

Diss Express

Struggling Redlingfield church gains government grant boost



Redlingfield residents gathered outside the Church of St Andrew in the village. ANL-150104-131842001

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An Anglo-Saxon church which has stood in a north Suffolk village for nearly a millennium is set for a new lease of life following the award of a £71,800 grant.

The Church of St Andrew, Redlingfield, was in such bad condition English Heritage immediately put it on the Heritage At Risk Register following an inspection.

But after the grant, one of 502 pledged nationally from the Government's Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund totalling £30 million, it is hoped the church can become the hub of the community.

It is estimated improvements and repairs to the church will cost about £150,000, while £80,000 is needed to enlarge and improve the Doorstep Green recreation area.

The initial grant will be used to make the roof water-tight.

Parish clerk Janet Norman-Philips said: "The church would be right next door to an enlarged Doorstep Green – so bringing the two projects together makes so much sense.

"Our beautiful little church has been around for almost a thousand years but it is in a sorry state, the roof needs major work, we have damp problems and the electrics are in urgent need of repair.

"We simply have to save it but we want to do so much more with it so that the people living here in a thousand years' time can still enjoy it.

"When creating the Doorstep Green we didn't think deeply enough about future growth – we didn't realise how popular it was going to be and we made it far, far too small.

"It's not going to be easy or quick but if we all pull together we believe we can achieve it."

A survey of all villagers carried out by the parish council revealed overwhelming support for extending Doorstep Green and improving the church to meet the needs of the village.

The hoped improvements for the church include toilets, a kitchen, sustainable heating and lighting and secure and safe access from the village.

Fundraising efforts for this year have begun, starting with a Buffet and Race Night at the Horham Community Centre on April 11, and concluding with a 1940s dance at the Red Feather Club in neighbouring Horham on November 14, which will go towards the church fund. For more visit www.redlingfield.suffolk.gov.uk

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