

Buildings for Mission

Minor Repairs & Improvements Fund

Programme Evaluation



The Grant:

The Diocese of Leicester secured up to £148,500 from the Church Commissioners' Minor Repairs & Improvements scheme to distribute during 2024-2025.

Grants of up to £5k were available to PCCs (£10k for those within the 20% most-deprived parishes on the Church Urban Fund deprivation index) to support parishes in the upkeep of their buildings by making minor 'stitch in time' repairs or to facilitate small improvements to aid the mission and ministry of the local church. Initially, the total project cost could not exceed £10k (or £12k where it's not eligible for the Listed Places of Worship VAT grant). This was increased by the national project group to £20k (or £24k where not eligible to reclaim VAT) in January 2025, although the effect of this was only observed at the April 2025 panel meeting, where two applications had total project costs in excess of £10k.

Awards Made:

The Diocese of Leicester launched with the first panel meeting held in April 2024. There were 7 panel meetings in total, with all the remaining funds allocated in the final meeting held in April 2025. An average of approximately £21,215 was allocated at each panel meeting.

38 parishes were awarded grants from the fund, 8 (21%) of which helped to fund 'Improvements' projects and 30 (79%) helped to fund 'Repairs' projects.

Work Supported:

Improvements projects included works such as installing heated pew cushions and infrared heating, improving accessibility by installing ramped access, and installing ladders to improve tower access for maintenance and inspections.

Repairs projects included works such as repairs and replacement of rainwater goods, re-fixing slipped slates to roofs, and repairs and repointing to stonework.

'Roof structure and coverings' saw the greatest demand for funding with 11 applications of this nature funded, followed by projects that included works to 'Masonry and Foundations', which saw 9 parishes receiving funding for these repairs.

