

# Ipswich: Lottery gives £3.6 million to restore Waterfront church - News - Ipswich Star

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✉ By Paul Geater

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Sue Gray in St Mary at the Quay.

A NEW community centre is to be created in one of the town's most historic churches after it got a £3.6 million lottery grant.

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St-Mary-at-the-Quay by the Waterfront has been redundant since the 1970s – but will now be given a new life as a heritage and wellbeing centre.

The scheme has been put together by Suffolk Mind and the Churches' Conservation Trust which owns the building – which dates from somewhere between 1450 and 1550.

The Heritage Lottery Fund confirmed the award today after two years of working with the church and Mind to ensure the bid was successful.

The church will be converted into a centre that Mind says will provide a quiet and beautiful sanctuary in a busy, historic market town.

It should have a flexible and welcoming community space which is open to all. It will offer wellbeing and heritage activities, a centre for local events, complementary therapy as well as a café.

The project obtained funding on the basis that it will:

- nRestore and rejuvenate an ancient building
- nCreate a sanctuary with a sensory medieval garden
- nReinstate significant heritage features making them accessible to all
- nLink wellbeing and heritage in an innovative way
- nTell the diverse history of Ipswich waterfront in an engaging and interactive way

nProvide restored and modern facilities for community wellbeing and heritage activities

Sue Gray, business development, Suffolk Mind said: "This is an exciting project that we hope will give people living in the community the opportunity to learn about how to improve their emotional health and wellbeing."

She said work should start on the project – which already has planning permission – next summer and it is due to be completed by the second half of 2014.



The cost is high because there needs to be considerable work to strengthen the building – and there will also be an extension built to the side.

Mrs Gray added: "The important thing is that this will provide facilities for the whole community. By linking heritage and wellbeing, we should be able to give people a real feeling that this is place where they feel that they belong.

"We would like to thank all those who have supported our bid including Ben Gummer MP, Ipswich Borough Council, councillors and of course our partners the Church Conservation Trust. The HLF grant will help us to make this project a reality."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: "This is an innovative project which unites two very different charities with the shared aim of creating a community wellbeing centre.

"We loved the idea of a redundant medieval church being brought back to life and once more becoming a key element in rejuvenating Ipswich's waterfront area."

How important is the work for the town? Write to Your Letters, Ipswich Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AN or e-mail [starletters@archant.co.uk](mailto:starletters@archant.co.uk)



