

Large grant guidance note

Introduction

We highly recommend reading this document before starting the online form.

On the following pages you will find the eligibility criteria, programme outcomes, details of how to apply and what supporting documents you will need, some top tips, as well as the terms and conditions of any successful grant application.

The National Churches Trust supports Christian places of worship throughout the United Kingdom that can demonstrate strong community engagement and sound plans for economic viability. Priority is given to projects that demonstrate well-developed plans for the building, that are supported beyond the congregation, and into the future.

If you are still looking for the answer to something when you get to the end, you could also try our [FAQ page](#).

Large grant programme

This programme supports the conservation and sustainable use of church buildings, focusing on larger and more complex projects. Our priority is for funding **urgent structural repairs** costing more than £80,000 including VAT. The **installation of kitchens and accessible toilets** costing more than £30,000 including VAT is also eligible.

The maximum grant under this programme is £50,000. The current average is about £15,000. The current success rate is roughly 1 in 4 applicants.

Grants will only apply to eligible work, but please include the whole phase project costs. Grants will never exceed 50% of the project cost. Offers are valid for two years. Those applying for £50,000 will need to demonstrate a very strong case for investment. We cannot guarantee that if an award is made that your full request will be met.

Find out more and apply [here](#).

To continue an application you have already started please click [here](#) to access the application site.

Correct as of 20 November 2024.

Please ensure you check our website regularly. Grant programme information may be tweaked over time, please check [our website](#) for latest information.



Eligibility

Applicants must meet all the eligibility criteria. We consider each application alongside a range of scoring criteria and against other applications at the time of applying. For Medium and Large Grants, the Grants Committee makes final decisions. It meets three times a year. Deadlines are strict and decisions are not made between meetings.

- ❑ Congregations can be of any Christian denomination and the building can be listed or unlisted.
- ❑ The building must be a **Christian place of worship** located within England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- ❑ The building must originally have been constructed as a place of worship and must be no less than 30 years old.
- ❑ We do not fund works to converted buildings, church halls, or privately-owned churches - such as chapels within hospitals, hospices, schools, prisons and similar institutions.
- ❑ The proposed works must be to the **main church building** or an extension of it. The National Churches Trust will not fund new build or stand-alone structures. Exceptions may only be made upon request if the place of worship is Grade I / A listed, and the decision is endorsed by one of the UK Home Countries Heritage Bodies.
- ❑ Applicants must be the owners or have the right to carry out the work. If the church is not part of a main denomination, or registered with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, it must be a **registered charity**. Any place of worship whose annual income exceeds £100,000 must be registered with the Charity Commission.
- ❑ Buildings must be **open for regular public worship** for a minimum of six services per year. Buildings that have been closed to the public must have plans to reopen for regular worship and public access and a congregation waiting to use the building on completion of the works.
- ❑ Buildings must be open to the public for at least **100 days per year** in addition to worship times, or within a year of project completion. Tell us if you will need to have special arrangements in order to meet this requirement, such as keyholder details on display.
- ❑ Projects must be led, overseen and supervised by a suitably qualified professional, usually a professionally qualified architect (listed on the Register of Architects) or a chartered building surveyor (MRICS or FRICS). Where the building is listed, the professional **must** have **conservation accreditation**. Usually professionals should hold conservation accreditation from one of the following:

- [The Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation](#) (AABC) listed at category 'A'.
- [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) (RIBA) listed as 'Specialist Conservation Architect'.
- [The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland](#) (RIAS) listed as 'Advanced'.
- [The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland](#) (RIAI) listed as 'Grade I'
- [Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors](#) (RICS) listed as 'Conservation Accreditation'
- [Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists](#) (CIAT) listed as 'Accredited Conservationist'.

