

Grant to St Mark's Portobello will preserve its future

St Mark's Episcopal Church in Portobello is celebrating after the National Churches Trust awarded it £100,000 to preserve the building for future generations.

The grant is part of a £1 million private donation to the trust which is the UK's leading independent charity helping churches to remain open for use. The money will be used to help 18 churches all over the UK. Others, including businesses and private individuals, have been inspired to donate to the trust as a result.

The trust is calling for the next government to find ways of introducing a scheme to match state and private funding.

Sir Philip Rutnam, Chair of the National Churches Trust, said: "The UK's churches include nearly half our most important historic buildings. At present the burden of caring for this heritage falls almost entirely on local people – the same people who run an astonishing array of community services.

"This is not sustainable, and it is clear that the future of thousands of buildings will be at risk unless we move quickly to a new approach. Our campaign has shown the potential for match funding and philanthropy to play their part in responding to the growing crisis.

"We now need the next UK Government to act and to introduce a

matched funding scheme that galvanises different sources of funding and secures these incredible buildings for the future.”

At St Mark’s the money will be used to repair the floor, ceiling, external walls and windows and repair the plasterwork which is in danger of falling on parishioners.

The repairs will allow the church to proceed with plans to improve its other facilities such as a new kitchen and accessible toilets.

This will ensure that the church can welcome the local community for all sorts of activities including coffee mornings, yoga, book clubs and children’s drama and dance classes. With improved facilities the church hopes to increase the revenue from its building which has dropped since Covid-19.

Claire Walker, Chief Executive of the National Churches Trust, said: “The National Churches Trust is excited to be able to support St Mark’s Church to enable them to carry out urgent repairs. This will safeguard the unique heritage of this historic church and keep it open and in use for the benefit of local people.

“Whether seeking quiet reflection, access to community services or a place to worship, the National Churches Trust helps hundreds of churches each year and with the support of local people, keeps them thriving today and tomorrow.”

Rev Canon Dr Sophia Marriage, Rector of St Mark’s, said: “This marks a significant milestone in our fundraising as we move towards the 200th anniversary of the church and work to ensure that the St Marks building and congregation can serve the people of Portobello in exciting ways for the next 200 years.

“We are immensely grateful for this generous grant of £100,000 from the National Churches Trust, which provides a massive

boost to our ongoing fundraising work and considerably helps towards the repair costs which were the starting point for the vision to make the church more accessible, flexible and welcoming for worship and for the many different community activities that meet there.

“We are also greatly encouraged by the partnership that this grant opens up, which shows how much the National Churches Trust supports the vision for the renewal of community infrastructure at a time when increased fabric costs and the withdrawal of community funds threatens these spaces which are integral to the flourishing of people.”

All photos courtesy of St Mark's





