A Birmingham church transformed into a community centre is the first to complete a conservation project under the ChurchCare 100 Church Treasures campaign.
The newly conserved stained glass window by Edward Burne-Jones and a monument to historian and poet William Hutton in St Margaret's, Ward End will enhance the Unity Hubb (hubb meaning love in Arabic) created under a trust that has transformed an underused church into a key community resource and centre for local history learning.

The Church of England's '100 Church Treasures' is a campaign to safeguard some of the country's most at risk ecclesiastical heritage. These treasures are at risk of permanent damage and loss, with an estimated total cost of repair of £3 million. 100 Church Treasures encourages parishes and helps fundraise for the conservation, interpretation and access of Church art for the benefit of local communities.

The two historic treasures at Ward End were funded by The Ruddock Foundation for the Arts. Founder and former chairman of the V&A, Sir Paul Ruddock, who helped launch the 100 Church Treasurers campaign said: "There is something uplifting about having beautiful objects around you and as a community centre it enriches peoples' lives by engaging with their local heritage. It is great to see this building repurposed and refurbished to this degree. I hope to see this in a lot of other churches that are often under-utilised".

The St Margaret's Community Trust was formed for the refurbishment, redevelopment and extension of St Margaret's Church to create a multi-purpose community centre to provide care and support to the people living in Ward End. The church is also home to a collection of historic monuments. With monthly heritage tours and open days St Margaret's is a local history space where people of all ages can learn about and engage with the social traditions and the history of the neighbourhood and its former residents.

Rashta Butt, Heritage Manager of the Unity Hubb, said: 'For me, St Margaret's Community Trust and the Unity Hubb is about community cohesion through shared heritage especially in a diverse neighbourhood like Ward End. The majority of the residents here are Muslim and it is always wonderful to engage with residents, especially the children, using these shared artworks like our stained glass window of Abraham to highlight the similarities in our traditions, or the importance of William Hutton to the history of Birmingham and his strong ties to their community, Ward End."

Sir Tony Baldry, Chair of the Church Buildings Council said: "We are incredibly grateful to Sir Paul for having sponsored the work of refurbishing and repairing this wonderful Burne-Jones window and very fine monument to William Hutton as part of the 100 Church Treasures campaign."

Director of ChurchCare, Janet Gough said: "Ward End is a wonderful example of how heritage projects can make churches more welcoming and accessible to all including non worshiping communities. We are thrilled to have this project be the first of many as we look to secure the future of all the heritage on the 100 Church Treasures list."

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Notes to editors

More information on 100 Church Treasures:

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/about-us/campaigns/our-campaigns/100-church-treasures

More information on St Margaret's Community Trust - http://www.stmargaretscommunitytrust.co.uk/