

Press Release 15 December 2016



We are delighted to announce that the Discover DeCrypt CIO and the PCC of Hempsted with St Mary de Lode and St Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, have received a confirmed grant of £1.36million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Discover DeCrypt will transform St Mary de Crypt Church and the Old Crypt Schoolroom, Southgate Street, Gloucester from historic buildings in danger of decay and dilapidation into a sustainable heritage attraction, educational resource, cultural venue and community facility in the heart of Gloucester, which is open and available to all. Detailed design work will take place in 2017 with work on site due to start in January 2018 and the buildings reopening in April 2019.

The Rector of St Mary de Crypt, Canon Nikki Arthy, expressed her delight at the news of the award: "I want to pay tribute to the work of so many people over a number of years who have brought us to this point. This is good for Gloucester and exciting for us all."

Commenting on the news, the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Rev'd Rachel Treweek said: 'For centuries St Mary de Crypt has been a place of worship and connection with the joys and struggles of local people. It is renowned for its strong association with key historic figures such as Joan Cook, Robert Raikes and George Whitefield who acted for good, inspired by their Christian faith. I am immensely grateful for the generous grant from HLF which will enable this ancient church and schoolroom to be a place of welcome and discovery for so many people of different ages and backgrounds.'

Nerys Watts, Head of HLF South West, said: "St Mary de Crypt and the Old Crypt Schoolroom have been an important part of Gloucester for centuries, so we're delighted to support this project which is set to secure a bright future for these historic buildings and transform them to benefit the local community and economy. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players we're delighted to see that people will be put at the heart of this transformation, from volunteering and training opportunities to giving people of all ages and backgrounds the chance to explore their heritage."

On hearing the news, Gloucester MP, Richard Graham said: "As a Patron of the project I have to declare an interest in being especially delighted the Heritage Lottery Fund has announced its award to our Discover DeCrypt bid."

The re-opening and re-use of the Old Crypt Schoolroom and link to St Mary de Crypt Church on Southgate Street for community purposes will surely bring a vigorous nod of approval from former de Crypt stars Robert Raikes (founder of Sunday schools) and George Whitefield (a founder of the Methodists). It's another great moment for heritage led regeneration - I'm grateful to the HLF and rejoice for our project team and volunteers, and the many this will benefit."