

Buildings for Mission

Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants Fund

2026-29

Eligibility guide

Eligible buildings

Church of England consecrated church buildings and licensed places of worship serving parishes in any Church of England diocese (including the Diocese of Sodor and Man and the Diocese in Europe). To qualify, the building must be in use for regular public worship and must be the responsibility (in terms of repair and insurance liability) of its PCC or equivalent body. Churches which are the subject of sharing agreements or ecumenical partnerships may be grant-aided to the extent that the building is the responsibility of the Church of England parish, so if the PCC has 50% of the repair liability, then half the costs can be treated as eligible and considered for grant.

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

For the purpose of certain works (detailed below), the 'building' may also extend to the boundary walls, railings and fences of the churchyard or curtilage; to the gates providing access to the churchyard or curtilage; and to the paths providing access through the churchyard or curtilage to the church.

Ineligible buildings

Cathedrals;

Churches and chapels which are the responsibility of private owners or non-parochial institutions such as schools, university colleges, hospitals and so-called 'peculiar' etc, even those which have opted into the Faculty Jurisdiction under paras 38-44 of the [Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2018/3/part/3/enacted) (see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2018/3/part/3/enacted>) or previously under the Care of Places of Worship Measure 1999;

Church of England churches outside English dioceses, the Isle of Man or the Diocese in Europe;

Non-Anglican places of worship;

Closed and closing churches ('closing churches' defined as those where the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee has recommended closure under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 or where the bishop has agreed it);

Church or parish halls and other buildings or structures in the churchyard or curtilage except those defined under *Eligible buildings* above.

Eligible work

Minor repairs

Repair of the building fabric and its permanent building services installations, defined as follows (the headings in italics correspond to the subcategories in the monitoring log spreadsheets in use by all MR&I Grants Fund distributors):

- *External: roof structure and coverings* - slates, tiles, shingles, lead flats etc and the wooden or metal structure supporting them;
- *External: rainwater goods including below-ground drainage* - ie the whole system for disposing of surface water, including gutters, spouts, hoppers, drainpipes, gullies, surface channels, drains and soakaways;
- *External: masonry and foundations* - walls, parapets, buttresses, towers and stone or brick spires;
- *External: architectural features and decoration* - pinnacles, bellcotes, fleches and spires (where constructed of timber and/or metal) and other architectural features; external decoration eg limewashing and paintwork;
- *External: doors and windows (surrounds, tracery, plain window glass)* - external doors including the masonry, wood or metal fabric of the opening/surround/frame as well as the door itself; windows, including the masonry, wood or metal fabric of the opening/surround/frame, tracery and ferramenta and plain window glass (clear or coloured plate glass and leaded lights but not stained or painted glass);
- *External: boundary walls, railings and fences; gates and paths* - boundary walls, railings, fences and other non-vegetation boundary markers of the churchyard or curtilage; gates providing access to the churchyard or curtilage or within it; paths providing access through the churchyard or curtilage to the church;
- *Internal building fabric* - ceilings, floors, internal doors, walls and wall linings (plaster/panelling but not wall paintings, mosaics etc);
- *Building services installations* - electrical wiring; gas, oil and water pipework; audio-visual system cabling and permanent fixtures, and the lightning conductor;

permanent fixed appliances such as boilers and cookers. NB replacement of components would be properly classified as repair; replacement of a whole system should be properly classified as an improvement if the replacement brings about better functionality, capacity or safety;

- *Emergency repairs or holding works* - propping, covering, protection etc, including temporary roof coverings.

To be eligible, any such work must be recommended in the most recent Quinquennial Inspection 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, in particular where 'stitch in time' repairs can save money in the long term. 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. For guidance on the Quinquennial Inspection and the urgency categories in them, see *Commissioning Quinquennial Inspection Reports Guidance Note*, available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/quinquennial-inspections>.

