

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH IN LYNG RECEIVES A LIFELINE GRANT FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S CULTURE RECOVERY FUND



St Bartholomew's Church in East Lyng, Somerset has received a financial boost from the government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund to help fund repairs to the church tower, during the coronavirus pandemic.

Lifeline grants from the Culture Recovery Fund are designed to protect heritage sites and ensure that jobs and access to culture and heritage in local communities are protected during the months ahead.

St Bartholomew's has been awarded £25,000 for essential repair work on the church tower, which will stop water seeping into the bell tower and eroding the ancient masonry and rotting the stays, which hold the six bells in place. The grant comes at a crucial time, as further damage to our much-loved church would have rendered it unsafe and beyond repair.

Grants of up to £25,000 are being allocated to cherished heritage sites, like St. Bartholomew's, across the country to cover urgently needed maintenance and repairs. This vital funding comes from a part of the Culture Recovery Fund called the Heritage Stimulus Fund and is administered on behalf of the government by Historic England.

As well as rescuing precious heritage buildings in need, the injection of cash will protect livelihoods for some of the most vulnerable heritage specialists and contractors working in the sector.

Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, said: "These grants will help the places that have shaped our skylines for hundreds of years and that continue to define culture in our towns and cities. We're protecting heritage and culture in every corner of the country to save jobs and ensure it's there for future generations to enjoy."

St. Bartholomew's or 'Lyng Church,' as it is commonly known by the locals plays a hugely important role in the community, never more so than since the loss of our village pub, several years ago. It is the hub of the community for worship, celebrations, community and cultural events and the only venue we have, big enough for locals to gather together. The tower, stands 60 feet high and has six bells, the oldest cast in 1612. The church can boast two full teams of bell ringers and whilst the pandemic may have silenced them temporarily, they cannot wait to return.

Lyng Church is inextricably linked to the tale of Alfred the Great and whilst the current day church dates mainly from the 14th century, there is evidence of Saxon earthworks within its grounds. Whilst Alfred founded a monastery in Athelney, those same monks, in turn built the parish church in Lyng. The church is home to a replica of the Alfred Jewel, the original is in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and there is a stained glass window in the north chancel, which shows Alfred wearing the jewel. People visit the church, not only to have a glimpse of the jewel but to see the wonderful carved 'bench ends' depicting early village life. This grant means we can welcome visitors to our church for many years to come. More importantly, we can continue to provide a place for the local community to meet together.

Christine Dawson, Chair of the Parish Council and member of the Parochial Church Council said: “We are delighted to receive this funding from the Culture Recovery Fund. It will make a significant difference to the work we need to carry out to St. Bartholomew’s, so that the church can continue to play an important part in the life of our community.”

Duncan Wilson, Historic England Chief Executive said: “Historic places across the country are being supported by the Government’s grants awarded under the Culture Recovery Fund. This funding is a lifeline which is kick-starting essential repairs and maintenance at many of our most precious historic sites, so they can begin to recover from the damaging effects of COVID-19.

“It is also providing employment for skilled craft workers who help keep historic places alive and the wheels of the heritage sector turning. Our shared heritage is an anchor for us all in these challenging times and this funding will help to ensure it remains part of our collective future.”