

**St Mary the Virgin, Upwaltham**

**The Church in The Field**

# The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Upwaltham has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for urgent repairs to the Grade I listed church.

The Parish Church Council of St Mary the Virgin Upwaltham have received a confirmed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of **£68,500** for the Grade I listed ‘church in the field’ at Upwaltham. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the project aims to undertake urgent repairs to the building, which is currently entered on the Heritage At Risk Register. Repairs included are to the chancel roof timbers, chancel window, new drainage and replacement of the cement render with lime render to ensure that the listed building will be weather and water-tight for many years to come.

Supported through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the other aims of the project include training community users in in how to use social media such as Twitter and Facebook. This will allow the community to reach the public with news and events linked to the church and the valley, including updates on the urgent repairs to the church. A fundraising website will also be created which will help raise the church’s profile as well as additional funds for the project. The layout of the church website is to be updated, including adding videos of the interior and exterior of the building prior to the works, as well as while the works are ongoing for the public to view. A new booklet on the history of the church and its setting in the historic valley of Upwaltham is also planned and as the church is easily accessible from the South Downs Way, a page on the new website will be dedicated to walking routes and points of interest in the Upwaltham Valley and nearby.

St Mary’s sits within the Upwaltham Valley and is a Grade I listed building, known as ‘the church in the field’. A small flint drover’s church of early Norman origins, it has little altered since it was first built and is only one of three apsidal ended medieval churches in Sussex. A notable past incumbent, Cardinal Manning (Henry Edward Manning 1808-1892) of the parish described the church and it’s setting as ‘very nearly heaven’. Within the church is the Memorial Plaque commemorating two tragic WWII air crashes that occurred within the valley in 1944 and 1945. The church is now also part of the Four Nations Memorial Walk over the South Downs covering the crash sites and memorial cairns, attracting visitors from all over the world.

### **About the Heritage Lottery Fund**

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/heritagelottery), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/heritagelotteryfund/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/heritagelotteryfund/) and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.

**Further information**

Please contact the project co-ordinator for further information on the project:

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