

27 of Suffolk's historic places of worship restored thanks to government pilot scheme

- **A £1.8 million fund has helped to repair, protect and preserve listed places of worship in Suffolk**
- **The pilot has so far supported 27 places of worship in Suffolk**
- **The scheme also provides opportunities to work with experts on maintenance and repair plans and increasing community engagement**

A £1.8 million pilot scheme to help support listed places of worship has provided grants towards repairs at 54 historic buildings in its first year.

The Taylor Review pilot scheme, which was launched in September 2018, provides advice, guidance and financial support to listed places of worship of all faiths and denominations in Suffolk and Manchester in order to build a sustainable future for these important historic buildings.

Thanks to this scheme, maintenance and urgent repair works have been brought forward by congregations who may have previously been unable to afford such works to keep buildings stable and weatherproof. In total, 54 places of worship in Greater Manchester and Suffolk have received support and been offered advice, with work underway on a number of other projects as the pilot enters its final year.

Heritage Minister Helen Whately said:

"I am delighted that so many buildings in Suffolk have benefitted from this funding.

"Our country has a rich and fascinating religious history and places of worship have been at the heart of communities for centuries. The Taylor Review pilot scheme is helping to protect and preserve these important places of worship and keep them central to our communities."

Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive, Historic England said:

"We are delighted that the Taylor Review Pilot has successfully repaired and restored 54 listed faith buildings in its inaugural year. We look forward to continuing to work with local communities nationwide to help maintain some of our most important places of worship."

Of the 54 grants provided, Suffolk received 27 with the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wortham, St Mary's Church, Rickingham Inferior and five historic churches in the Southwold area benefiting from funding and support.

- Thanks to a grant from the Taylor pilot, Grade I listed St Mary's was able to repair missing roof tiles, replace leaking asbestos cement gutters and repair small cracks to stop rainwater further damaging the ancient building which dates to the 12th century.

- The Medieval Grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin in Wortham received funding for repair works to the roof and walls. The funding also helped to provide updates to the drainage system and downpipes.
- Five churches in Southwold - Sacred Heart, St Edmund King and Martyr, the United Reformed Church, Church of St Mary and Church of St Peter & St Paul - received support from the Taylor pilot to create a maintenance cooperative where skills will be shared between the five churches.

The scheme also sees expert advisors work with those looking after listed places of worship on increasing community engagement with, and the maintenance and repair of, the buildings.

The interim report of the Taylor Review Pilot has also been published today. This sets out evidence from the first seven months of the scheme and can be viewed here [LINK]. The final report is expected to be published in summer 2020.

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- 46% of all Grade I Listed buildings in England are places of worship. UK wide, there are approximately 14,795 listed places of worship, many of which are in need of repairs that are complex and costly.
- The Taylor Review - which focused on Church of England church buildings - presented a model for how listed places of worship could become more sustainable through regular maintenance and repair and wider community involvement.
- The Taylor Review pilot aims to test the recommendations with all faiths groups and denominations.
- The Pilots are run and managed by Historic England that works closely with faith groups and denominations.

Additional quotes:

Cathy Hume of the Church of St Mary the Virgin said:

“The support and guidance from Historic England has been invaluable. Taking part in this scheme has heightened my awareness of the church building and how to care for it. It has also given me knowledge and confidence to tackle the bigger challenges that the church fabric presents.”

Jean Sheehan of St Mary’s Church said:

“We are grateful to the Taylor Review Pilot as the repairs carried out will help to keep the walls dry. We have also had professional advice from the Community Development Adviser and Fabric Support Officer and found them very helpful. The day courses were also useful and it was interesting to meet up with other people who have similar problems with their churches.”