

Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants Fund

Diocese of Leicester Eligibility Guide

Eligible buildings

Church of England consecrated church buildings and licensed places of worship (including those which are the subject of sharing agreements or ecumenical partnerships) serving parishes in the 40 mainland dioceses and the diocese of Sodor and Man.

The 'building' extends to its below-ground drainage system, foundations and immediate curtilage.

Ineligible buildings

Other buildings or structures in the churchyard or curtilage of eligible buildings which are not in ecclesiastical use. Cathedrals; churches and chapels which are the responsibility of private owners or institutions; Church of England churches outside England or the Isle of Man; non-Anglican places of worship; closed and closing churches.

Eligible work

Minor repairs

Why now? - 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) takes priority, but any work required within the quinquennium is eligible.

- 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, eg propping, covering, protection etc.

Improvements

Why now? - in the case of improvements, a convincing case must be made that such works are essential to sustaining worship and mission use;

- 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). It will be assumed that PCCs will apply to the LPW grant scheme wherever possible.

Other criteria for being eligible for a grant

The applicant body must have legal responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the church building. This will typically be the PCC but may in some cases be some other properly constituted body.

The work must not have started before the appropriate permission is obtained and the required funds are secured (i.e. grants pledged or monies in hand).

Grants are available towards projects with costs of up to £10,000 (or £12,000 if the VAT is not eligible under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme).

In order to give more grants to support more parishes, grants will not normally exceed £5,000 (or £6,000 if the VAT is not eligible under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme) except for churches that are in parishes within the 20% most deprived nationally where the panel may award funds up to £10,000 (or £12,000 for LPW-ineligible projects) where funds allow within that period.

The grant will not cover VAT where the VAT can be re-claimed through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Reclaim scheme.

It is expected that parishes will provide at least 10% - excluding VAT - of funding from their own resources in addition to contributions from elsewhere, whether grants or donations.

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. Where comparative costs are not obtainable, the applicants should state why this is the case in their application.

The work needs to be completed and the grant funds drawn down within 12 months of the grant being awarded, or before 31st December 2025 – whichever is soonest.

Eligible grant applications will be prioritised as follows:

- Prioritisation of repair works identified in quinquennial inspection report as urgent requiring attention within 24 months of report.
- Prioritisation of parish ranking amongst the 20% most deprived nationally (this aligns with our strategic allocation of Lowest Incomes Communities Funding). However, the Panel may award 100% grant in exceptional circumstances irrespective of deprivation indices (due to the limitations of this measurement).

In addition, please be aware that the diocese is required to spend at least half the total allocated funds on repair projects during the funding term (i.e. 2024-5).

Further advice and guidance can be sought from: ChurchBuildings@LeicesterCofE.org