



MINOR REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS GRANTS FUND

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

INTRODUCTION

Exeter Diocese has been allocated £202,500 from the Church Commissioners 2023-25 triennium funding for grants targeted at supporting the most deprived parishes in the Diocese. This money is available to grant aid minor repairs and improvements to churches within these parishes.

The Fund is intended to target need and because of this churches that fall within the Diocesan Common Fund Index of Multiple Deprivation bands E-K will be invited to apply in the first instance. Should sufficient funds remain, applications from IMD bands C-D will be invited later in 2024 and in 2025. Churches eligible to apply will be contacted direct by the Church Buildings Support Officers. To find out which band your parish falls into see [here](#).

There is a £10,000 maximum grant available for a listed church, which can claim back VAT, or £12,000 for a non-listed church. All work will need to be carried out, paid for, and the grant claimed within a year of the offer date, or by 31 December 2025, whichever is the sooner.

The focus is on urgent repairs, including 'stitch in time' projects which can save money in the long term. The Diocese has identified roofs and above ground drainage as priorities here. Small-scale improvements that are essential to sustaining worship are also eligible.

Because of the tight time restrictions of the scheme, only works falling into Lists A or B will be considered for a grant, or in exceptional cases work that already has a Faculty in place but has not been carried out. For a full list of works that qualify for funding see the Eligibility Guide.

Please note that works already commenced or completed are not eligible.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

Grant applications must be made on the Exeter Diocese Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants Fund Application Form, although additional material such as quotations and photographs can be submitted alongside this.

Applicant Details

The applicant must have legal responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the church. In most cases this will be a churchwarden or incumbent. If you are neither of these, please set out your role and if you are not a PCC member, please provide evidence that you have PCC approval to make the application.

Project Details

It is very important that you clearly state, what you wish to do and why you need to do it. In the case of repairs, work must be recommended in your most recent QI report as being necessary within the quinquennium. For emergency repairs not noted in the QI, a report from an accredited architect or surveyor would be acceptable.

For improvements, a convincing case must be made that such works are essential to sustaining worship and mission use. You should also demonstrate how these works fit within your Mission Action Plan.

It is anticipated that in most cases further permission from the archdeacon under List B will be required and the Church Buildings Support Officers will be able to help with this. If permission is required, no work can begin until this is in place.

You should include with your application, photographs of the defect(s) to be repaired or the context in which the improvement will be made, along with a few general photos of the church.

Quotes

It is appreciated that finding contractors may be difficult, where possible the Church Buildings Support Officers may be able to supply names, but please note we cannot make recommendations and responsibility for engaging a contractor and subsequent liabilities lie with the parish. In certain cases, it may be possible to get a conditional grant offer, based on a specification but no money can be released until quotations are received. For works costing over £1000, a minimum of two quotes are required.

Funding and Finance

The maximum grant has been set nationally and is non-negotiable. It is, however, appreciated that this may not be sufficient to fund all the work required. In these cases it is important to show where the additional funds are coming from.

Please note that the grant scheme is intended as a 'quick wins' fund and all projects must be completed within one year, or by the 31st December 2025, so it may not be possible to part-fund larger projects where the parish is relying on extra money from external grants or fundraising that is not already in place. Priority will be given to those parishes that can demonstrate they will be able to complete the works within the specified time.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The grant money will be available in four tranches starting in March 2024 and finishing 31st March 2025. You may apply at any time throughout this year but early applications are encouraged as the number eligible applications may exceed the total available money for the scheme.

ASSESSMENT

On receipt, your application will be validated by the Church Building Team to check for eligibility and that all the material is present for the Grants Allocation Panel to reach an informed decision. Applications for works which have already been commenced or been completed will not be sent to the panel.

The Panel comprises the DAC Chair and the four archdeacons. While you should not canvas the Panel you may approach your archdeacon regarding the repairs or improvements before making the application. Similarly, the DAC, through the Church Buildings Office can also be approached for informal advice.

If there is anything missing, or clarification is required on an aspect of your application, a member of the team will contact you. Once everything needed has been checked, your grant application will be sent to the Grants Allocation Panel. The panel will make their recommendation based on the following criteria:

- IMD Grade
- Urgency of work
- Type of work – repairs to roofs and above ground drainage will be prioritised
- Justification
- Evidence that the work can be completed within the set timescales
- Parish finances and Common Fund payments

Final sign-off of the recommendation will be made by the Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance Assets Group.

DECISION

You will be notified by the Church Buildings Team when a decision has been made on your application.

If you are successful, you will be allocated a case officer who will be your prime contact for supporting you in getting the works completed and claiming your grant.

The terms and conditions of the grant will be included with the offer letter, which you will be asked to agree to as a condition of receiving the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, you may apply again, but in most cases every effort will be made to get eligible applications through at the first attempt. Only one grant allocation is available for each church.

PAYMENT

In most cases, payment will be made on completion of the work. Where the PCC can demonstrate a cash shortfall, it may be possible to receive 50% of the grant upfront once the PCC has signed a contract or otherwise agreed terms for the work with a contractor. In these cases, a portion of the grant will be held back until the work is completed and a valid claim received and approved by the diocese.

CONTACTS

Although the money is from centrally sourced triennium funding, it is being administered locally. All enquiries should be made the Church Buildings Team whose contact details are below:

Church Buildings Office

The Old Deanery
The Cloisters
Exeter
EX1 1HS

01392 294 902 / 944

dac@exeter.anglican.org