

Update on the response of funders who grant aid church buildings work to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Version 7 – 24.8.21

INTRODUCTION

This update covers the funders in our advice note on National Grants plus a few others and four of the main funders featured in our advice note on Local Grants. (These two advice notes give more information on what, where and how funding is given and are found on <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/repairs-maintenance-grants/>.)

We are also reviewing new sources of COVID-19 related funding and including information if they are relevant to church building works. Main headlines are given here for each funder where information is available.

Common approaches in the responses from the funders to COVID-19 have been: flexibility in the way projects already grant-aided will be dealt with including allowing delays or other changes to projects and the way they are dealt with; and emergency and recovery funding for vulnerable sectors, bodies and projects. Existing grant schemes have been variously suspended, to be reviewed, changed or continuing. A number of programmes have now reopened with or without changes to eligibility criteria.

It will be wise to check funders' websites for the latest guidance. (Links could also change and you may need to start from the home page to find COVID-19 information.) Some of the trusts and foundations do not have COVID-19 responses on their websites.

We suggest you contact a funder for information and to discuss your situation if you are considering making an application to it, want information on an application made but not yet decided, or have already been offered a grant for your project.

There have been numbers of new grant schemes in response to COVID-19 with key ones being delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England on behalf of the government. These have mostly had short lifespans and challenging deadlines for applications and often delivery. The targeting of schemes mean that all or most parishes may not be eligible or likely to be successful with a good proportion of them. We contacted those parishes that were eligible for schemes which were limited to churches which had already been given National Lottery Heritage Fund grants or had been identified as Heritage at Risk or met other criteria. We aim to contact any groups similarly targeted in the future.

Given the speed at which new schemes are being introduced it is worth keeping an eye on the websites of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England in particular as well as the Diocese's Church Buildings Bulletins. Please get in touch if you want to talk about a grant scheme you are interested in.

NATIONAL GRANTS

National Lottery Heritage Fund (<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>)

Online information

The current funding programmes are listed on this webpage

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding>.

The ***National Lottery Grants for Heritage*** have been an important source of major funding for church buildings though it has been increasingly difficult to secure these grants in recent years. Information is given on the current grant situation and to those bodies which have already been awarded a grant.

Support can be given through the ***Digital Skills for Heritage*** programme. This gives funding to innovative organisations that can help us support digital development in the heritage sector.

Further support is given for organisations to grow stronger and be forward looking through boosting skills and confidence and improving management. Information on this initiative is given here: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/help-heritage-organisations-build-better-businesses>.

National Lottery Heritage Fund project grants

National Lottery Heritage Fund – Grants Reopen for 2021-22

The Heritage Fund's grants for projects have opened again with funding from £3,000 to £5 million available. The grants cover a broad range of heritage including nature and landscape, community memories and stories, and places of worship and other historic buildings and monuments.

Priorities have been revised for the period until April 2022 to respond to the impact of Covid-19 and support recovery.

Repairs to church buildings can be funded but to have a chance of success a project must involve a wider range of people in heritage and deliver at least one of the other priority outcomes. These are:

- Boosting the local economy including job creation
- Encouraging the development of skills and creating jobs
- Supporting people's wellbeing
- Creating better places to live, work and visit
- Improving the resilience of organisations working in heritage

Projects also have to show that they are building environmental sustainability into their project and future plans.

Other outcomes which remain but have not been prioritised are: heritage will be in better condition; heritage will be identified and better explained; and people will have learnt about heritage, leading to change in ideas and actions.

Projects will be expected to deliver priority outcomes and environmental sustainability in proportion to the size of their project.

Applicants will also need to show that the risks of delivering their project with the added challenges of Covid-19 and future uncertainty are manageable. The Heritage Fund needs to be reassured that a project can and will be delivered with the minimum of potential hazards or unwelcome surprises including with budgets.

Dealing with Heritage at Risk remains an important factor in making decisions about grants. A number of the Diocese's listed churches are on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and others have been logged as concerns by Historic England and/or the Diocese.

Churches are listed because of their special interest but other church buildings and their histories and communities can have heritage value too.

Get in touch if you want to talk about whether your church is at risk or if a project involving the church in some way could have sufficient heritage interest for a Heritage Fund grant.

The Heritage Fund wants to encourage grant applications for projects from Luton which is one of 13 target areas in the UK. It also wants to help applications come forward from disadvantaged groups or which otherwise benefit them.