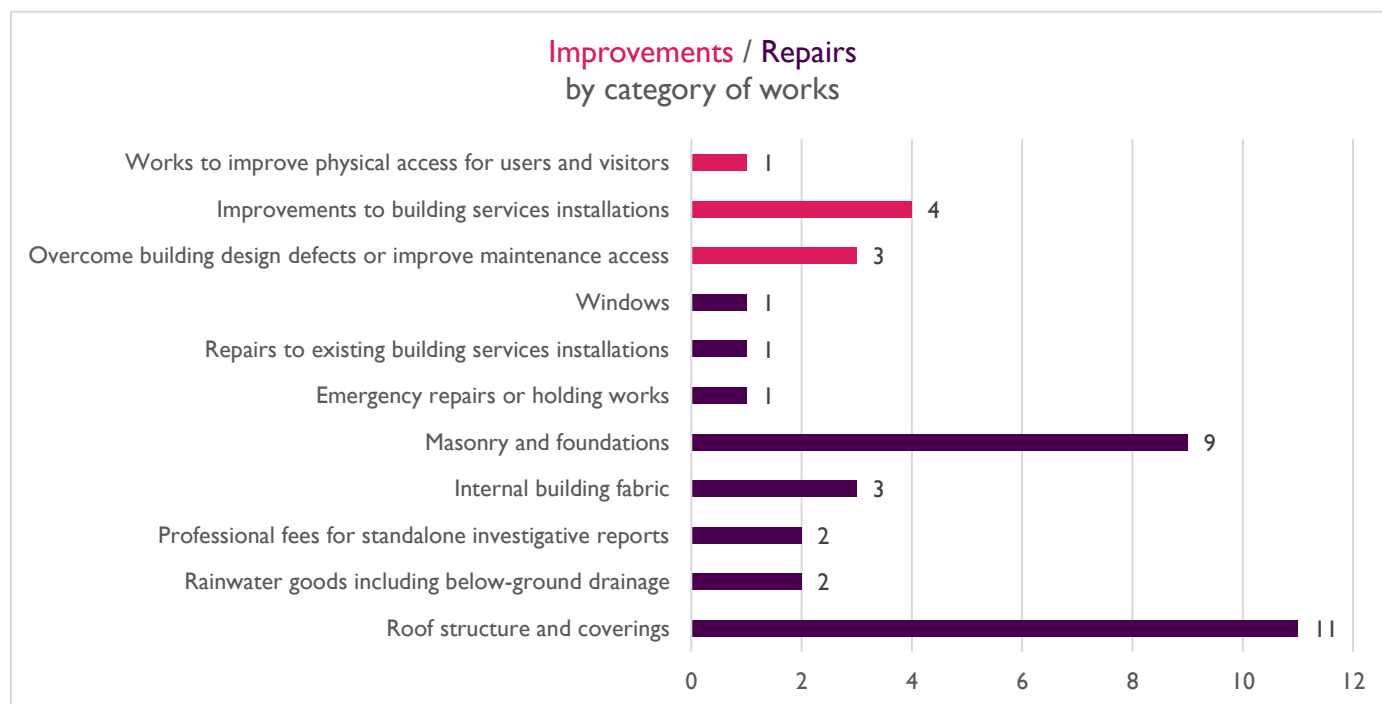


Figure 1 - Applications for 'Improvements' vs 'Repairs', by category of work within each umbrella.

Parishes Supported:

The Diocese of Leicester sought to distribute the fund as fairly as possible. More than a third of the fund (£55,178.73) was allocated to parishes that fall within the 'Most Deprived' or 'Relatively Deprived' areas nationally, of which £31,488 was allocated to those within the Top 20% most deprived.

Based on the Church Urban Fund Deprivation Index, 22 parishes (looking after 24 buildings in total) in the Diocese of Leicester are among the Top 20% most deprived areas, nationally. The MR&I Fund supported over a quarter (6) of these parishes with their building projects.

Buildings Supported:

Of the awarded funds, 12 were allocated to PCCs caring for buildings listed at Grade I. This equates to 21% of all the Grade I listed buildings within the Diocese. 19 of the buildings supported are listed at Grade II*, 11% of all church buildings listed at this level in the Diocese, and 4 are listed at Grade II (7% of all those in the Diocese).

3 of the churches awarded funds are unlisted (11% of all those unlisted within the Diocese), for whom accessing grant funding for repairs can be particularly challenging where grants are often designated for historic, listed church buildings.

Over a third of the allocated money (£52,431.27) has been distributed between 12 church buildings that are currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. This is almost a third (29%) of all churches within the Diocese that appear on this Register. The funded works will provide much needed interventions to these buildings whose fabric has been recognised as being 'At Risk' by Historic England.

Thank you:

The Church Buildings Team are very grateful to the panel members who have given their time to consider applications and outcomes. Special thanks also go to Ariel Baker (Generous Giving Administrator) whose administrative support to this Fund has been essential in ensuring the smooth running of the grant programme.

Next steps:

The Church Buildings Team kindly ask that those parishes awarded funds remain in touch about their project and fill in a Completion Report when finished, a copy of which can be provided to you or downloaded from the Diocesan website if needed.

We hope that parishes that have not been able to access MR&I funding still find success with their projects. Please do contact the Church Buildings Team for further support.

If the opportunity arises for future applications to be considered, we will update the diocesan website and Diomail with this information.

Atarah Adams

Historic Churches Support Officer

Atarah.Adams@LeicesterCofE.org

***Please note, the data quoted in this report is based on **allocated** funds, only. Awards to parishes are subject to certain conditions, including a deadline of 31st December 2025 for works to be completed, invoiced and paid for, and therefore the actual spend may vary if these conditions are not met.

An MR&I Success Story: Repairs

South Croxton, St John the Baptist

St John the Baptist, South Croxton is a Grade II* listed church building that is currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. Following an unexpected discovery of wet rot within a beam to the South Aisle roof, St John the Baptist was forced to temporarily close on the grounds of safety, in May 2024.

Alongside fundraising activities within the parish and support from a local Trust, the parish were granted funds from the Minor Repairs and Improvements Fund. This allowed remedial works to be undertaken quickly, the beam was repaired and the building reopened for services just in time for Christmas 2024.

The PCC should be commended for their efforts and the Church Buildings Team wish to thank them for everything they do to care for their church building.



Figure 3 - Wet rot within the South Aisle beam.