Depending on the nature of the work, the following may also be considered:

- [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) (RIBA) listed as 'Conservation Architect'.
 - [The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland](#) (RIAS) listed as 'Accredited'.
 - [The Conservation Accreditation Register of Engineers](#) (CARE)
 - [The Chartered Institute of Builders](#) (CIOB) Building Conservation Certification Scheme listed as 'Certified' or 'Proficient'
- ❑ **Work must not have started** before the online application is submitted but must be achievable within 2 years of the grant decision being made.
 - ❑ You must have secured at least **50%** of the funding for the project you are applying to us for before you submit your application to us. You should therefore have started your fundraising campaign before applying and you should know the results of any major grant applications.
 - ❑ All necessary **permissions** must be in place before you apply to us. This could include permits from your governing body i.e. Faculty signed off by the Chancellor, List B Archdeacon's consent, Property Consent,

Listed Building Advisory Committee authorisation or a Trustee minute; and if required, the local planning authority consent) must be approved, valid and in place at the point of application.

- Applications must be received before the deadline and include all documentation requested. **Any documentation not supplied online must be received within 5 working days** or we reserve the right to reject the application.

In order to establish eligibility for the programme, you will be asked a series of questions at the start of any new application to us, reflecting the statements above. Please answer these honestly. Submitting an application that does not meet one of the criteria is likely to result in a rejected application.

What we cannot fund

- Works required due to negligence;
- Repairs to, or scheduled maintenance of boilers, clocks, organs, wall paintings, bells, monuments, fittings and fixtures and solar panels;
- Heating, lighting, electricity, and AV;
- Works to boundary walls, paths, churchyards, churchyard monuments or car parks;
- Stained glass restoration (unless urgent repairs to window structure, or the building is no longer watertight);
- Construction of new places of worship or church halls.

What we will prioritise

- Work to architecturally and historically significant buildings;
- Urgent/essential structural repair projects (as identified in a recent QIR or building survey as required within two years), with a focus on buildings that are at risk;
- Installation of kitchens and toilets where a strong need can be demonstrated;
- Places of worship that can demonstrate a suitable maintenance system is in place to protect our investment;
- Places of worship with regular opening hours;
- Places of worship that can demonstrate strong community engagement and sound plans for economic viability.

Although not listed as distinct priorities, it is important to us to continue to attract more applications from non-Anglican denominations and to ensure our funding has geographic spread. This can play into our grant making decisions.

Programme outcomes

We want to see churches open and in regular use, available to all. In order to ensure our funding is focused to achieve the greatest impact, and that we are meeting our two key goals outlined in our current strategy, applicants should demonstrate how their project will address these. We also ask about environmental sustainability and community and social outcomes.

- Church buildings being well maintained, adaptable and in good repair
 - *E.g. removed from at risk register, watertight for another 100 years, improved maintenance access etc.*
- Church buildings being sustainable, open and welcoming
 - *E.g. work will enable more users to access the building, address local demand or gaps in service, changes will diversify income, changes will open opportunities to welcome more and/or different people, changes will engage with more volunteers, form new partnerships etc.*

Where possible please supply details such as number and type of new activities planned, number of anticipated new users, volunteers that will be engaged etc.

Scoring criteria

- **Heritage** – the architectural significance of the building.
- **Need** - the problem that needs addressing - urgency of the project due to condition or limitations, and the need for our funds, e.g. no toilet and unable to meet demand for use / can't accept bookings; financial need as demonstrated by accounts; Index of Multiple Deprivation; funding shortfall.
- **Case for investment** – what is the case for our funding right now, in this round? Whether the project is ready to start; if there is a pending funding deadline or an existing grant about to expire; potential for the community to raise funds on the basis of its size and other funding needs in the area; if the building is identified as being at risk; partnerships or other significant projects in the area e.g. Levelling Up, Heritage Action Zones, Taylor Pilots, City of Culture etc.; community support as evidenced by consultation; opening times; priority areas.
- **Risk management & project planning** – the level of project planning undertaken e.g. all permissions secured and in date, tenders/quotes received through open tendering process, fundraising in place, consultation carried out, business plan produced, maintenance plan in place, and a lead qualified professional with high level of conservation accreditation. Level of contingency included within budget; annual maintenance spend; realistic time frames for funding or project delivery; financial condition of the church (sustainability risk).
- **Heritage & community impact** – how the application meets the required programme outcomes to show improvement and benefit to heritage, community and sustainability.

