



Treasure Ireland - Winter Ready Programme

Guidance Notes

1. About the Winter Ready Small Grants Programme

The Winter Ready small grants programme has been created by the National Churches Trust, with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to help churches in Northern Ireland prepare their buildings for the winter months. This is a time limited, one-off opportunity, to support work that will complete within eight weeks of an award being made.

Grants of between £500 and £3,000 are available to cover the cost of essential maintenance that will help keep churches safe, open, warm and weather-resilient over winter.

In this document you will find the eligibility criteria, details of how to apply and what supporting documents are required, as well as the terms and conditions of any successful grant application.

This Grants Programme is part of the Treasure Ireland Project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the National Churches Trust and the Historic Environment Division at the Department for Communities - Northern Ireland.

2. Eligible Work

The aim of this programme is to help churches cover the cost of essential maintenance that will keep churches safe, open, warm and weather-resilient over winter. This programme will not support or contribute to larger renovation or restoration projects - it is for small-scale maintenance and urgent repairs, it is a time-limited opportunity and is

intended for work that will be completed with immediacy and within eight weeks of an award being made.

Examples of eligible work:

- Clearing gutters and drains to prevent leaks or flooding
- Repairs to roofs, downpipes, or flashing to stop water ingress
- Draught-proofing windows or doors
- Repairs to broken windows or external doors
- Other urgent maintenance that reduces the risk of cold, damp, or weather damage

3. Who Can Apply

You can apply if your organisation meets all of the following:

1. Location: The church building is in Northern Ireland.
2. Use: The building is regularly used for worship by a Christian denomination.
3. Ownership/Responsibility: The applicant church or governing body is responsible for the building's upkeep and maintenance.
4. Building Type: The building is a dedicated place of worship (not a hall or separate ancillary building unless integral to the main worship space).
5. Need: The proposed work is essential to prepare the church for winter and will be carried out within eight weeks of an award.

Ineligible applicants include:

- Community groups that do not own or manage a church building
- Projects for buildings that are permanently closed or no longer used for worship
- Individuals applying on their own behalf
- Work in privately owned church buildings, buildings or structures separate to the main church, buildings constructed less than 30 years ago, buildings not originally built as a place of worship
- Applicants that don't supply the supporting documents required

4. Eligible Costs

Funding can cover:

- Labour and materials for eligible maintenance work
- Hire of specialist equipment (e.g., access towers, cherry pickers)
- Professional fees only where essential to deliver the maintenance (e.g., surveyor for roof repairs)

Ineligible costs:

- Large-scale capital works or repair projects
- Routine running costs (electricity, heating fuel, insurance, staff wages)
- New heating systems or renewable energy installations
- Decorative work that is not essential to winter readiness
- Work already completed or contracted before the grant decision
- VAT which can be reclaimed through application to the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme before April 2026

5. How Much You Can Apply For

- The maximum grant available is £3,000 per church.
- You may apply for less than £3,000 if your project costs less.
- If your project costs more than £3,000, you must show how you will fund the remainder (e.g., reserves, donations, other grants). Please note this programme is intended to support small works and we would not expect costs to exceed £5,000.
- Match funding is not required.
- Two quotes must be provided for each distinct element of the project from a professional contractor.

6. Preparing Your Application

Before you begin:

1. Identify the problem (e.g. leaking gutter, lost roof tiles).
2. Get two written quotes or estimates from a qualified contractor.
3. Take photographs of the exterior of the building and the area/s needing attention
4. Ensure you have any necessary permissions to carry out the work (from your denomination, local authority, or heritage body if the building is listed).

7. How to Apply

1. Complete the Winter Ready Application Form online available via the Treasure Ireland page.
2. Provide the following supporting documents:
 - A minimum of two quotes or estimates for the work
 - Photographs of the problem area (recommended) and exterior
 - Evidence of consent/permissions if required (for example, from your diocesan or presbytery office)
 - A copy of your most recent accounts

3. Submit your form and documents as soon as possible. **Please note** this is a rolling programme which will close when all the available funds have been allocated.
4. Incomplete applications may not be considered.

8. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed by National Churches Trust staff and approved by the Grants Committee, based on:

1. Heritage value.
2. Need
 - a. Is the work essential to make the church winter-ready?
3. Case for Investment
 - a. Does the application show value for money.
 - b. Are the costs reasonable and proportionate?
 - c. Does the church require financial assistance to ensure the work is carried out?
4. Risk
 - a. Can the church complete the work promptly after the grant is awarded.
 - b. Does the proposed work reflect good maintenance practice?
5. Impact/outcome
 - a. Will the work prevent further damage and keep the church open, safe, warm, and welcoming?

Priority may be given to:

- Churches of high heritage value
- Churches most at risk from water ingress or damp
- Churches providing important community services during winter (e.g., warm spaces, food banks)
- Churches whose accounts show financial need
- Churches who demonstrate a good regular maintenance approach

9. Grant Conditions

- Grants will be paid out in a single instalment following completion of work and upon receipt of supporting documents (invoices and payment claim form)
- Work must be completed and all grant money claimed within eight weeks of an award being made.
- Churches may be asked to provide additional evidence, such as photographs of the work, as proof of completion.

- If the cost of works reduces for any reason, grant payments may be reduced accordingly
- The National Churches Trust may ask to visit your church to see the funded work.
- Grantees must credit the National Churches Trust in any press or public statements regarding the work.

