

Minor Improvements Grant Scheme Rules

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).

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 (such as schools, university colleges, hospitals and so-called 'peculiar'); Church of England churches outside England or the Isle of Man; non-Anglican places of worship; closed and closing churches.

Eligible work

Eligible work and costs include:

- 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.
- Professional fees to design, specify, inspect and certify the improvement work.
- Ecologist's fees to prepare a bat management plan to allow works other than bat mitigation measures.
- 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. More information on the LPW grant scheme can be accessed here: <https://listed-places-of-worship-grant.dcms.gov.uk/>

Grants can be made 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) at a rate of up to 90%, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Ineligible work

The follow work will not be eligible for a grant:

- Routine maintenance, as set out in the Church of England's 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: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/our-conservation-grants/grants-historic-church-interiors-and-churchyard>
- Conservation reports. These may qualify for the grants administered by ChurchCare: <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

General conditions

The maximum grant is £10,000 (or £12,000 if the VAT is not eligible under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme). The committee can make grants of up to a maximum £20,000 (or £24,000 if the VAT is not eligible under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme) in exceptional circumstances.

Grants will be targeted and prioritised according to the circumstances of the parish and it is expected that parishes will supply an element of partnership funding from their own resources. The appropriate level of grant will be assessed according to the indices of multiple deprivation by ecclesiastical parish as shown in the Church of England Parish Map using the following scale:

- Deprivation rank 6,236 to 12,307 – grant @ 50% of £10,000
- Deprivation rank 5,012 to 6,235 – grant @ 60% of £10,000
- Deprivation rank 3,812 to 5,011 – grant @ 70% of £10,000
- Deprivation rank 2,558 to 3,811 – grant @ 80% of £10,000
- Deprivation rank 1,232 to 2,557 – grant @ 90% of £10,000
- Deprivation rank 1 to 1,231 – grant @ 90% (or more if exceptionally justified) of £10,000

The Church of England Parish Map can be accessed here:

<https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a>

The offer of a grant from the Fund will not remove the requirement for the PCC to obtain faculty or approval under list A or B, as necessary, or any other necessary permission before the work goes ahead. The offer of a grant 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.

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.