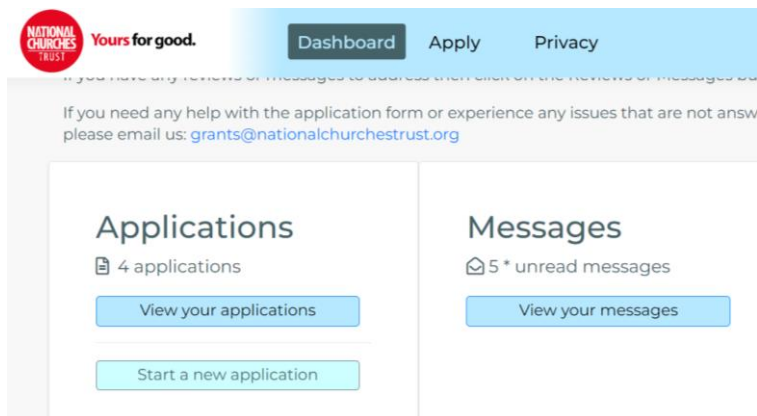
Using our application portal



The online application form can be accessed [here](#). The first time you use the site you will need to 'Register' – when you next access the site, you will go to 'Login'.

When you register a validation email will be sent to your inbox. Check your junk mail if it doesn't arrive. It may take a few minutes.

When you access the site you enter a dashboard. Select 'Apply' at the top of the screen, then 'Start a New Application'. Then select 'New Application' under Large Grants.



You will first need to answer the eligibility quiz. If you pass you will proceed to the Stage 1 Application Form via a Privacy Statement.

The online application form – Stage 1

This form is quite short and simple.

Click on each of the sections to access the questions. When you click on the next section the form will automatically save. Try to answer as much as you can.

Mandatory questions are marked with a red star. Help text is available where there is a blue question mark.

The only uploads required during Stage 1 are permissions – you will need these available to upload.

Once you have completed the form – Review what you have entered (you can edit anything you need)

Any fields not yet completed will be marked 'Required'. You will need to select 'Edit' and complete the missing fields, then return to the Review panel.

Once all required information has been provided a tickbox will appear at the top of the panel to check that you understand our privacy policy. You can then press 'Submit'.

Your progress will then look like this:

You will only be able to access the Stage 2 questions if our officers are satisfied that your project is eligible. You can view the Stage 2 questions in advance to help prepare your submission if you are successful on our [Large grants webpage](#).

The online application form – Stage 2

Once an officer has approved the application, you will receive an automatic email and a message inside your application portal under 'Messages'. The current status will show when you select the application in your dashboard, under 'Progress'

This section is much longer. However, the questions from Stage 1 appear again, pre-filled. You can edit any answers if required. We recommend working on the form over a number of sittings. When you re-enter the portal you will need to select 'Continue this application'.

HERITAGE
NEED - part 1
NEED - part 2
CASE FOR INVESTMENT - part 1
CASE FOR INVESTMENT - part 2
RISK MANAGEMENT & PROJECT PLANNING - part 1
RISK MANAGEMENT & PROJECT PLANNING - part 2
OUTCOMES
And finally
Review and submit

Amongst the sections, you will be prompted to upload the following documents – preferably as PDFs – if you don't have these available please send them to us via the 'Messages' section in your portal within the next 5 working days or email us at grants@nationalchurchestrust.org:

