors to the Flower Festival had never visited us before and were quite overwhelmed by the splendour of the cathedral. It belongs to everyone – not just to the Catholics – a house of God, for God's people, where are all welcome."

Naomi Perowne, Cathedral Development Officer who co-ordinated the bid, explained that the news would unlock further funding for the project. "Fundraising for a major capital project is a long process when you are starting from scratch – people need to be convinced the project is viable before committing large sums of money. Now we can show that it really will happen and other funders will come on board."

Mike Loveday, Chief Executive of Norwich's Heritage Regeneration Trust (HEART) said 'This is really great news for the city - once again, Norwich's fantastic built heritage has received support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The cathedral is committed to working with HEART in bringing together and promoting the city's fine heritage sites. This collaboration is crucial and we will be working jointly to help to achieve a successful outcome at Stage Two.'

HLF has recently made large grants to the Castle Museum and to Dragon Hall and Norwich Cathedral received a Stage One Pass for a grant of over £2 million a few months ago for its new Hostry.

Robyn Llewellyn, Heritage Lottery Fund Manager in the East of England added; 'This award will be hugely beneficial for everyone from local people to the thousands of visitors that come to Norwich from around the world to explore its history. The planned work will rejuvenate the Cathedral, providing much needed community facilities and a fitting welcome for all visitors.'

Ends

\* 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.

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