## Blockley Church’s Building on History Project gains support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Blockley Church has received initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for its Building on Blockley’s History Project, it was announced today. Made possible thanks to National Lottery players, the project aims to restore the building and its monuments for the next generation and engage locals and visitors with the story of the agricultural and industrial history of the village. The project will also enable the church to make significant steps towards greater environmental sustainability and accessibility.

Development funding of £38,205 has been awarded by the Heritage Fund to help Blockley Church progress its plans to apply for a full National Lottery grant of £1,417,256 at a later date.

Blockley Church is the oldest building in the village. Its structure and memorials uniquely tell the story of the village’s development from monastic cell to agricultural community and on through industrialisation to the present day. The building has become unusable in the winter owing to the failure of its heating, the east window stonework is crumbling and there is movement in the tower arch. Without this funding from the Heritage Fund, it would continue to be unusable in winter, deterioration would continue, and its stories would remain unheard. The lack of a toilet makes it challenging to use for groups of children and others.

The project will see the installation of a new heating system and associated power supply enabling the building once again to be used all year round while significantly reducing the Church’s carbon footprint. It will also address the serious structural issues in the east window and west arch. Stabilisation of the west arch will allow the creation of a new meeting room in the tower for groups who visit and use the church. These will enjoy a better welcome with the installation of a toilet and small servery. Several key monuments which tell the story of influential people in the village’s history will be conversed and cleaned.

Throughout its 850 year history, Blockley Church has been at the heart of the community. This project, these will enable volunteers, local groups and schools to take part in the project through a wide range of community-based events and activities both inside and outside the church building. This will consolidate and enhance the church’s place at the heart of village and community life.

The project is a once in a century opportunity to ensure that the church is handed on to the next generations is as good a state as possible to ensure its future sustainability. The structural work will address priority items in the architect’s condition report, while the development of volunteering opportunities will help to grow and sustain the diverse groups of people who interact with the life of the church and its community from week to week.

The Revd Canon Dana Delap, vicar of Blockley Church, said “We are thrilled to have received this initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. We’re delighted that the Trustees have endorsed our proposals for the conservation and development of the church to make it warm, welcoming and sustainable for the future. This exciting development belongs to our entire community and opens up incredible opportunities for everyone. We will all work together to make the most of it, and we are especially grateful to the National Lottery players who are helping to make it possible.”

Stuart McLeod, Director of England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “Churches like Blockley are among the UK’s most treasured historic buildings that are deeply rooted in the communities they serve. We’re delighted to offer our initial support for their once-in-a-generation project, which will not only safeguard the church’s remarkable heritage but also ensure it remains a welcoming and accessible space for all. Thanks to National Lottery players, this funding marks the beginning of an exciting journey, and we look forward to working closely with the team as they develop their plans for a full grant application at a later date.”

## Notes to editors

**About Blockley Church**

Blockley Church is the Church of England parish church of the villages of Blockley, Aston Magna, Draycott, Northwick Park, Ditchford Hill and Dorn. It is 850 years old, and listed Grade II\*. The development of the church has closely paralleled changing life in the village over the centuries and it is this story which will be told as a result of the project. The Church is the location for the filming of the Father Brown TV series starring Mark Williams as the eponymous sleuthing catholic priest.

Its real life vicar is the Revd Canon Dana Delap.

**About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

\*Grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. Blockley Church has initially been granted round one development funding of £38,205 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to progress with its plans. Detailed proposals are then considered by the Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £1,417,256

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That’s why as the largest funder for the UK’s heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, [Heritage 2033](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/heritage-2033-our-10-year-strategy). Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

[heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/)

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## Further information

**Further information**

For further information, images and interviews please contact Revd Canon Dana Delap at on 01386 700676 or vicar@blockleychurch.org.uk