- **Accounts** – A copy of your most recent set of audited, signed or independently examined, annual accounts to help us understand your financial situation. These should include the independent examiner's report. If the income exceeds £100,000 you will need to be registered with the Charity Commission, or provide evidence that you are in the process of registering.
- **Friends' Accounts** - If you have a Friends' group, a copy of its most recent accounts.
- **Architectural plans/drawings** – This is essential for applicants proposing changes. If you have multiple documents you will need to email us separately, or merge documents together into a single file. We like to see existing and proposed plans, including the whole site, and not just the area of proposed change.
- **Buildings at risk register entry** – If your building is outside of England, a copy of the buildings at risk entry, if applicable (we can easily access England's list).
- **External and Internal Images** – A separate exterior and interior image in jpeg format of between 1MB and 5MB – please avoid sending these as Word documents or PDFs. We will use these in the assessment papers for our Grants Committee and, if the application is successful, for publicity purposes. Please ensure you have permissions to use the images in place before sending them to us, and make it clear if any credits are required.
- **Additional images of the issue**
- **Grant offer letters** – If you have been awarded a major grant award, please supply a copy of their offer letter and project costings.
- **Maintenance plan** - Regular maintenance is one of our top priorities, so we ask for a copy of your annual maintenance plan and, if you haven't already got one in place, we strongly encourage you to compile one. We will ask again at the payment stage. Maintenance plans are an annual timetable of regular steps to keep the building and grounds in good order. We have templates for you to edit, and advice and resources on our website [here](#).
- **Permissions** – A copy of the permission from the governing body, and local planning authority permission where it is required (this is normally new or external work).
- **Quinquennial Inspection or Building Survey or Condition Report** – A recent QIR or building survey or condition report that clearly highlights the issues that require attention and their urgency.
- **Specification of works** – Compiled by the lead professional and detailing the work that will be done, preferably costed or the tender report.
- **Development plan or business plan** – if available.
- **Statement of need** – or an equivalent, if available.
- **Evidence of consultation** – if available – do mention any consultation in your application.
- **Additional information** – anything further you would like to attach e.g. leaflets, activity plan etc.

Once you have completed the form your progress will show like this:

Progress
The current step of the application.

- Initial Application **Complete** [View application form](#)
- Initial Decision **Complete**
- Stage 2 Application **Complete** [View application form](#)

Your application will be assessed by officers against our priorities, scoring criteria and impacts, and against other applicants in the round. We may request further information via the Messaging service inside your application portal – we recommend checking the portal regularly, although you should receive an email alert if you are sent a message. We will often contact your lead professional and sometimes a governing body or local church trust to verify details of the work.

The final decision will be made by the Committee which meets 3 times a year.

Tips on using the online application forms

Printing. If you select the 'Submit and Review' tab – a printer icon in the top right corner will appear. Select this to either print, or save as a PDF.

Read-only. This form has been submitted.

Print this form **print**

First tell us about you
St Test - (?)

Web links. Not all web addresses are hyperlinks. You may have to copy and paste links into a web browser.

Questions marked with a red star * are mandatory and all applicants must complete these. If you have nothing to enter write 'none' or 'NA'. Mandatory questions must be completed in order to proceed to the next pages. We encourage applicants to answer as many of the questions as possible. If you have no information to enter into a box, and it is not mandatory, you can leave it blank and continue to the next question.

Character and word counts – these will either be stated by the box or appear as you start writing.

6f When is the building open to visitors outside of worship use?

Opening hours outside of worship use

0 characters / 800 Required field

7c Outline the case for receiving National Churches Trust funding now

Case for our funding

0 words / 250 Required field

File uploads – the maximum file size for a single upload is 10MB. If you are having difficulty uploading files please try removing spaces and punctuation from the file name.

Second attempt applications - If you are submitting a new application having previously been refused, please assume the case is being assessed for the first time and resubmit all the information we require ensuring it is up to date as we cannot guarantee that the same staff member will review the application. Also please be sure to address any feedback sent in your refusal letter. Failure to do so is likely to result in another unsuccessful outcome. We cannot guarantee that any reapplication will be successful and would

only expect to receive a reapplication if a change has been made (such as a change to the project cost, income or proposal), or you have been encouraged to do so in your previous refusal letter.

Tables – It is very important that the project cost and income tables are completed. We will not be able to assess your application without this information. For project costs, click 'Edit' on the line and enter a short description if required, the cost and the VAT, then click 'Save', and move onto the next line. For project income, click the plus button, complete the details in the same way, then click Save. For more tips on completing the tables, please see '[Completing the Project Cost and Project Income Tables](#)' below.