A picture of the type of church projects which can be successful with the revised priorities will become clearer over the next few months as cases are considered by the Heritage Fund. We will pass on what we learn.

One town church in the Midlands had already made a successful Expression of Interest for a large grant when this note was written. The project included a sizeable amount of repairs but would also deliver the essential outcome of including a wider range of people in heritage and some of the other priority outcomes along with environmental sustainability. The church would develop its offer to visitors to reinforce that of existing heritage attractions in the town and give a boost to the vulnerable local economy and place.

Heritage Fund grants are divided into three bands: from £3,000 to £10,000, from £10,000 to £250,000 and from £250,000 to £5million.

Applications can be made for grants from £3,000 to £10,000 and from £10,000 to £250,000 at any time with decisions normally made in eight weeks. Pre-application advice is available for those asking for more than £10,000.

If you want to apply for a grant from £250,000 upwards then you first need to make an Expression of Interest. If you are then invited to apply you will need to make applications for a development phase followed by a delivery phase.

Much more information is available on the Heritage Fund website. Start with the National Lottery Grants for Heritage 2021-22 webpage

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-grants-heritage-2021-22>.

Places of worship has its own webpage <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/our-work/places-worship> but note that the project examples given do not fully reflect the new priorities.

Applying for Heritage Fund grants is a challenge and you should know whether you have any chance of being successful before spending time on an application. As a first step you should follow the links given above, read the guidance and email David Bevan, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer HCBSupport@stalbans.anglican.org to arrange a chat.

The next step could be for David to ask the Heritage Fund to give informal advice on a brief description of your project and how it will deliver the Fund's priorities. If the response is encouraging you could then develop your project and follow the process for the band of grant you want as highlighted above and explained in detail on the Heritage Fund webpages.

You may decide to delay making a grant application until after 2021-2022. The focus and priorities of the grant schemes from April 2022 on will not be known before the end of this year at the earliest.

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

A COVID-19 Update is given in a panel on the home page of the website <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>. This notes that administration of the scheme continues and gives a helpline number and submission dates for invoices.

National Churches Trust (<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/>)

The NCT's Coronavirus webpage (March 17, 2020) gives information on working arrangements <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/coronavirus-0>.

It says that: *'If you are concerned about the impact the outbreak could have on your grant offer or grant applications, feel free to contact us by email: grants@nationalchurchestrust.org'*.

All grant programmes are open as normal. Answers to questions on grants and looking after your church during the coronavirus pandemic are here <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/grants-and-looking-after-your-church>. (June 12, 2020)

Church of England (ChurchCare) Conservation Grants

(<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare>)

The webpage <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/our-conservation-grants> recognises the current difficulties with applying, accepting and claiming ChurchCare grants. A grant will not be lost if there are delays in accepting or claiming it with time periods extended. Advice and support is available with the contact link given.

Historic England

Historic England's guidance on grants and funding in relation to COVID-19 is here <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/funding/>.

This lists different grant programmes but you need to check whether these are open and, if so, whether your church would be eligible on its own and given its circumstances.

The Allchurches Trust

The Trust's webpage on Coronavirus dated 21 April, 2021 is here <https://www.allchurches.co.uk/news/message-of-reassurance-coronavirus/>. Existing grant programmes are currently running as normal.

The Trust recognises the need for flexibility and wants to offer support during the current situation. It will consider redirecting grant monies given for a specific purpose and will be flexible with reporting deadlines and in other ways. You should contact the Trust to discuss any changes to your circumstances or projects.

The Allchurches Trust has provided funding to organisations co-ordinating church and charity responses to the food poverty impacts of COVID-19 and launched the Hope Beyond grants programme. It is now reviewing the results.

Guidance on Advice and Resources, some of which relate to COVID-19, are here <https://www.allchurches.co.uk/advice-and-resources/>.

Please note that the Trust has provided exceptional grants focused on the extra costs of support provided to local communities by churches as a result of flooding in the past. This does not cover the costs of the impact of flooding on a church building which should be discussed first with the insurer before making a normal application. Please ask the DAC team for further information.

Ecclesiastical Insurance (<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/>)

Ecclesiastical Insurance has set up a Church Fundraising Hub covering a range of topics with the aim of giving support during COVID19 and beyond https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising/?utm_source=Communicator-email&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=Link734&utm_campaign=Fundraising+support+for+your+church.