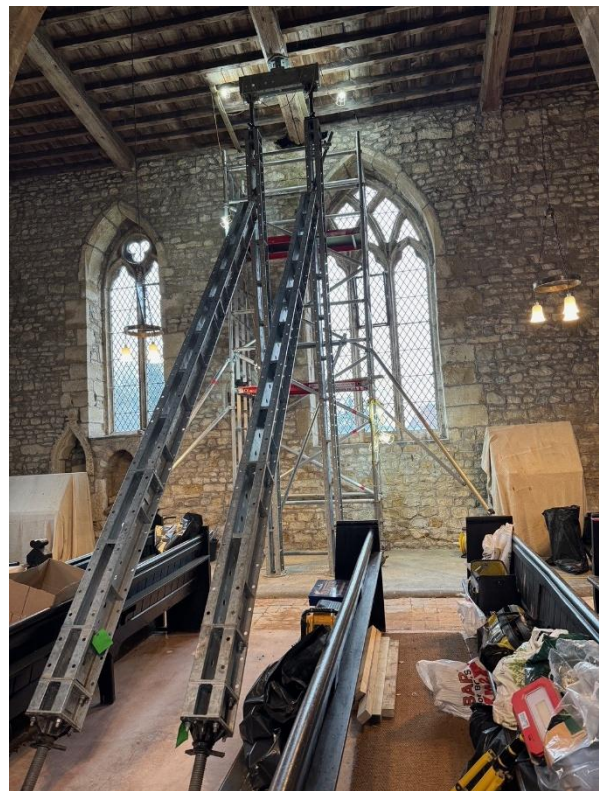


Figure 3 - Works underway to prop the beam and complete repairs.

An MR&I Success Story: Improvements

Twycross, St James

St James', Twycross is a Grade I listed parish church. The east window contains early French stained glass (presented to the church in 1840 by Sir Walter Waller) the earliest dated believed to be from the Lady Chapel of St. Denis, near Paris (c. 1145).

The DCC were dedicated to making the church more accessible to all, to which the stepped access was a significant barrier. Alongside fundraising activities within the parish and support from Trusts, the parish were granted funds from the Minor Repairs and Improvements Fund. This assisted the DCC in creating a tarmac pathway up to the Chancel door to create level access into the church. This now allows the church to be accessed by a wider range of people, including families with prams, people with disabilities, wheelchair and scooter users and those using walking aids.

"I am delighted I can use my wheelchair and scooter to get into the church when needed"

The DCC and PCC should be commended for their efforts and the Church Buildings Team wish to thank them for everything they do to care for their church building.



*Figure 5 - New level access to chancel door.
Photo provided by DCC Secretary.*

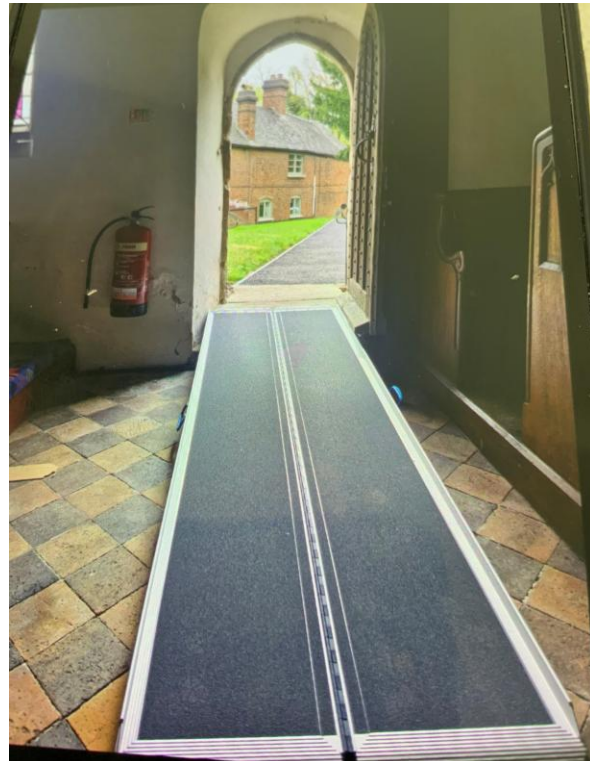


Figure 5 - View from inside the church, with level access visible in background. Photo provided by DCC Secretary.