Project costs	Description	Cost	Total	
Project costs: Professional fees	Description:			
Cost:	VAT:			
				Save Cancel
Repair and conservation work			0.00	Edit ...
Capital works incl. kitchens & toilets			0.00	Edit ...
Contingency			0.00	Edit ...
Inflation			0.00	Edit ...
Other			0.00	Edit ...
		0.00	0.00	

+

Income stream	Description	Unsecured funds	Secured funds	
Income stream:	Description:			
Unsecured funds:	Secured funds:			
				Save Cancel
			10,000.00	Edit Delete

Question tips

2c: Country/Region: Please select the country, or region of England, that the place of worship is located in. For places of worship in England please follow the following system:

- EAST MIDLANDS: Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland
- EAST: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk
- LONDON
- NORTH EAST: Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear
- NORTH WEST: Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside
- SOUTH EAST: Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex
- SOUTH WEST: Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Isles of Scilly, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire
- WEST MIDLANDS: Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire
- YORKSHIRE

4a: The listing grades in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are as follows:

- England: I / II* / II Check here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- Wales: I / II* / II Check here: <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support?lang=en>
- Northern Ireland: A / B+ / B / B1 / B2 Check here: www.communities-ni.gov.uk/services/buildings-database
- Scotland: A / B / C Check here: www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/search-for-a-listed-building/

5c / 8a: Projects must be led by a suitably qualified professional: a professionally qualified architect (listed on the Register of Architects), or a chartered building surveyor (MRICS or FRICS). Where the building is listed, the professional MUST also belong to one of these conservation accreditation schemes:

- [The Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation](#) (AABC) listed at category 'A'.
- [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) (RIBA) listed as 'Specialist Conservation Architect'.
- [The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland](#) (RIAS) listed as 'Advanced'.
- [The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland](#) (RIAI) listed as 'Grade I'
- [Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors](#) (RICS) listed as 'Conservation Accreditation'
- [Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists](#) (CIAT) listed as 'Accredited Conservationist'.

Depending on the nature of the work, the following may also be considered:

- [Royal Institute of British Architects](#) (RIBA) listed as 'Conservation Architect'.
- [The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland](#) (RIAS) listed as 'Accredited'.
- [The Conservation Accreditation Register of Engineers](#) (CARE)
- [The Chartered Institute of Builders](#) (CIOB) Building Conservation Certification Scheme listed as 'Certified' or 'Proficient'

5e: Explain what is the problem that needs addressing - does it have to be done? What is the urgency of the project alongside the need for our funds? For example: there is no toilet and we are unable to meet the demand for use and have had to turn away bookings (with examples). Also, the financial need which may be demonstrated by the accounts and lack of unrestricted reserves. If there are high unrestricted reserves be sure to explain in Qu. 6b. We will review the Index of Multiple Deprivation for the area - explain what impact the scale of deprivation has on fundraising capacity and why you still need our limited funds.

7c: What is the case for our funding this project right now? Whether the project is ready to start with permissions in place and this is the final bit of funding required; if there is a pending funding deadline or an existing grant about to expire; what the potential is for the community to raise funds on the basis of its size and other funding needs in the area / if other bodies are fundraising locally; if the building is identified as being at risk; if there are local partnership arrangements, or other significant projects in the area e.g. Heritage Action Zones, Levelling Up, City of Culture etc.; community support as evidenced by consultation; opening times; priority areas.

Completing the Project Cost and Project Income Tables

Project Cost Table

The project cost table should show the total cost of your project, broken down into the categories listed. Please include the total costs for the project or phase, even if some elements are not eligible for our funding. There is an opportunity to submit a cost specification with a more detailed breakdown in Stage 2.

Tips:

- Please enter whole numbers with no punctuation (the system will automatically add commas to large numbers).
- The 'cost' column should contain the cost excluding VAT.

- The VAT column should contain the VAT you expect to pay. Please do not enter the rate of VAT or the cost including VAT in this column. Please enter VAT even if you expect to claim it back.
- The 'Total incl. VAT' column will automatically populate with the sum of the Cost + VAT columns
- Please ensure that you include a contingency allowance within your budget
- The 'Other' row can be used for any costs that do not fit with the other rows. Please do not use this row for VAT.

