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**Press Release 01/11/21**

**Worcester Cathedral receives £300k boost from the Culture Recovery Fund**

Worcester Cathedral is among 142 historic sites across England that are receiving grants worth £35 million through the second round of the government’s Culture Recovery Fund.

Worcester Cathedral was awarded £328,794, which will be used to continue essential repairs to its medieval library.

The funding will not only help to secure some of the Cathedral’s most valuable treasures - including the will of King John and a 1225 copy of Magna Carta – but also enable it to enhance its environmental sustainability.

During autumn 2019 the Cathedral library team started to report water ingress to the building. A resulting inspection made clear there was a significant issue with the roof and associated masonry.

During lockdowns, environmental conditions in the library deteriorated further, placing some of the Cathedral’s most important artefacts at risk.

With support from round one of the CRF, the skilled team was able to fully overhaul and re-cover the roof of the ante-library and thermally stabilise the conservation room, which houses the most sensitive items of the collection.

Phase two of the essential improvement works to the main library means that they can now continue to improve the thermal and sustainable measures of the rest of the library; encouraged by the aims of the 2030 Net Zero Carbon Target set by the Church of England.

Funding through phase two of the CRF will enable the Cathedral to: provide temporary protection to the library; re-cover the lead roof, improving the detail where possible; improve rainwater disposal locally and; install a latch-on man safe system to the roofs.

In addition, some of the Cathedral high roofs needing urgent attention immediately above the library can also be repaired to prevent water ingress.

Emily Draper, Estates Manager at Worcester Cathedral, said: **“**I am delighted by the news that our plan for phase two of the library roof works has been supported and funded by the Culture Recovery Fund for Programmes of Major Works. This work will make such a difference to the health of the main library and ensure we are protecting the precious collection for the future. It is wonderful that we can repair the tiles and give the south transept and south slope of the nave some much needed love and attention too. I am excited for the project to start and looking forward to being able to clip onto our new safety system and tour the upper roof spaces!”

Worcester Cathedral houses one of the most important libraries and archives of any English Cathedral and attracts visitors and scholars from all over the world.

It has collected manuscripts since the seventh century and now has the second largest collection of medieval manuscripts in any cathedral in the United Kingdom.

It contains nearly 300 manuscripts, maps, plans, drawings, books and archives dating from the 10th Century onwards and many still have their original bindings. The library also holds many early printed books and music (from medieval to Sir Edward Elgar), historical documents and ancient artefacts.

**About the Culture Recovery Fund**

This vital funding is from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage and the Heritage Stimulus Fund - funded by Government and administered at arms-length by Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Both funds are part of the Government’s £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund which is designed to secure the future of Britain’s museums, galleries, theatres, independent cinemas, heritage sites and music venues with emergency grants and loans.

Culture Secretary, Nadine Dorries, said: "From local churches to ancient buildings and landscapes, the UK's unique heritage makes our towns, cities and villages stronger, more vibrant and helps bring communities together.

"This latest funding - £35 million from our unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund - will help protect sites for future generations and help them build back better from the pandemic."

Duncan Wilson, Historic England’s Chief Executive, added: **“**Funding from the government’s Culture Recovery Fund is hugely welcome at a time when the people and organisations who look after our vast and varied array of heritage urgently need support to carry out essential repairs. Heritage is a fragile eco-system, with an amazing cast of characters who keep our historic places alive, with specialist skills that take time to learn and experience to perfect. These grants will protect their livelihoods, as they use their expertise to help our heritage survive.”

Money from the Heritage Stimulus Fund will also keep our nationally and internationally significant heritage assets in good condition and sustain the skilled craftspeople that looks after them.

**[ENDS]**

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**Notes to editors**

**Worcester Cathedral** has been a place of Christian worship and prayer for fourteen centuries; the present building dates back to 1084 and is dedicated to Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Described as possibly the most interesting of all England's cathedrals, especially architecturally, Worcester Cathedral was founded in 680. Saint Oswald then built another cathedral in 983, and established a monastery attached to it. Saint Wulfstan began the present building in 1084 replacing the earlier cathedrals.

The Cathedral's attractions include King John's Tomb, Prince Arthur's Chantry, the early 12th Century Chapter House, St Wulfstan's Crypt, medieval cloisters, magnificent Victorian stained glass and spectacular views from the top of the Cathedral tower.

**Culture Recovery Fund**

The government's record-breaking £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund is the biggest ever one-off cash injection into UK culture. Since the start of the pandemic, almost £2 billion has been invested to tackle the crisis facing the country’s most loved arts organisations and heritage sites.

**Heritage Stimulus Fund**

The Heritage Stimulus Fund is part of the Culture Recovery Fund and is administered by Historic England on behalf of the government.

The first round of the Heritage Stimulus Fund has already enabled repair and maintenance work at more than 800 of the country’s treasured heritage assets and has protected the jobs of expert crafts workers in the sector.

Grants allocated in this latest round of the Heritage Stimulus Fund will continue to support a large number of projects carried out by a variety of specialists and workers across the country, thereby supporting this vulnerable sector as the nation re-opens.

**Historic England**

The public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England’s spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. We protect, champion and save the places that define who we are and where we’ve come from as a nation. We care passionately about the stories they tell, the ideas they represent and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists we share our passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.