

£4.1million to save remarkable heritage at risk in Wales

07 August 2023

Lifesaving support from our COVID-19 Response Fund for buildings impacted by the pandemic.

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Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust has been awarded £2.2m to protect and preserve the nationally important heritage site for future generations.

The main building of the 19th century Grade I listed castle was at risk of collapse. Our funding will support urgent repairs including the return of roofs and floors to the main building, that had to be halted during the pandemic.

Gwrych Castle was built in the Gothic style in the 1800s. The site was extended in 1845 and a chapel added in the 1870s. Much of the gardens were planted during this time, including Monkey Puzzle and Yew trees which remain today. During the Second World War, the castle was requisitioned to house around 200 Jewish children seeking safety.

The site has been identified by Cadw (the Welsh government's historic environment service) as an irreplaceable cultural asset. The impressive Italian marble staircase inside is considered one of the Seven Wonders of Wales. Public attention gathered as the castle became the home of ITV's I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here in 2020 and 2021.

Dr Mark Baker, Chair of Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust, said: "With this substantial funding award, we can reverse the critical situation that the site is currently in, allowing Gwrych Castle to be returned to its former glory and offering our visitors the best experience when they come to learn about the fascinating heritage it has to share."

Rescuing Wales's cultural landscape

Funding has also gone to:

Gladstone's Library (£777,246): the Grade I listed library in Hawarden is known as one of the most important research libraries in Wales and is home to internationally significant collections. Our funding will support major repairs to the entrance porch, roof, the Reading Room ceiling and some external windows, all of which was postponed or cancelled during the pandemic.

Friends of Friendless Churches (£769,309): redundant medieval churches St Lawrence's in Gumfreston, Pembrokeshire and St James's in Llangua, Monmouthshire, will be rescued from ruin. St Lawrence's houses potentially the oldest pre-Reformation bell in Pembrokeshire, while St James's boasts a wonderful medieval wagon roof. The churches – which date back to the 12th century – faced a loss of income and access for maintenance during lockdown.

Insole Court (£328,938): built in 1855 by James Harvey Insole, a member of one of the founding families of the coal industry in the Rhondda Valley, Insole Court is recognised as an important part of Cardiff's cultural landscape. Our funding will support essential repairs to the Grade II* listed mansion and stables.

Dr Simon Thurley CBE, Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "We're tremendously proud to have provided a lifeline for some of Wales' incredible heritage sites and assets through the COVID-19 Response Fund, helping them to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic."

The COVID-19 Response Fund

[The £40m fund](#) was made up of £20m from NHMF and a further £20m from the government's Cultural Assets Fund. It is now closed to applications.

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A pioneering mill village, a museum, ship and locomotive have received a share of our COVID-19 Response Fund, designed to support sites and assets at risk.