10. Timescales

- This is a rolling programme which will close for applications when all of the available funding has been allocated.
- Assessments will be carried out on a rolling basis and applicants will be notified within 20 working days of submission.
- All works must be completed and claims submitted within eight weeks of an award being made
- Payments are typically processed within two weeks of receipt of a complete claim

11. Top Tips for a Strong Application

- Move quickly. This is a time limited, one-off opportunity, to support work that will complete within eight weeks of an award being made.
- Focus on essential maintenance that directly improves your building's resilience to winter weather.
- Be specific about the issue and the impact if not addressed.
- Keep quotes realistic and detailed – this helps assess value for money.
- Submit clear photographs that show the problem area.

12. Using the Online Application Form

Getting Started

Applications to the Winter Ready programme must be made online. The online application form can be accessed via the National Churches Trust website.

The first time you use the applications portal you will need to 'Register'. The next time you access the site, you will need to 'Login'.

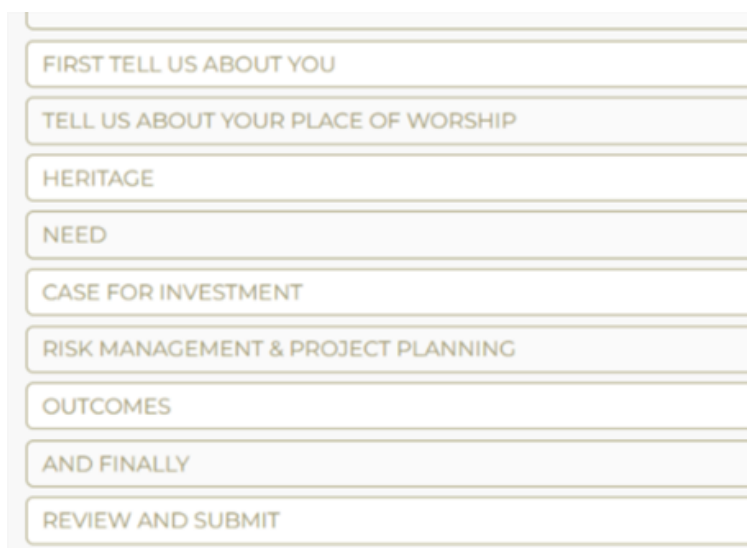
When you register a validation email will be sent to your inbox. Check your junk mail if it doesn't arrive. It may take a few minutes.

Once you've completed your registration you can login. When you login to the portal you enter a dashboard. Select 'Apply' at the top of the screen, then 'Start a New Application'. Then select 'New Application' under "Winter Ready" programme.

You will then need to complete the eligibility questions. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will proceed to the Application Form via a Privacy Statement. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria you cannot proceed with an application.

The Application Form

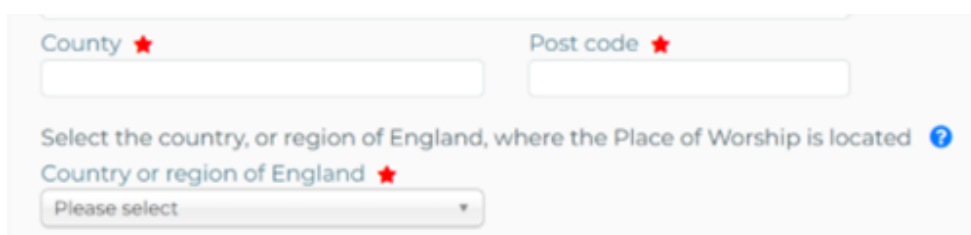
Once you've accessed the application form, click on each of the sections to access the questions. When you click on the next section the form will automatically save.



A vertical list of application form sections, each in a light grey box with a thin border. The sections are: FIRST TELL US ABOUT YOU, TELL US ABOUT YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP, HERITAGE, NEED, CASE FOR INVESTMENT, RISK MANAGEMENT & PROJECT PLANNING, OUTCOMES, AND FINALLY, and REVIEW AND SUBMIT.

You don't have to complete the form in one go. You can save your work and when you re-enter the portal you will be able to resume your application by selecting 'Continue this application'.

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



A form snippet showing location fields. It includes two text input fields: 'County' and 'Post code', both marked with a red star. Below them is a text input field for 'Country or region of England', also marked with a red star, with a blue question mark icon to its right. The 'Country or region of England' field has a dropdown arrow and the text 'Please select'.

You will be required to upload supporting documents (such as photographs and quotations) within the application – you will need to have these documents available to upload when prompted.

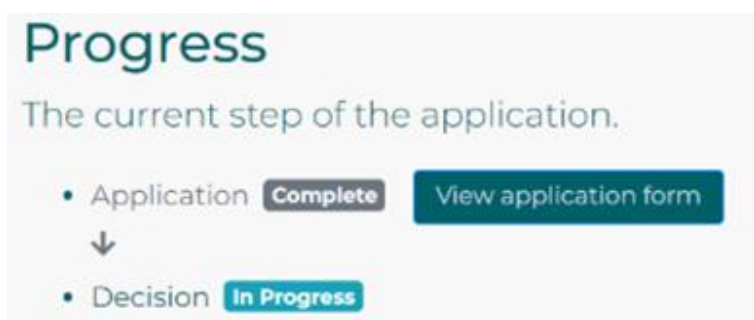
Once you have completed the form – review what you have entered (you can edit anything you need).

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 tick box will appear at the top of the panel to check that you understand our privacy policy. You can then press 'Submit'.



You will receive an automatic email and a message inside your application portal under 'Messages'. The status will be displayed when you select the application in your dashboard, under 'Progress' as shown below.



13. Finally

You can find lots of other useful information on our website including fundraising tips, other sources of funding, training opportunities, advice on looking after your building and much more.

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