For example, a completed table might look like this:

Project costs	Description	Cost	VAT	Total	
Professional fees	Architects fees	10,000.00	2,000.00	12,000.00	Edit
Repair and conservation	Roof repairs	100,000.00	20,000.00	120,000.00	Edit
Capital works incl. kitchen and toilets				0.00	Edit
Contingency	10% of repair costs	10,000.00	2,000.00	12,000.00	Edit
Inflation	5%	5,000.00	1,000.00	6,000.00	Edit
Other				0.00	Edit
		125,000.00	25,000.00	150,000.00	

Project Income

The project income table should show the fundraising that has already been carried out for the project. Click the + button in the top right to add a new line. Add as many lines as required.

Tips:

- Please enter whole numbers with no punctuation (the system will automatically add commas to large numbers).
- Unsecured funds are funds which are not yet confirmed, such as pledged donations or grant applications which are pending a decision.
- Secured funds are funds which are confirmed, such as donations that have been received or grants for which you have received an offer letter.
- If you intend to commit any funding from reserves, please include this in the table.
- If the building is listed, include what you expect to apply for from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) – this is likely to be all of the VAT incurred on the project.
- The Income Stream column should contain a headline description of the funding source – for example 'Grant' or 'Local Fundraising'.
- The description column can be used to add detail, such as the name of the grant funder, although please keep this brief. If some funds are allocated to specific elements of the project this information can be entered here.

For example, the table could look like this:

					+	
Income stream	Description	Unsecured funds	Secured funds			
Local fundraising			10,000.00		Edit	Delete
Grant	Local Landfill Grant		5,000.00		Edit	Delete
Grant	Local churches Trust	10,000.00			Edit	Delete
LPWGS	VAT reclaim		20,000.00		Edit	Delete
		10,000.00	35,000.00			

Additional funding

On occasion we may be able to help you secure additional funding from other funders who we partner with and who, from time to time, invite us to make recommendations to them. To be considered, be sure to indicate interest in question 11c of the form.

Wolfson Foundation Fabric Repair Funds: We currently administer church repair funding on behalf of the Wolfson Foundation. Eligible applications made through our Large grant form will be considered for an additional award from Wolfson of up to £10,000.

To be eligible, churches must be listed Grade I or II* in England or Wales, Grade A or B+ in Northern Ireland or Grade A or B in Scotland. Projects must be for urgent and essential repair works. Wolfson funds cannot be allocated towards overheads, administrative costs, enabling or demolition work, work that has started before a grant offer, or VAT. Information is also on our website [here](#).

Decisions

We will usually contact you by email or post within two weeks of a Grants Committee meeting with news of your application. Grantees will need to return a signed acceptance form within 60 days. The latest conditions of the grant will be laid out in the offer documents. These are likely to include:

1. Submit details for free to the [Explore](#) section of our website
2. Project led by a qualified professional with conservation accreditation if the building is listed
3. Open for at least 100 days a year beyond worship, within a year of project completion
4. Acknowledge the National Churches Trust grant in printed materials and on a website, and help publicise the award
5. Return a feedback report a year after project completion
6. If the place of worship is closed for worship within 10 years of receiving payment of a grant award, report this to the National Churches Trust without delay. We may request full or partial repayment of the grant
7. Claim the grant within 2 years of the decision date

Payment claims

This will be outlined in the offer letter in terms of process and what we require. Payment claims need to be supported by an architect or surveyor's interim or completion certificate showing that relevant work in excess of the grant award has been carried out.

Church Membership

We have recently launched our new Church Membership Scheme. Members can access a range of benefits, including a page on our website. If you receive a grant from us your church will receive Church Membership FREE for two years. If you are already a member, we will extend the term of your current membership by two years. You can find more details about our church membership [here](#). Our website features over 4000 churches. If you receive a grant from us we will require you to submit an entry for your church to enable us to promote your open days as part of our explore churches pages. If you'd like to submit your church now you can do so [here](#).

Final comments

If you have any additional questions please visit the [FAQs page](#) of our website or contact the Church Engagement Team via email: grants@nationalchurchestrust.org or telephone: 020 7222 0605.

In the meantime we encourage you to apply for as many different sources of funding as possible. For information about other sources of funding please see our [website](#).

You can stay in touch by signing up to receive [our monthly e-newsletter](#). You can also subscribe as a [Friend](#).

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