

Northumbria Historic Churches Trust

Registered Charity No. 511314

Registered Office: 20 Aykley Vale, Aykley Heads, DURHAM DH1 5AW

www.NorthumbriaHCT.org.uk

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

The principal purpose of the Northumbria Historic Churches Trust (NHCT) is giving grants to help with the repair of church buildings. These notes provide guidance on the principles and priorities the NHCT uses in deciding on the award of grants.

The Church Building

To be considered for a grant a church must:

- **Be sited within the Church of England dioceses of Durham or Newcastle.**
The church does not itself have to be Church of England.
- **Be a place of Christian worship in use.**
"Christian" means a church of a denomination which is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. "Worship in use" means that we cannot help with buildings which are not used mainly or solely for worship (such as church halls), or churches which have been declared, or are likely to be declared, redundant. In some cases these things are not black and white, so if you think your building might be eligible please contact us to discuss. We may be able to help cases where a disused church is to be brought back into use for worship.
- **Be of historic interest.**
The church must either be listed (that is, listed by English Heritage as a building of special architectural or historic interest), or built before 1946 and having some special feature, either architectural or historical (including historical association), which makes it out of the ordinary. An unlisted church in a Conservation Area may also be eligible for a grant.

To receive a grant neither the church nor its members need to be subscribers to the Trust. Obviously we appreciate such support, without which the Trust could not continue to operate. We would welcome your church and some of its members both taking out subscriptions and continuing them into the future regardless of the outcome of any grant application.

The Proposed Work

To receive financial help from the NHCT, the proposed work should be:

- **For repair of the structure of the building.**
Priority is given to repairs, and grant is not usually offered to new works, improvements, reinstatement of features, repair of furniture and fittings etc. Specifically we do not give grants for the repair or replacement of heating, lighting, bells, clocks, organs, or stone cleaning. Nor do we help with work which should be carried out as part of routine maintenance such as clearing of gutters, replacement of slipped roof tiles, and redecoration. We may offer grant to the replacement of core electrical installations if the current installation is unsafe to the point of being a threat to the building, and towards the repair of window glass if it is of historic importance in its own right. Other items of exceptional historic value may also be eligible.
- **Necessary and of appropriate priority.**
The work should have been identified in the most recent quinquennial inspection report (or equivalent survey) as being the next priority, and we will expect to see a copy of the report (or

relevant part). We will of course also consider making a grant to emergency repairs not mentioned in a survey report when the need for them could not reasonably have been foreseen.

- **Carried out to a "conservation standard".**

Work should be carried out in a way which minimises change to the building, does not unnecessarily disturb or replace historic fabric, and uses traditional materials and methods which are appropriate to the building. In exceptional cases we may accept as eligible the use of modern materials where these can be justified.

There is no minimum or maximum size of project that may be considered for grant. A project may consist of two or more separate phases, and each phase may be considered for an offer of grant. We are unlikely to make an offer on a new phase if there is an outstanding offer on a phase which is neither complete nor near to completion. We cannot consider helping a building if the need for work arises from something which was or should have been covered by insurance.

Application and Decision Process

- **Before applying.**

Potential applicants for grant are encouraged to discuss their case with the Secretary to the trust before completing an application form. Help in completing the application may be available.

- **Assessing your application.**

If the building and works are eligible for grant we assess the need for help in the context of the church's resources, both actual (including any grants already awarded) and potential. We need to see a copy of all relevant latest financial accounts. Necessary professional fees and VAT are eligible for grant, although in the case of a listed church we expect that the church will recover VAT under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme. If the works are likely to be eligible for a grant under the English Heritage / Heritage Lottery Fund joint scheme of Repair Grants for Places of Worship, we normally expect you to wait for a decision by that scheme before applying to the NHCT.

- **Starting work.**

If you start work before applying for a grant, we will assume that you already have enough money to pay for the project, and the application will be rejected. If work needs to start after you have applied but before a decision has been reached, you should contact the Trust to explain the circumstances.

- **Grant offers and payment.**

The normal maximum grant is £5,000, but Trustees may award more if they consider it justified. This is likely to be only in the most exceptional circumstances.

If Trustees award a grant, you will receive an offer by letter. An offer is subject to conditions, which are outlined in a separate note. Payment of the grant is not made until the works are complete.

Grants are awarded at the absolute discretion of the Trustees. You may appeal against their decision by writing to the Secretary with your reasons, and the case will be reconsidered by the Trustees at the next reasonably available opportunity. There is no higher appeal authority within the Trust. You would need to seek your own legal advice on whether judicial review or an appeal to the Charity Commissioners would be appropriate.