

Application Guidelines For a Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant

As part of the national church 'Buildings for Mission: Support for Churches' initiative the Diocese has been awarded funding for a Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant to help parishes with minor repairs and improvements for church buildings. These funds will be distributed during 2024 and 2025.

Funding will be awarded for eligible stand-alone works costing £10,000 (or £12,000 depending on VAT implications), with grants likely to provide between 50% and 90% of the total project cost.

If you would like to apply for a Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant, in the first instance please contact the Church Buildings Maintenance Officer (lwest@stalbans.anglican.org) to discuss your project.

1. ELIGIBILITY GUIDE

Church of England consecrated church buildings and licensed places of worship in the Diocese of St Albans are eligible. The 'building' extends to its below-ground drainage system, foundations, and immediate curtilage.

Eligible Works

The scope of eligible works includes:

- minor fabric repairs both external and internal;
- improvements to accessibility;
- improvements to building services;
- connectivity;
- bat mitigation measures (including relevant ecologist's fees);
- professional fees associated with the repair and improvement works; and
- VAT for those not eligible for the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme.

At least half of the money allocated to the Diocese needs to be spent on fabric repairs (as this is the primary focus of the Buildings for Mission project). Accordingly, as a Diocese we have decided to prioritise the following:

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- 1) minor fabric repairs;
- 2) bat cleaning and mitigation;
- 3) investigative works (i.e. opening up at ground level or in roof spaces); and
- 4) feasibility studies for possible improvements to accessibility or building services.

Minor repairs must be recommended in the most recent QI report (or subsequent professional report or condition survey) as being necessary within the quinquennium.

For **improvements to accessibility and/or building services**, a convincing case must be made that the works are essential to sustain worship and mission use.

Ineligible Works

- Routine maintenance.
- Routine cleaning.
- Work to furnishings (bells, manuscripts, church plate, paintings, stained glass, etc).
- Conservation reports.
- Routine inspections (QI reports, gas safety, etc).
- Routine servicing of building services installations.
- Any work covered by insurance.
- Works that have already been carried out.

2. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

The following criteria reflects the demonstratable need that has been identified within the Diocese as well as targeting areas/parishes that lack access to support for their church buildings:

- Heritage at Risk church buildings and other cases on Historic England's HAR register.
- Church buildings at risk of falling onto Historic England's HAR Register because of poor building condition and/or lack of local capacity.
- Luton churches.

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- High Street Heritage Action Zones.
- Churches with bats whose activity has a serious impact on the life, mission, fabric and sustainability of the church.
- Churches lacking a plan for sustainability.

If the Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant fund is oversubscribed, priority will be based on the above criteria together with the classification of required works as set out in the applicable QI reports (i.e. urgent, or within the next quinquennial).

3. SIZE OF GRANTS

Grants of up to £10,000 can be made towards **projects with costs of up to £10,000** (or £12,000 if VAT cannot be recovered under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme <https://listed-places-of-worship-grant.dcms.gov.uk/>).

The objective of the Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant is to address need. This will be reflected in the way that projects and applications are prioritised (as set out above). In addition, the level of grant awarded will usually be based on a parish's national IMD 'deprivation rank' as shown in the Church of England Parish Map - [Church of England parish map - Overview \(arcgis.com\)](#).

The scale for grant rates will be as follows:

- Deprivation rank 6,236 to 12,307 – grant @ 50%
- Deprivation rank 5,012 to 6,235 – grant @ 60%
- Deprivation rank 3,812 to 5,011 – grant @ 70%
- Deprivation rank 2,558 to 3,811 – grant @ 80%
- Deprivation rank 1,232 to 2,557 – grant @ 90%
- Deprivation rank 1 to 1,231 – grant @ 90% (or more if exceptionally justified)

It is acknowledged that the deprivation profile of the households in the parish might not match the scale of need faced by the church. If the Diocese considers that there is a case for a different rate than

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those shown above, then it may depart from these limits.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for a Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant is as follows:

- 1) Contact the Church Buildings Maintenance Officer to discuss your project/needs.
- 2) Complete and submit the Application Form.
- 3) Include applicable supporting documentation, for example:
 - a. Professional report or condition survey if works not specified in QI Report.
 - b. Mini statement of need for improvements to accessibility and/or buildings services.
 - c. Photographs of defects or bat activity etc.
 - d. For works over £1,000, evidence that several quotes have been obtained to ensure best value.
- 4) Complete the online form for Grant Application Details.
- 5) Applications will be reviewed by the Church Buildings Maintenance Officer, with recommendations made to the relevant Archdeacon, the Chair of the Parish Grants Committee and the DAC Secretary. Applications may be approved, declined or referred to the next Parish Grants Committee for further consideration.

5. APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applications are now being received on a rolling basis to provide assistance to eligible parishes as quickly as possible.