

THE WORCESTER AND DUDLEY HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST (WDHCT) GRANT POLICY

CURRENT POLICY (to be reviewed before end 2022)

The primary purpose of the Trust is to award relatively small financial grants for the repair, preservation and refurbishment of Christian places of worship in Worcestershire and Dudley only.

Since we were founded in 1993, we have given grants totalling over £500,000 (and administered nearly another £200,000 on behalf of less specialist trusts) to a wide range of places of worship from medieval buildings to 20th century ones across the county of Worcestershire and the Archdeaconry of Dudley.

At present our modest grants are usually for £500 only. Rarely has the WDHCT been the only grant provider, churches having to search diligently for a wide range of other sources to raise substantial sums in parallel with much local fundraising activity.

See "Other Sources of Funding" under the Grants tab on our website for information that might be of help.

WHAT MIGHT WE GIVE A GRANT FOR?

We consider applications for assistance with major items of maintenance and repair to the structure and fabric of places of worship of architectural significance (not necessarily old) of all Christian denominations. These must be for:

- a planned repair for the place of worship building itself. We do not give grants for church halls, ancillary buildings, graveyards and graveyard structures or car parks;
- our current priority in awarding grants is the repair or replacement of the external fabric of the building – walls, roof, windows and rainwater goods to ensure a building is watertight and so prevent further deterioration;
- we also may award a grant for safety reasons e.g. the repair or replacement of lightning conductors;
- we may give grants towards heating installations and improvements since they are often a valuable preventative measure against further deterioration of the fabric;
- we may make a grant towards the cost of preliminary work such as structural or archaeological surveys or the provision of estimates;
- we do not currently give grants towards lighting or decoration of the fabric, the installations of toilets and kitchens, even though we recognise they do render the buildings more user-friendly for religious and community use. Similarly we rarely give grants for church yard walls unless it affects the integrity of the church building itself;
- we make no grants for work on organs, bells, interior furniture or re-orderings of a place of worship;
- we do not expect to provide for new works or routine maintenance.

N.B. We do not normally give an individual place of worship more than one grant in any 5 year period.

HOW TO APPLY

We do not consider grants for work already completed.

Applications should be made BEFORE the actual work begins, but usually after the planning stage is complete and appropriate permission has been obtained. However early warning of pending works, prior to formal application, is helpful to the WDHCT's future planning.

If the National Lottery Heritage Memorial Fund is involved, a copy of their decision should be included with the application, as well as any letters of commitment from other funding bodies.

We expect to see consents from the denominational authority for the repair and maintenance of the place of worship (a Faculty or Archdeacon's certificate for an Anglican Church, or equivalent authority for places of worship of other denominations) or else at this early stage information on what stage they are at and their production later.

A regular maintenance plan for the building is required, a copy to be deposited with the Trust.

Completed application forms should be accompanied by a 'statement of significance', a copy of the architect's report and estimates (or equivalent), and the place of worship's accounts for the last financial year and, if possible, by coloured photographs of the church, chapel or meeting house and the proposed work.

They should be sent to the WDHCT's Secretary – see contact details on website. If possible, an electronic version of as many of these as possible would be appreciated also by the Secretary.

CRITERIA THE TRUSTEES TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN REACHING ANY DECISION

- Listed status of the building and whether it is on the Heritage at Risk Register;
- The pastoral importance and the significance of the building to its local community, as well as its historical, architectural and artistic merits;
- The existence of a regular congregation and its wider use by the community;
- The efforts being made by the congregation and community with their own resources to fundraise for the planned works, as well as efforts made locally and nationally to raise the necessary funds. Obviously funds already in hand or promised are taken into account when the Trust makes the offer of a grant.
- Hours the place of worship is open to the public. The Trust as a general rule expects a place of worship to be open for a reasonable period in daylight hours and publicised accordingly.
- Places of worship who receive a grant will be expected to be or become a church member of the Trust (if not one already) and remain so for at least five years. (The current annual subscription is £25.) They will also be asked to display a certificate from the Trust in the church.
- The WDHCT also expects that any place of worship which receives a grant should take part in the annual National Ride and Stride event each September (the WDHCT's main fundraiser), both as a place to be visited and in recruiting sponsored walkers and cyclists from its congregation.

PROCESS AFTER APPLICATION

After an application has been received by the Secretary, there will be a preliminary consideration at a Board meeting (4 each year) and a possible preliminary offer of a grant.

The Secretary will advise you of the outcome of this meeting.

If a preliminary offer is made, a trustee will visit the site. Confirmation of the offer will be subject to a satisfactory report to the Trustees from this visit.

No payment will be made until the WDHCT has received evidence (receipted bills or architect's certificates) confirming that work to the value of the grant has been completed.

The Grant offer remains available for claiming for two years from the date of the confirmed award. If not claimed by then, they will automatically lapse and reapplication must be made. If there is likely to be a long delay before taking up the grant, it is helpful if the Secretary is informed.

November 2019