

Plans to conserve Walpole Old Chapel gain support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel [FWOC] has received initial support* from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for its project *Walpole Old Chapel Unwrapped*, it was announced today.

Made possible thanks to National Lottery players, the project aims to carry out essential repairs and conservation works to remove this remarkable Grade II* Listed building from the Heritage at Risk Register.

Development funding of £96,332 has been awarded by the Heritage Fund to help FWOC progress their plans to apply for a full National Lottery grant of £900,000 at a later date.

Walpole Old Chapel is one of the oldest and finest non-conformist places of worship in the country, described by architectural historian Christopher Stell as 'a historic gem'.

The Chapel is still used for worship, baptisms and weddings including same-sex celebrations

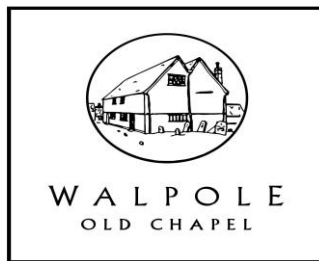
and cultural performances. It also offers local volunteers opportunities to carry out research on the non-conformist congregations of North-East Suffolk.

This initial support from the Heritage Fund will help FWOC and partners advance crucial plans to ensure the building's future, including the capital works programme, business and activity planning to engage the public.

During this initial phase the Friends charity will take ownership of the Chapel before the current owner closes operations and is forced to sell the building.

In due course, once development work is complete, FWOC will apply to the Heritage Fund for full funding to deliver the Unwrapped Project. The project will replace the external render on the chapel walls which has failed over the past decades, repair the original timber frame, and complete other essential conservation activities. The repairs will be run alongside programmes of heritage skills activities promoting interest in learning traditional conservation techniques, expanding community outreach activities and promoting the Chapel as an attractive destination for visitors to north-east Suffolk.

Simon Weeks, Secretary of the Friends of Walpole Old Chapel said: "We are thrilled to have received this initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Chapel is more than 300 years old and was built by people who wanted to worship in their own way in their own building. Thanks to National Lottery players we can now develop our plans to help us make sure the Chapel has a sustainable future by extending the range of cultural activities we shall be able to offer."



NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Friends of Walpole Old Chapel

The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel have cared for the Chapel since 1995 on behalf of the Historic Chapels Trust [HCT]. FWOC registered as a charity in 2022 [no: 1198030] ready to take on ownership of the Chapel should that become a possibility.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

*Grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. *Walpole Old Chapel Unwrapped* has initially been granted round one development funding of £96,332 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to progress with its plans. Detailed proposals are then considered by the Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £900,000.

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That's why as the largest funder for the UK's heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, [Heritage 2033](#). Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

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Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact Simon Weeks, Secretary: 01986 784348 or info@walpoleoldchapel.org