

PRESS RELEASE: 19 January 2017

ANDREW & CHRISTINA BROWNSWORD PLEDGE MATCH FUNDING TO BATH ABBEY'S £1 MILLION TARGET

Andrew and Christina Brownsword, via The Brownsword Charitable Foundation, have agreed to give £500,000 in match funding towards Bath Abbey's Footprint project in order to encourage local businesses and organisations to support the project and raise £1 million.

The Footprint project is a programme of capital works and interpretation that will secure the Abbey's physical future and improve its hospitality, worship and service to the city. After nearly a decade of planning, consultation and development work, building work is due to start this Autumn. However, the Abbey still needs to complete its major fundraising appeal in order for the building work to take place. This is where the Brownswords have stepped in.

The Footprint Appeal was set up to raise £19.4 million for the Abbey's ambitious and transformative programme. Thanks to a grant of £10.7 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and additional funds from private individuals and trusts, as well as the Abbey's own congregation and visitors, the Abbey now has just over £1 million left to raise.

Charles Curnock, Footprint Project Director, said: "We are extremely grateful to the Brownswords for stepping in with their generous offer. By pledging half a million in match funding towards the Footprint Appeal, they are giving added motivation and a real impetus to our fundraising appeal. We hope businesses and individuals will join in and will be more inclined to give once they know that match funding is offered.

"With £1 million left to raise, you may think most of the hard work is done. However, there is still a mammoth task ahead. I understand that the hardest part of raising funds for any project is often the last and final hurdle. So, while we're immensely grateful to everyone who has supported the Footprint project so far, we still need to raise this final amount in order for the project to succeed and, if you don't already know about it, I urge you to find out more about how our project will benefit those in Bath as well as visitors to the city."

Andrew and Christina Brownsword are well known in Bath for their generous philanthropy to various charities and good causes. The match funding will be triggered every time someone makes a donation to the Footprint project, up to a total of £500,000, thus raising £1 million in all.

Andrew Brownsword said: "The Abbey plays a vital role in the city, making a significant impact on those who live, work and visit Bath. Many people feel a connection with the Abbey, whether through worship and prayer, its beautiful music or architecture, or simply by popping in for a few moments of quiet. The Footprint project is essential in ensuring the Abbey is able to carry on these contributions to city life; as the city of Bath grows and changes, so must the Abbey.

“We can see from the huge amount of care and work that has already gone into the first stage of the Footprint project, that this programme of change will maintain, make the most of and improve this magnificent building and its resources. We feel now is the right time to offer our support so that we can inspire other individuals, businesses and trusts to help this ground-breaking project that is much needed in order for the Abbey to continue to inspire and bring lasting benefits to future generations.”

As part of Phase 1 of the Abbey’s Footprint project, some initial excavation work is taking place along the south side of the building, just outside the Abbey shop, on Kingston Parade from now until April 2017. The work is to create new underground spaces and facilities which will help make the Abbey more welcoming and improve its service to the city.

The Abbey will remain open as usual during the Phase 1 work and, following discussions with local stakeholders and neighbours, some changes have been made to ensure as little disruption as possible to visitors, worshippers and neighbouring businesses and residents.

If you would like to know more about the Footprint Project, please visit www.bathabbey.org/footprint , email: footprint@bathabbey.org or follow @bathfootprint on Twitter.

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Notes to editors:

For further information please contact Elaine Teh or Lucy Ryder, Communications Officer, on 01225 303320 or comms@bathabbey.org.

About Bath Abbey

Bath Abbey is a flourishing Church of England parish church which technically serves a small city centre parish (Bath Abbey with St James). This parish has a small residential population and primarily consists of commercial properties; and most of the regular congregation and the 692 people on the electoral roll live in other parishes or come from outside the city of Bath. The Abbey holds daily services of morning or evening prayer or Holy Communion; and the standard pattern of Sunday worship is for five daily services attended on average by 630 people. Special services at Advent, Christmas and Easter are well attended; and many local organisations hold annual services in the Abbey. The Abbey has four choirs: Men’s, Boys’ and Girls’ choirs support worship in services; whilst Melody Makers is a choir for younger children which performs in concerts in the Abbey once a term and at other events in and around Bath. The Abbey runs a successful Schools Singing Programme, an outreach activity which supports singing within local schools and holds regular workshops and concerts in the Abbey. The Abbey welcomes approximately 400,000 visitors annually and is open daily all year round; many of these visitors being families and school parties. Apart from being a place of prayer, worship, weddings and funerals, the Abbey has an important role as a visitor destination, a performance space (for audiences anywhere between 10 and 1,000), a general civic space and an exhibition space. www.bathabbey.org

About Bath Abbey’s Footprint

The £19.3 million Footprint project aims to carry out essential repairs to the Abbey's collapsing floor, install a new eco-friendly heating system using Bath's unique hot springs as a source of energy and enlarge capacity by creating 200 sq metres of new facilities to fulfil the Abbey as a place of congregation, equal access and hospitality. A programme is also planned to record and interpret the Abbey's 1,200 years of history and this iconic church for millions of visitors including educational visits. www.bathabbey.org/footprint