

Media Information

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For Immediate Use

Fundraising Continues as Launde Abbey Restoration Gets the Go Ahead

The Synod of the Diocese of Leicester has approved the project to save Launde Abbey following their meeting late last night.

In the 2 hour meeting held in Leicester Cathedral the Synod overwhelmingly supported the proposal from the trustees of Launde Abbey to begin the building work. Synod took a step of faith that the public appeal will raise the full £1 million by Christmas, and gave their backing to ensure this achievement.

A remarkable £150,000 has been donated during a nine day cycle of prayer which ended on 9th September. This brings the total donated close to the £800,000 mark and has demonstrated to the trustees of the Abbey and the Synod that there is a public will to save the historic retreat for future generations.

The Synod decision is also based on a robust business plan that will ensure the independence and self funding of Launde Abbey in the long term. The news means that essential renovations to bring the building up to health and safety standards and to enhance the facilities can go ahead, while fundraising continues.

Bishop of Leicester, The Rt. Revd. Tim Stevens is delighted with this news, "We have received tremendous support from within the Church of England and from individuals and companies in the wider community. Gaining the approval of the Synod at this stage is a big thank you for those who have worked so hard to generate the funds needed, and brings the target into sight. With just over £200,000 still needed we must continue to push forward to ensure we can complete the work to secure the long term future of this historic and beautiful retreat."

To donate to the Abbey fund go to the website, www.savelaundeabbey.co.uk

~Ends~

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Editors Notes

About Launde Abbey

Launde Abbey is an Elizabethan manor house set in the countryside East of Leicester, whose former residents include Thomas Cromwell's son Gregory and his wife, Elizabeth, sister of Jane Semour, Henry VIII's third wife. It is one of the UK's last remaining Church of England retreat houses, with a chapel dating back to the 12th century, and welcomes in around 20,000 visitors each year. To continue its open door policy however, the Abbey needs £1million to fund essential modernisation work which will ensure the building complies with current health and safety legislation.

In April, a 'Save Launde Abbey' campaign was launched, headed up by the Bishop of Leicester, with the aim of securing the necessary £1million to be able keep the Abbey open to the public.

A nine day cycle of prayer was started at Launde Abbey on Sunday 1 September following the pilgrimage of the Bishop of Leicester, Tim Stevens and the Suffragen Bishop of Brixworth, Frank White, to the Abbey. The end of this event was timed to coincide with the Synod meeting.