**Buildings For Mission and Net Zero Carbon (NZC):**

**Grants for Minor Repairs and Improvements and NZC Work**

**Guidance for Applicants**

During 2024 and 2025, the Diocese of Chichester will be distributing a small number of grants to parishes for the costs of minor repairs and improvements for church buildings and for Net Carbon Zero (NZC) work.

**Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants**

The money for these grants has been awarded by the Church Buildings Council’s ‘Buildings for Mission: Support for Churches’ fund, with the aim of enabling parishes to undertake urgent repair works and improvements, especially where this will prevent further deterioration to church buildings.

The scheme is intended to help secure the future viability of church buildings and to sustain worship and mission. It is principally targeted at parishes which are unable to fund their repair works independently, whether due to a lack of available funds or ineligibility for other grant funding streams.

**Net Zero Carbon (NZC) ‘Quick Wins’ Grants**

These grants are being financed through the Church of England Environment Programme’s NZC ‘Quick Wins’ Grant Fund. They aim to support churches and church halls in delivering small scale NZC works.

These grant funds will be administered by the Diocese of Chichester’s Church Buildings and NZC Teams. Decisions will be made by the Archdeacons, the Senior Church Buildings Officer and the NZC Programme Manager.

**Buildings for Mission: Minor Repairs and Improvements**

What works are eligible?

1. Emergency fabric repairs to churches

(where holding works are urgently needed to prevent further loss of historic fabric, pending permanent repair solutions)

1. Fabric repairs and improvements to unlisted and 20th century churches

(match-funding support for repair and facilities projects in churches that are less attractive to heritage-focussed funders)

1. Feasibility studies

(Part-funding of feasibility studies for parishes seeking ways to improve use and sustainability of their buildings)

For works to be eligible they must be recommended in the most recent Quinquennial Inspection, or another professional report such as a conditions or structural survey. Works specified as urgent will be prioritised.

‘Improvements’ constitute projects that involve altering or upgrading the building, its services or facilities. This may include: Accessibility features; Heating; Lighting; Electrical wiring; Audio-visual systems; Kitchens/Serveries; Plumbing; Toilets; Energy Efficiency; Climate Mitigation; Bat Mitigation.

**Net Zero Carbon (NZC) – ‘Quick Wins’**

What works are eligible?

1. Work aligned with the Church of England ‘[Practical Path to NZC for Churches’](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church/practical-path-net-zero-carbon-churches) tool:
2. Improving electric connections, to enable electric heating;
3. Work that enables parishes to respond to temporary heating solutions and/or (ideally) find a permenant longer term low carbon alternative.

Professional fees can be eligible where they are required to progress a NZC capital project, and the professional studies apply to the technical project being undertaken.

We will particularly favour applications that demonstrate parishes are purposefully engaging with NZC and that the works covered by their funding request are part of wider plans to significantly reduce their carbon footprint, rather than just ad hoc NZC-related works that aren’t part of a wider, longer term NZC vision.

**General Principles for Eligibility**

Grants may also cover professional fees which are necessary to carry out repairs or improvements – for example, architect’s fees, or costs associated with other building surveys.

All applications must demonstrate that appropriate permissions, i.e. faculty, planning permission, or List B consent, have been obtained. For help applying for the appropriate permissions please contact the Church Buildings Team - <https://www.chichester.anglican.org/church-buildings-and-pastoral-reorganisation/>.

It is recommended that contractors for capital works are selected through a competitive tendering process to ensure that projects are cost-effective.

What works are not eligible?

* Routine maintenance (e.g. cleaning; servicing)
* Quinquennial Inspections
* Repairs covered by insurance
* Conservation of artwork or church furnishings

What buildings are eligible?

Church of England consecrated churches and licensed places of worship in parishes are eligible. This includes churchyards and boundary walls within their curtilage, as well as below-ground structures such as drainage pipes.

Other buildings are excluded, including: cathedrals; non-Anglican places of worship; institutional or private/non-parochial chapels; closed churches.

Church halls are eligible for Net Zero Quick Wins funding but are excluded from the Minor Repairs & Improvements Grant.

The distribution of grant awards will be prioritized to churches with a distinct and demonstrable need for financial help. Applications meeting the following criteria will be prioritized for grant funding:

* Parishes with a high rank of national ‘deprivation’
* Unlisted churches and 20th century churches
* Church buildings on the Heritage at Risk Register

You can check your deprivation ranking through the Church Urban Fund’s Look-up tool, here: <https://cuf.org.uk/lookup-tool>

For the Net Zero Carbon grants, parishes will be required to:

* Have submitted their most Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) data
* Be registered with [Arocha’s Eco Church initiative](https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/).

**How much money is available?**

Individual grants will be no lower than £1000 and will rarely exceed £5000. Unless in exceptional circumstances, a grant awarded will be no more than 90% of the total cost of the work.

Funds will be awarded at the discretion of the Church Buildings Team and Archdeacons (and also the NZC Programme Manager in the case of the NZC grants), taking into account the unique needs of each individual church.

**How can churches apply?**

To apply, you will need to complete the Application Form which is available from your Archdeacon.

You will also need to provide some supporting information, which may include the following:

* Copy of appropriate faculty permission or Archdeacon’s permission for List B consent, if required for works. If the appropriate permission has not been received at the time you make your application, a PCC minute authorising the works may be submitted.
* Copy of planning permission, if required for works
* Sufficient information on the proposed scope and methodology of the works e.g. a schedule of works prepared by your architect
* Cost breakdown of works
* Photographs of relevant areas
* Annual PCC accounts, with details of all unrestricted reserve funds
* Details of any funds held by a Friends Group or by a separate Building Fund
* Details of any prior grant funding that has been obtained
* The parish’s ranking on the Multiple Deprivation Index (MDI)

In some cases, the Buildings Team may request further information to support the decision-making process.

Completed applications can be sent to the Church Buildings Support Officer at sophie.allen@chichester.anglican.org.

**The Decision-Making Process**

The Church Buildings Team will meet three times a year (in June, September, and December) to consider applications. Following these meetings, parishes will be informed whether their applications have been successful over email.

An unsuccessful application will not prevent you from applying again. You can discuss the outcome of your application with your Archdeacon.

**Completion of Works**

Where applications are successful, the grant will be paid into the PCC bank account details held within the diocesan finance system prior to the commencement of the work. Projects must be completed before the end of 2025.

To ensure that funds are utilised appropriately, parishes will need to provide the following:

* A certificate of completion
* Evidence of completion, e.g. before and after photos

If works are not completed within a reasonable timescale, or if funding is misused, the Diocese of Chichester reserves the right to reappropriate 100% of the money awarded.

Following the completion of the works, parishes will be asked to complete an evaluation form, which will cover:

* How the grant was spent (including before and after photos for capital works)
* Whether the grant helped attract further grant funding
* How the works have benefitted the parish and supported mission and ministry
* Whether the grant led to a further project being planned (e.g. where a grant has funded a feasibility study or report from an independent heating expert)

This information will help the Diocese to measure the benefit of this grant scheme and will improve prospects for further grant schemes of a similar nature in the future. Failure to complete the evaluation is likely to prejudice further applications from the same parish.