Buildings For Mission

Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant Fund

Guidance Note

**Overview**

The Buildings for Mission Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant Fund is a national initiative that is intended to help fragile Churches maintain their building in a timely manner and avoid further costly work. The Diocese has received a grant of £132,000 to award to churches until 2025. Any church within the Diocese under Ecclesiastical Exemption and meets the criteria below is eligible. Awards range from £1000-£10,000 and will be decided on need (see below). Funds will be distributed through a grant panel which will meet 4-6 times a year, with funding to be spent before December 2025.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Any consecrated Church of England building and licensed places of worship (including those which are the subject of sharing agreements or ecumenical partnerships) within the Diocese[[1]](#footnote-2).

Every application must be accompanied by a relevant faculty, list A, or B, in progress or granted prior to applying. Any permission needs to be produced before the work goes ahead. Where a grant is issued prior to permission being granted the offer does not imply support for the proposal for the purposes of faculty or any other approval and does not indicate that permission will be forthcoming.

* The total project costs should not exceed £20,000 for listed churches and £24,000 for unlisted churches. (please note that if your total project costs exceed this, you have the option to either phase the works or break them down into smaller pieces).
* Work should not begin until the diocese has approved the scope, methodology and costs of the work and made an offer in writing which the PCC has accepted.
* Work costing more than £1,000 will need to be subject to some form of competitive procurement (normally by obtaining itemised quotations for comparison) on a best value basis. A full competitive tender exercise will not be required unless the nature of the work or other factors make it necessary.
* Work will need to be carried out, paid for, and claimed within a year of the offer date or by 31 December 2025, whichever is the sooner.

The granting panel especially welcomes applications from those churches working directly with the Church Buildings Repair and Maintenance Support Officer.

**Ineligibility**

Other buildings or structures in the churchyard or curtilage of eligible buildings which are not in ecclesiastical use. This includes memorials, paths, walls, trees, etc.

Cathedrals: churches and chapels which are the responsibility of private owners or institutions**[[2]](#footnote-3)**; non-Anglican places of worship; closed and closing churches.

Funds will not be allocated to projects that could reasonably be funded from PCC reserves. The PCC is required to submit a copy of the most recent PCC Annual Accounts within the application. This will be used to determine need and eligibility.

**Eligible work**

The aim of the grant is to fund essential fabric repairs that cannot be funded wholly through PCC funds. The focus is on the most urgent repairs so they can be undertaken before larger costs arise. To be eligible, any such work must be recommended in the most recent QI report (or subsequent professional report or condition survey etc). Work classified as urgent (either category 1 - Urgent, requiring immediate attention; 2 - Requires attention within 12 months; or 3 - Requires attention within the next 12 - 24 months) should take priority but any work required within the quinquennium is eligible. Works of differing urgency within that definition may be undertaken together for the sake of efficiency and economy, especially where ‘stitch in time’ repairs can save money in the long term.

This will include repair of building fabric (external): roof coverings, roof structure, walls, parapets, pinnacles and other architectural features, towers, spires, windows, doors, rainwater disposal system including below-ground drainage.

Repair of building fabric (internal): ceilings, floors, doors, walls, and wall linings

(plaster/panelling but not wall paintings, mosaics etc),.

Repair of building services installations where essential for health and safety and/or

continuity of worship and mission use.

Emergency repairs or holding works, e.g. propping, covering, protection etc.

**Improvements**

Additions, alterations, or adaptations specifically to overcome building design defects or obsolescence (e.g. undersized hoppers or drainpipes) or to improve access for maintenance.

Additions, alterations, or adaptations where essential to improve physical access, e.g.

handrails, ramps etc.

Improvements to building services installations where essential to sustain worship and

mission use, such as improvements to heating, lighting, wiring, kitchens, WCs. Where necessary, this might include the installation or upgrading of pipework or cabling to the

perimeter of the churchyard or curtilage.

New installations or improvements to existing installations for digital connectivity, whether through a wired connection or 4G/5G mobile Wi-Fi, where essential to sustain worship and mission use.

Bat mitigation measures, including relevant ecologists’ fees and production of a bat management plan, where the impact of bats is a barrier to worship and mission use. A one off deep clean can be an eligible cost as part of a mitigation plan.

**Other eligible costs**

Professional fees to design, specify, inspect, and certify the repair or improvement work.

Ecologist’s fees to prepare a bat management plan.

VAT (for unlisted churches and work to listed churches which falls outside the eligibility of the [Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme)](https://listed-places-of-worship-grant.dcms.gov.uk/). It will be assumed that PCCs will apply to the LPW grant scheme wherever possible.

**Ineligible work**

Routine maintenance, as set out in our [Calendar of Care](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/building-maintenance-and-repair).

Routine cleaning.

Work to furnishings, such as bells and bell frames, books and manuscripts, church plate, clocks, monumental brasses and decorative metalwork, monuments, organs, paintings and wall paintings, stained glass, textiles, wooden objects. These may qualify for the grants administered by ChurchCare ([see Grants for historic church interiors and churchyard structures | The Church of England](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/building-maintenance-and-repairhttps%3A/www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/building-maintenance-and-repair)).

Conservation reports. These may qualify for the grants administered by l ChurchCare ([see Grants for conservation reports | The Church of England](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/churchcare-grants/grants-conservation-reports)).

Routine inspection (Quinquennial Inspections, periodic inspection of electrical installations, appliance testing, gas safety checks, etc).

Routine servicing of building services installations.

Any work covered by insurance.

Works of adaptation such as reordering, pew removal, servery updates, etc.

**How the grant will be awarded**

The focus of the grant fund is to help the most fragile Churches maintain their buildings. As such grants will be given based on the most pressing need. Each application will be judged on an evidence-based criteria. Each element is explained below but priority will be based on the following:

* Level of urgency as noted within the latest QI Report
* Type of work (see below)
* Deprivation rank (see below)
* Available PCC funds

**Explanation of each granting criteria**

Category of urgency within quinquennial report:

* 1 - Urgent, requiring immediate attention.
* 2 - Requires attention within 12 months.
* 3 - Requires attention within the next 12 - 24 months.
* 4 – Requires attention within the next quinquennium (5 years).

Works will be prioritized in the following order.

* Roof coverings and roof structure.
* Rainwater goods and drainage systems.
* External fabric repairs including repointing, stone repairs, windows and doors.
* Internal fabric repairs, including ceiling, floors, etc.
* Other eligible work that enables the above.
* Improvement works where justified.

*This list is not exhaustive and will not include all potential works. Works not covered in the ‘eligible work’ section, and emergency work, will be judged on a case-by-case basis judged on impact and need.*

The appropriate level of grant will be assessed consistently, according to the

indices of multiple deprivation by ecclesiastical parish as shown in the [Church of England Parish Map](https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a). (1 being most deprived) The following scale for grant rates is recommended:

* Deprivation rank1 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)

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

The PCC is required to submit a copy of the most recent PCC Annual Accounts within the application. This will be used to determine need and eligibility.

1. Please note the ‘building’ extends to its below-ground drainage system, foundations, and immediate curtilage. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Such as schools, university colleges, hospitals and so-called ‘peculiars’ etc, even those which have opted into

the Faculty Jurisdiction (under paras 38-44 of the E[cclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2018/3/part/3/enacted)

[2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2018/3/part/3/enacted) or previously under the Care of Places of Worship Measure 1999) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)