Improvements

Improvements to the building fabric and its permanent building services installations, where essential to sustain worship and mission use, defined as follows (the headings in italics correspond to the subcategories in the monitoring log spreadsheets in use by all MR&I Grants Fund distributors):

- *Additions, alterations or adaptations to overcome building design defects or to improve access for maintenance* – eg replacement of undersized hoppers or drainpipes or installation of fixed ladders at high level for maintenance/inspection access;
- *Additions, alterations or adaptations to improve physical access for users and visitors* – eg handrails, ramps etc; the objective of such work should be to achieve equal access rather than an arbitrary improvement; for guidance see *Equal Access to Church Buildings*, available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/accessibility>;
- *Improvements to building services installations* - such as improvements to heating, lighting, wiring, kitchens, WCs, audiovisual systems. Where necessary, this might include the installation or upgrading of supply infrastructure, including pipework or cabling from the nearest suitable connection, eg to provide a three-phase electricity supply;

- *New installations or improvements to existing installations for digital connectivity* - whether through a wired connection or 4G/5G mobile Wi-Fi;
- *Bat mitigation measures* - including relevant ecologists' fees and production of a bat management plan where necessary, where the impact of bats is a barrier to worship and mission use. A one-off deep clean may be an eligible cost as part of a mitigation plan. NB where an element is being repaired after bat damage, the work should be categorised under Minor repairs according to the type of repair.

Other eligible costs

Necessary costs incurred with an associated eligible repair or improvement:

- Contractors' preliminaries;
- Scaffolding and other essential access costs;
- Professional fees to design, specify, inspect and certify the repair or improvement work;
- VAT – unless a zero rate is available. For guidance, see Understanding VAT Zero-Rating for Church Works, available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/understanding-vat-zero-rating-church-works>.

Where a reduced rate is applicable, the amount of VAT payable (and not recoverable) would be eligible for grant.

Professional fees for standalone investigative reports for repairs – eg fees for investigation, survey, design or specification aimed at repair work. To be eligible, the repair work envisaged must itself be eligible for the MR&I Grants Fund, even if the likely cost of that future work may potentially be above the project cost threshold. NB in cases where the cost of such preparatory work could be included in the development phase of a major project eligible for grant from a large-scale funder such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, such requests should take that route for funding rather than MR&I;

Professional fees for standalone project development for improvements – as above, the improvement envisaged must itself be eligible for the MR&I Grants Fund;

Ecologist's fees to prepare a bat management plan.

Ineligible work

Routine maintenance, as set out in the *Calendar of Care*, available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/building-maintenance-and-repair>

Routine cleaning. If the increased cleaning burden is due to bats, this may be eligible for a Living Alongside Bats in Churches grant, see: <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bats-and-churches/living-alongside-bats-in-churches-grant>;

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

Routine servicing of building services installations;

New or replacement fossil fuel appliances;

Works, including conservation reports, professional fees and VAT, for 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 or painted glass, textiles and wooden objects. These may qualify for the grants administered by the Archbishops' Council for historic church interiors and churchyard structures: see <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/our-conservation-grants/grants-historic-church-interiors-and-churchyard-structures#na>;

Works, including conservation reports, professional fees and VAT, for structures such as tombs, monuments, grave markers, churchyard crosses and other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the church or in the wider churchyard or curtilage. These may qualify for the grants administered by the Archbishops' Council for historic church interiors and churchyard structures: see

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/our-conservation-grants/grants-historic-church-interiors-and-churchyard-structures#na>;

Soft landscape repair, maintenance, tree surgery and pruning, grass-cutting and other gardening work;

Any work covered by insurance.

Eligible project size

Projects with estimated costs of up to £25,000.

On an exceptional basis, projects with higher estimated costs as follows:

- The estimated eligible costs other than access costs (scaffolding, mobile access platform etc) are within the £25,000 limit but the access costs mean that the threshold is exceeded; or
- The estimated eligible costs including access costs are no more than £50,000;

as long as all the other scheme criteria are met including that the project can be completed and the grant claimed by the parish within the standard one-year deadline.

Ineligible project size

Projects with estimated costs of more than £25,000 unless one of the two exceptional circumstances detailed above are met.