



TOLPUDDLE OLD CHAPEL TRUST

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Welcome

Friends of Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust (TOCT) Newsletter - March 2017

Much has happened in the last 2 years since TOCT purchased the Grade II* listed former Methodist chapel in Tolpuddle.

The Trustees thank you for signing up as a 'Friend of TOCT' and welcome your support in our project to renovate this unique building as a 'quiet place in the heart of an historic Dorset village'.

Heritage Lottery Fund round 1 success

Our great news is that our round 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was successful. TOCT have received initial support for the renovation project with development funding of £63,700 awarded to help progress our plans. This initial funding together with in-principle support for the delivery stage of £329,300 allows the Trust to produce detailed plans for the renovation and repair of the former chapel, as well as creating interpretation and community engagement activities to tell the history of the building and its connection to the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

The development phase has also been supported by grants from the Architectural Heritage Fund and Dorset County Council. We expect this development phase to take until Autumn 2017 when the round 2 HLF application will be submitted. Key to the development phase are securing planning and listed building consent, developing interpretation and activity plans and securing the £200,000 of match funding needed.

Project Team in place

With the confirmation of the development funding the TOCT Trustees have been able to recruit key members of the project team to take the project to completion. These team members are:

- Architect – Paul Richold of Architecton
- Project Manager – Martin Cooke of Heritage & Leisure
- Activity & Interpretation Planner – Lucy Johnston

Plans for 2017 developing

As part of the development phase for the project, Lucy will be planning lots of activities and trial events as research for the project. Ideas under development include:

- School and group visits to the former chapel and Tolpuddle;
- Touring a multi-media presentation to local groups;
- Offering guided visits as part of Heritage Open Days in September;
- Activities over the Tolpuddle Festival weekend on the 15th and 16th July including cob making workshops and the opportunity to view inside the building.

Communicating our vision

Following the HLF success we've secured some great press and media publicity.

- A tremendous article in The Guardian published on Boxing Day and online. www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/dec/27/tolpuddle-martyrs-old-chapel-restored-place-sit-think

- Full page coverage in The Dorset Echo, The Blackmore Vale Magazine, The Methodist Recorder and Church Times.
- Andrew McCarthy and Project Manager, Martin Cooke, have also been interviewed by Radio Solent with their Facebook post receiving over 2,000 hits.

The project to renovate the former chapel is attracting worldwide interest due to its importance in the development of Methodism in Dorset and its influence on the formation of the group of agricultural labourers, who later become known as The Tolpuddle Martyrs. George Loveless' belief in social justice was formed here in Tolpuddle and within the one roomed chapel that they built, many years before their forming of a 'Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers' and their subsequent arrest in 1834.

In this development phase we will be working hard to communicate our vision of the project as wide and far as possible.

We will be updating our website and using Facebook to communicate regular project progress and news.

How to get involved

Being able to show to funders the great support we now have from over 100 'Friends of TOCT' has really helped our funding applications. As the project moves forward there will be opportunities to get involved and help in a number of ways. To have an informal chat contact Andrew by email to tolpuddleoctrust@btinternet.com

Next newsletter – June 2017 with project updates and what's on at the Festival

Supported by:



Historic England



Rioting and Persecution - On Tuesday [October 13th] a Methodist chapel was opened in the village of Tolpuddle, in Dorset; and a number of persons accompanied the ministers from Weymouth on the occasion. After evening service, when the ministers and their friends were preparing to return a mob of about 100 persons assembled, and behaved in a most disorderly manner. A Lady belonging to the ministers party, before she could get into her carriage, was pushed down a bank into the road; the horses being frightened by the tumult and noise, the driver was for a considerable time unable to proceed; and the ladies were under the necessity of walking a great distance, exposed to the most brutal insults. The drivers, horses, and carriages were pelted with stones, mud etc., the windows of the chaise broken and even the side of the chaise was pierced by stone. One Lady who rode by the driver received a severe blow on her head and at Piddletown, two miles from Tolpuddle, the driver received a blow in his neck, which, had it not been for a large neckcloth, would probably have proved fatal

(Bath Chronicle, 1818)

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**Trustees: Andrew McCarthy (Chairman), Robert Brunt, (Secretary),
Rev Stephanie Jenner, Adrian Whittlesea.**