Garfield Weston Foundation (<https://garfieldweston.org/>)

The Foundation's starting webpage on COVID-19 is here <https://garfieldweston.org/covid-19/>. The normal grant programmes are open and advice is given on how you should take account of COVID-19 when applying.

We suggest you check with the Foundation if you are considering applying for a grant or are about to submit an application. Contact details are here <https://garfieldweston.org/contact-us/>.

The Headley Trust (<https://www.sfct.org.uk/Headley.html>)

The Trust (one of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts) has this webpage on the impact of COVID-19 <https://www.sfct.org.uk/message.html>. Again the message is of support through the current situation and that the Trust's funding is flexible and intended to help you deal with the challenges.

We suggest you contact the Trust at info@sfct.org.uk if you are thinking of applying.

Laing Family Trusts (<https://www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk/>)

The COVID-19 webpage describes the flexible approach being taken by the trusts <https://www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk/covid-19/>.

Foyle Foundation

The Foundation's Coronavirus homepage is here <http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk/>. This lists the current grant schemes and says that its grant policies are being kept under review with respect to COVID-19.

All current grant recipients will continue to be supported with the Foundation engaging with them and taking a flexible approach.

The Wolfson Foundation (<https://www.wolfson.org.uk/>)

This webpage of March 2021 <https://www.wolfson.org.uk/covid-19-and-how-we-can-support-you/> sets out its supportive approach and says that all of its capital funding programmes have reopened.

The Foundation should be contacted if you are thinking of applying for a grant <https://www.wolfson.org.uk/contact/>.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (<https://esmefairbairn.org.uk/>)

Information on the Foundation's response to COVID-19 which focuses on grants for organisations it already funds is here <https://www.esmefairbairn.org.uk/caroline-mason-on-esmee-fairbairns-response-to-coronavirus>).

Joseph Rank Trust (<http://www.ranktrust.org/contact.htm>)

There is currently no information on the impact of COVID-19 on grants on the Trust website <http://www.ranktrust.org/rank-trust-grants.htm>. Contact details are given here <http://www.ranktrust.org/contact.htm>.

The Rank Foundation (<https://rankfoundation.com/>)

The Foundation's response to COVID-19 dated 3 April, 2020 is here <https://rankfoundation.com/covid-19-update/>. This gives information on emergency and resilience funds available to its existing networks and/or grant recipients. The wider Pebble Grants programme has reopened but the major grants programme is suspended at the moment. We suggest you contact the Foundation if you are thinking of applying.

GRANTS WITH A LOCAL FOCUS

Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust (<https://bedshertshct.org.uk>)

With respect to the impact of COVID-19 those thinking of making applications for Repair Grants and Roof Alarm Grants, including when faced with emergencies, may wish to get in touch with the Grants Secretary, Archie Russell.

The Grants Secretary's telephone number is 01767 312966 and his email address is grants@bedshertshct.org.uk.

The Steel Charitable Trust (<https://steelcharitabletrust.org.uk/>)

The Trust gives its response to the COVID-19 outbreak here <https://steelcharitabletrust.org.uk/2019/01/31/deadline/>. This says that the effect of COVID-19 on its operation is minimal but it has received many more applications and the success rate of applications is currently under 5%. The Trust has now resumed a 'business as usual' approach.

Francis Coales Charitable Foundation (<http://franciscoales.co.uk/>)

The Francis Coales Charitable Foundation website does not currently have information on its response to COVID-19. Contact details are given here <http://franciscoales.co.uk/contact.html>.

Simon Gibson Charitable Trust (<https://www.sgctrust.org.uk/>)

The Simon Gibson Charitable Trust website does not currently have information on its response to COVID-19 on its website. Contact details are given here <https://www.sgctrust.org.uk/contact-us/>.

MORE INFORMATION

Further updates

The Directory of Social Change (DSC) <https://www.dsc.org.uk/> is giving 'Coronavirus: Weekly Funding Updates'.

FURTHER HELP

For more information and advice on Church Buildings and grants:

- visit the Church Buildings pages of the St Albans Diocese website at <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/>
- contact the DAC team at dac@stalbands.anglican.org or David Bevan, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, direct at HCBSupport@stalbands.anglican.org

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David Bevan

Historic Church Buildings Support Officer

Diocese of St Albans