



Deopham STAR report for Deopham Parish Council AGM May 10 2023

Deopham STAR is a group of volunteer Deopham residents who have been brought together to help with the funding of the restoration of St Andrew's Church and to develop the church as a community hub. Working with High Oak Parochial Church Council (PCC), the group has been instrumental in the award of a Development Grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The award of £48,955 is for the '*Caring for our Roots*' project, which aims to transform the at-risk church into a sustainable heritage, community and worship hub for Deopham and the wider area. This will be achieved in partnership with local schools, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the Norfolk Record Office and others.

The Deopham STAR group were brought together by the previous vicar of Deopham, Colin Reed, and although not necessarily Christian they have a shared desire to see the church continue to serve its local community and function as a community hub.

The initial National Lottery Heritage Fund award will be used in the project's development phase, to pay for further investigations into the church's condition and to build project activity ideas. This will then lead to a further application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for a larger grant to deliver the project and its outcomes. The group will appoint specialists to help them devise the best options to secure the future, among them an Activity Consultant and an Architect.

'Caring for our Roots' will explore the importance of place, identity and inclusion to a community as expressed through the distinctive and valued heritage of its parish church. This will be achieved both through urgent repairs to the church's fabric in order to remove it from Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk' Register and through a series of engaging new activities and resources, designed to explore, celebrate and nurture the 'roots' of our community – its built, social and environmental heritage. These activities will culminate in the launch of a new '*Caring for our Roots*' exhibition, co-created and co-curated by the most disadvantaged pupils from our local schools in partnership with the Norfolk Record Office.

High Oak Parochial Church Council and the Deopham STAR group have until 10th March 2025 to complete their work before applying to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the larger delivery phase grant.