

PRESS RELEASE FROM St MARY the VIRGIN PARISH CHURCH, LEWISHAM

ISSUE DATE: 19th August 2022

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St Mary the Virgin, Lewisham

Diocese of Southwark

Church of England

Church website: <https://www.lewishamparish.com/>

Funding joy for St Mary the Virgin, Lewisham

A much-loved South London church is to share in a £437,000 urgent funding pay-out from the National Churches Trust.

A £30,000 National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant will help to pay for urgent repairs to chancel, tower and side apse roofs at St Mary the Virgin, Lewisham, to ensure the church thrives today and tomorrow.

The church also receives a £10,000 Wolfson Fabric Repair Grant from the Wolfson Foundation on the recommendation of the National Churches Trust.

Broadcaster and journalist Huw Edwards, Vice President of the National Churches Trust, said:

"I'm delighted that St Mary the Virgin is being helped with funding for urgent repairs to the building's structure. This will safeguard unique local heritage and keep the church 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."

Paul Ramsbottom, chief executive of the Wolfson Foundation said:

"As well as being places of worship and buildings of beauty, churches sit at the heart of the community. In many ways they stand between the past and present. We are thrilled to continue our partnership with the National Churches Trust to support the preservation of these significant, much-loved historic buildings across the UK."

41 churches across the UK will stay open and in good repair thanks to £437,000 of funding awarded by the National Churches Trust. 21 churches benefit from £134,000 of Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants. In 2021 the National Churches Trust made 304 awards to churches worth £5.2 million.

The church

The current Georgian building, by local architect George Gibson, dates from 1777. It features a medieval tower with a prominent Victorian clock with four faces. St Mary's is the Borough's oldest building and a hidden gem of south-east London architecture.

It was designed as a 'preaching box', with galleries and a high pulpit with sounding board. It is believed John Wesley preached here in the Methodist 'revival'.

St Mary's contains many impressive monuments, including those by renowned sculptor John Flaxman, dating from 1797, Victorian stained-glass windows depicting the life of the Virgin Mary and mosaics from the redesign by Sir Arthur Bomfield, portraying the patriarchs, Empress Helena and Queen Bertha of Kent.

St Mary's is a strong and diverse church community serving a dynamic community of central Lewisham.

Project

Grade II* Listed St Mary's is the ancient parish church of Lewisham, first mentioned in a Saxon Charter of 918AD. The church receives a £30,000 National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant and a £10,000 Wolfson Fabric Repair Grant to fund urgent repairs to the chancel roofs, rainwater

Father Steve Hall, vicar and churchwardens Joan and Jennifer who are overseeing the project on behalf of the PCC, said:

"We are delighted to now be close to our target of £250,000 with these grants from the National Churches Trust and the Wolfson Foundation, after more than two years of fundraising and hard work – and many decades of water pouring in, buckets and mopping up and subsequent damage to the fabric of our wonderful church.

We continue to seek further funds, not least to ensure inflationary pressures are fully covered when we start the project this autumn. We give thanks for the generosity of so many in contributing to this success and look forward to celebrating with our friends, supporters and the wider community when the work is complete."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the National Churches Trust

The National Churches Trust is the charity supporting the UK's church buildings. Churches, chapels and meeting houses are impressive, exciting and surprising places. Working together with churches across all four nations, we help to maintain these wonderful buildings and keep them open for worship and community use today, and tomorrow. More details at www.nationalchurchestrust.org

PRESS CONTACT

Eddie Tulasiewicz 07742 932278 020 7227 1936 eddie@nationalchurchestrust.org

About the Wolfson Foundation

[The Wolfson Foundation](http://www.wolfsonfoundation.org.uk) is an independent charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to support civil society by investing in excellent projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and the arts.

Since it was established in 1955, some £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 14,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

Website: www.wolfsonfoundation.org.uk

Twitter: [@wolfsonfdn](https://twitter.com/wolfsonfdn)

Wolfson Fabric Repairs Grants Programme.

Wolfson Fabric Repairs Grants are made on behalf of the Wolfson Foundation by the National Churches Trust. The aim of the programme is to support the conservation and restoration of places of worship with outstanding historic and architectural significance. Churches can apply for the grants of up to £10,000 to support repairs to the fabric of their buildings such as roof repairs, masonry repairs, rainwaters disposal and drainage and floorwork.

For more information visit www.nationalchurchestrust.org/our-grants/wolfson-grants