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Advice on National Grants for Church Building Repairs and Alterations

This advice covers:

- **Signposts to the wide range of grants available**
- **Key national bodies and trusts giving grants**
- **Other trusts with a national scope**

Note that different grant schemes fund either repairs or alterations or both. Check what funders support and require before applying for a grant.

Signpost to the wide range of grants available

The Church of England's Parish Resources webpage on funding church buildings is here https://www.parishresources.org.uk/resources-for-treasurers/funding/

The page includes a link to the 'National List of Charitable Grants for Churches' which is broken down into sections including:

- Conservation, Preservation, Heritage & Restoration
- Bells, Organs, Windows & Other Specific Funding
- Community Projects/Improved Facilities

Key national bodies and trusts giving grants

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Heritage Fund project grants reopen for 2021-22

The Heritage Fund's grants for projects have opened again with funding from £3,000 to £5 million available. The grants cover a broad range of heritage including nature and landscape, community memories and stories, and places of worship and other historic buildings and monuments.

Priorities have been revised for the period until April 2022 to respond to the impact of Covid-19 and support recovery.

Repairs to church buildings can be funded but to have a chance of success a project must involve a wider range of people in heritage and deliver at least one of the other priority outcomes. These are:

- Boosting the local economy including job creation
- Encouraging the development of skills and creating jobs
- Supporting people's wellbeing

- Creating better places to live, work and visit
- Improving the resilience of organisations working in heritage

Projects also have to show that they are building environmental sustainability into their project and future plans.

Other outcomes which remain but have not been prioritised are: heritage will be in better condition; heritage will be identified and better explained; and people will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions.

Projects will be expected to deliver priority outcomes and environmental sustainability in proportion to the size of their project.

Applicants will also need to show that the risks of delivering their project with the added challenges of Covid-19 and future uncertainty are manageable. The Heritage Fund needs to be reassured that a project can and will be delivered with the minimum of potential hazards or unwelcome surprises including with budgets.

Dealing with Heritage at Risk remains an important factor in making decisions about grants. A number of the Diocese's listed churches are on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and others have been logged as concerns by Historic England and/or the Diocese.

Churches are listed because of their special interest but other church buildings and their histories and communities can have heritage value too.

Get in touch if you want to talk about whether your church is at risk or if a project involving the church in some way could have sufficient heritage interest for a Heritage Fund grant.

The Heritage Fund wants to encourage grant applications for projects from Luton which is one of 13 target areas in the UK. It also wants to help applications come forward from disadvantaged groups or which otherwise benefit them.

A picture of the type of church projects which can be successful with the revised priorities will become clearer over the next few months as cases are considered by the Heritage Fund. We will pass on what we learn.

One town church in the Midlands had already made a successful Expression of Interest for a large grant when this note was written. The project included a sizeable amount of repairs but would also deliver the essential outcome of including a wider range of people in heritage and some of the other priority outcomes along with environmental sustainability. The church would develop its offer to visitors to reinforce that of existing heritage attractions in the town and give a boost to the vulnerable local economy and place.

Heritage Fund grants are divided into three bands: from £3,000 to £10,000, from £10,000 to £250,000 and from £250,000 to £5million.

Applications can be made for grants from £3,000 to £10,000 and from £10,000 to £250,000 at any time with decisions normally made in eight weeks. Pre-application advice is available for those asking for more than £10,000.

If you want to apply for a grant from £250,000 upwards then you first need to make an Expression of Interest. If you are then invited to apply you will need to make applications for a development phase followed by a delivery phase.

Much more information is available on the Heritage Fund website. Start with the National Lottery Grants for Heritage 2021-22 webpage https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-grants-heritage-2021-22

Places of worship has its own webpage https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/our-work/places-worship but note that the project examples given do not fully reflect the new priorities.

Applying for Heritage Fund grants is a challenge and you should know whether you have any chance of being successful before spending time on an application. As a first step you should follow the links given above, read the guidance and email Ann Wise, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer awise@stalbans.anglican.org to arrange a chat.

The next step could be for Ann to ask the Heritage Fund to give informal advice on a brief description of your project and how it will deliver the Fund's priorities. If the response is encouraging you could then develop your project and follow the process for the band of grant you want as highlighted above and explained in detail on the Heritage Fund webpages.

You may decide to delay making a grant application until after 2021-2022. The focus and priorities of the grant schemes from April 2022 on will not be known before the end of this year at the earliest.

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

This scheme makes grants towards the cost of the VAT incurred in making repairs and carrying out necessary alterations to listed churches (http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/). As a result the scheme can contribute to the partnership funding required by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. (The LPWGS budget has been confirmed until 31 March 2025.)

National Churches Trust

For information on the National Churches Trust grant schemes see https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/.

The Trust's grant programmes are:

> **Large Grants (formerly Cornerstone)** – For urgent and essential structural repair projects with estimated costs of at least £100,000 that will help places of worship become wind and watertight, and for installing kitchens and toilets with estimated costs of at least £30,000, to improve access for all.

Medium Grants (formerly Gateway) - To support churches in their project development up to RIBA stage 1; supporting local church trusts; and essential repair projects with estimated costs of between £10,000 and £100,000.

Small Grants (formerly Foundation) - Small grants to support small, urgent maintenance and repair issues or to carry out small investigative works costing up to £10,000.

If you are looking for information about the Wolfson Foundation Fabric Repairs Grants please see here - applications are made via our existing programmes.

Grant decisions are made by the NCT's grants committee which meets three times a year.

The Trust's grant criteria for the main grants includes:

- 50% of fundraising has to be in place at the point of application (grant awards will never exceed 50%)
- Churches should have been constructed more than 30 years ago and open for regular worship
- Applicants must demonstrate how they meet one (or possibly more) of the Trust's outcomes:
    - Preserving heritage
    - Promoting sustainability
    - Inspiring support
- Places of worship must be open beyond worship for at least 100 days per year

The Church of England (ChurchCare)

The Church of England (ChurchCare) provides grants for the conservation of a range of building and churchyard features, fittings and furnishings, and conservation plans, as set out under 'Our conservation grants' https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/our-conservation-grants.

Benefact Trust

Benefact Trust (formerly the Allchurches Trust)(https://benefacttrust.co.uk/) supports the mission and work of the Christian church and charitable projects that have a Christian foundation. It likes to assist in areas of greatest need where organisations are tackling social issues and working in partnership. The Trust has grant-aided church repairs and new facilities.

The Allchurches Trust also provides advice and resources on developing, funding and delivering successful projects https://benefacttrust.co.uk/advice-and-resources/.

Ecclesiastical Insurance

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Ecclesiastical Insurance provides a Church Fundraising Hub covering a range of topics https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising/?utm_source=Communicator-email&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=Link734&utm_campaign=Fundraising+support+for+your+church.

Other trusts with a national scope

Other trusts and foundations that have given grants to churches in the diocese include:

- Garfield Weston Foundation (http://www.garfieldweston.org/)
- The Headley Trust (https://www.sfct.org.uk/the-headley-trust/) can fund exceptional large churches and this diocese's parish churches through its second grants round in 2023.

Further potential sources for churches are:

- Beatrice Laing Trust (https://www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk/)
- Foyle Foundation (http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk/small-grants-scheme/)
- The Wolfson Foundation (http://www.wolfson.org.uk/)

Feedback and help

Please get in touch if this advice note needs updating or if you know about another good national source of grant-aid that should be added.

For further help and advice contact:

Ann Wise, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, Diocese of St Albans

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