

## **Key Findings from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship (RGPoW) Impact Assessment**

English Heritage is very aware of the difficulties faced by congregations. New research shows that 61% of people responsible for looking after places of worship (PoW) state that repair and maintenance is a constant major concern to them and a further 17% state that it is an occasional major concern.

Research also showed that 98% of grant recipients agreed that the repairs funded by the RGPoW prevented irreversible damage to their building. 76% could not have done any of the work without help with a further 13% said they would have had to reduce the scale of the work carried out - demonstrating the need for this funding.

The end result is that these buildings are kept or, in a few cases, brought back into the use for which they were built - securing their future for the time being. Everyone - be it congregations, faith groups or English Heritage - recognises that the number of people looking after religious buildings decline and as they grow older and it is getting more difficult to find others to take on the responsibility to help.

With most of the work being done by contractors within a 50 mile radius of the site and with the additional opening up of these buildings to the public, there are many other benefits to the community arising from the receipt of this funding, adding additional value over and above the repairs themselves.

### **Key findings from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship (RGPoW) Impact Assessment**

- Since 2002 1,567 sites have had at least one RGPoW grant offer, nearly 11% of all listed places of worship.

#### **How much of an issue is repair and maintenance**

- 61% of PoW who received RGPoW state that repair and maintenance is a constant major concern for them with a further 17% saying it is an occasional major concern.
- 39% of RGPoW recipients find it at least fairly difficult to raise funds for repair and maintenance.

#### **The importance of RGPoW**

- RGPoW grant is vital contributor to the total costs of projects carried out by PoW scheme. 73% of PoW receiving RGPoW receive over 50% of the total cost from the scheme.

#### **Without the RGPoW some places of worship may have been lost**

- 76% of PoW would not have been able to complete their repair and maintenance project at all without the RGPoW. This means that over the last eight years, approximately 1,190 of our most important (PoW) would not have been able to carry out the repair work needed to ensure the sustainability of their building. A further 13% would have had to reduce the scale of the works done.

- 30% of PoW would have closed without the RGPoW, 17% indefinitely. This equates to 266 building permanently shut down as PoW without the grant scheme.

### **Receiving RGPoW decreases the likelihood of large scale repair and maintenance grants in the future**

- Receiving the RGPoW grant and carrying out the repair and maintenance encourages PoW to better plan for future repairs and maintenance – over 70% strongly agree that it helps them plan for the future.

### **Receiving RGPoW helps PoW to open up more to the public and to use their building more effectively**

- 63% strongly agree that it encourages them to plan development work to improve their facilities, half (47%) strongly agree that it enables them to use their building more effectively and a quarter (24%) that is broadens local community use and extends opening hours.
- Approximately half of all grant recipients stated that the quality of experience for both regular users and other visitors had improved a lot since the repair and maintenance was completed.
- 38% agree that there has at least probable increase in either regular attendees or other visitors. This increase in attendees will help the PoW develop a firmer finance base.

### **Methodology**

100 recipients of RGPoW grants (received since 2005) were interviewed by BDRC Continental. Quota sampling was used to ensure that the sample was representative of the total PoW receiving grants.

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