

Northumbria Historic Churches Trust



Registered Charity No 511314
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 located within the Church of England dioceses of Durham or Newcastle**
The church may be of any Christian denomination.
- **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 issues 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/Historic England 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 be eligible for a grant neither the church nor any of its members need to contribute to the Trust. Obviously we appreciate all financial support, without which the Trust could not continue to operate. We would therefore welcome your church donating to the Trust in the future, and/or mentioning the Trust by name in the context of any publicity about the repairs which the grant has helped to fund.

The Proposed Work

To receive financial help from 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, or repair of furniture and fittings. We may offer grants to support the costs of installation or repair of heating systems, toilets and/or kitchen facilities, where this would contribute significantly to the community life of the church. The Trust does not normally give grants for the repair of lighting systems, bells, clocks, organs, or for stone cleaning. We do not 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 for the replacement of core electrical installations if the current installation is unsafe to the point of being a threat to the building, and toward the repair of window glass if it is of historical 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 an application for 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 which 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 help with any costs which were or should have been covered by insurance.

Application and Decision Process

- **Before applying**

Potential applicants for grants are encouraged to discuss their case with the Secretary to the Trust before completing an application form; this can save time and effort. We may wish to make a visit to your church prior to consideration of your application. Unless the application is for emergency repairs, applications are normally requested one month prior to Trustee Board meetings; the date of the next meeting is advertised on our website (www.northumbriaht.org.uk) under Grants. Help in completing your application may be available. All applications will be acknowledged.

- **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. Professional fees and VAT are not eligible for grant, although in the case of a listed church we expect that all or most of the VAT paid will be recovered under the Listed Places of Worship (LPW) grant scheme. If the project might reasonably be expected to be offered a grant under the Heritage Lottery Fund's Grants for Places of Worship programme we normally expect you to apply to the HLF and have received an indication of the likely level of support, before you apply to the NHCT.

- **Starting work**

If you start the work before you apply for a grant we will assume that you can afford the project without our help, and the application will be rejected. If work has to start after you have applied but before you have received an offer from us, you must contact the Trust to make the case for the application still to be considered.

- **Grant offers and payment**

Decisions on grant applications are made by the Trustees, who meet once a

quarter. The normal maximum offer is £5000, 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 in writing, and we may wish to make a visit to your church at this point, particularly if we have not done so already. An offer is subject to conditions, which are outlined in a separate Guidance Note.

Payment of the grant is made when the works are complete, unless an agreement has been made at the start of the project that payment will be made in two or more instalments, against agreed milestones, to aid cash flow.

You may appeal against the Trustees' decision - whether it is to reject an application or the level of offer - 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.