

Rooted in place, growing in faith

Our strategy for church buildings in the Diocese of Truro



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1. Introduction

‘Without sufficient investment, deterioration threatens not just the buildings but the wider societal and cultural value they provide.’¹

There are currently 305 church buildings in our diocese, each cared for by dedicated clergy and volunteers. In 2024, Parochial Church Councils spent an estimated £3 million² on repairs and maintenance alone – a figure that does not begin to capture the thousands of volunteer hours, emotional energy, and opportunity cost involved (based on income of £11 million and total expenditure of £8 million³).

‘It’s lonely trying to fix Church fabric problems even with support from Church members.’⁴

Church buildings are deeply loved, but they frequently consume a disproportionate share of the time and funding that might otherwise support mission and ministry. Most churches in Cornwall are very old, often requiring major and unaffordable repairs simply to remain open, let alone to adapt for the needs of their communities. In many places, the church is the only remaining public building, yet access can be difficult, heating inefficient, facilities limited, and furniture dedicated to one particular posture – all of which can unintentionally discourage wider use.

Unlike more urban contexts, many of our churches are located in rural or coastal communities with lower economic activity and population levels and therefore have limited opportunity for commercial income.

‘Churches in the most deprived parishes are far more likely to struggle than those in less deprived areas and even more likely to close.’⁵

At the same time, these buildings hold the stories and identity of their places in a unique way. Many are of significant architectural merit and are powerful physical signs of the enduring presence of the Church. Church buildings are often an icon of faith. In rural areas they attract less people automatically because of smaller communities and there is therefore less perceived impact for funders but perhaps a higher impact for individuals.

¹ Willingness to pay for historic churches: evidence from a Discrete Choice Experiment, Historic England (2025)

² Return of Parish Finance 2024

³ ibid

⁴ Quote from Churchwarden in 2025 strategy consultation

⁵ **Struggling, closed and closing churches**, Church Buildings Council, Church of England (2020)

‘Churches are often the oldest surviving local landmarks, they provide a sense of continuity and place, playing a role in integrating diverse populations and welcoming new communities.’⁶

There are many voices in our church, some that may say that ‘the church is the people, we don’t need buildings’ and others: ‘the church building is the heart of our mission and ministry’. There are hard decisions that need to be made, but giving up is not an easy option. When a church closes, the building does not disappear, it becomes a long-term liability for the Truro Diocesan Board of Finance (TDBF) and the national church.

This strategy therefore resists the temptation to focus only on those churches that appear most sustainable. Such an approach would neither reflect our shared responsibilities nor honour the faithfulness and potential of places that are struggling now. Instead, it begins with a more fundamental question: **what are churches for?**

In many ways, the answer has not changed for centuries. Churches are for worship, gathered community, pastoral care, mutual support, and occasional offices. They are ‘launchpads for mission’⁷, places of prayer and quiet, ‘thin’⁸ places where we encounter God. What *has* changed is the context in which this calling is lived out, and the pressures placed upon the buildings that house it.

Our diocese faces challenges that are shared across much of the Church of England, but also holds distinctive characteristics.

‘Cornwall has a distinctive heritage. Our historic environment reflects the richness of our diverse society, culture and economy. This has developed over the millennia and centuries.’⁹

In 2023, the national Church launched the *Buildings for Mission* programme, through which our diocese received funding to appoint a Church Buildings Support Officer and distribute £137,000 in small grants for repairs and improvements. Over the past 2 years, 132 churches have received tailored support, helping them to secure additional external funding and to plan more confidently for the future.

Despite this, the strain on PCCs remains acute. While PCCs are legally responsible for church buildings and take great pride in caring for them, many are struggling to do so sustainably. In response, the Diocese has committed £2 million over eight years to support PCCs in their stewardship of church buildings. The challenge is that £2 million of TDBF funds will not go far if it is all given out in grants, it might

⁶ Willingness to pay for historic churches: evidence from a Discrete Choice Experiment, Historic England (2025)

⁷ Church Buildings and halls (case studies): redeveloping places and spaces for building God’s Kingdom in the Diocese of Chester, Diocese of Chester (2021)

⁸ Praying for England, Wells and Coakley (2008)

⁹ Introducing Cornish Distinctiveness, Cornwall Council (2022)

cover 5 roofs, which would be great for 5 churches, but not the other 300. Used strategically, it offers an opportunity for lasting change that can benefit many more churches.

This strategy sets out how we intend to do just that: focusing on what is needed, learning from what is working – both locally and in other dioceses – and acting in ways that strengthen mission while stewarding our buildings with care, realism, and hope.

‘Every £1 invested in a church building, the benefit to communities is over £16.’¹⁰

2. Vision

We envision Cornwall’s churches as well-stewarded places of God’s presence—rooted in their communities, sustaining worship and mission supported by frameworks that enable confident local decision-making and free people to focus on ministry and mission.

3. Context and Rationale

3.1 What is in scope

All the Church of England church buildings that are consecrated or licensed for public worship, excluding legally closed churches, church halls and schools and aligns with the wider work within the Diocesan Plan for Change and Renewal.

This work is not about closing churches, we are committed to working with parishes and deaneries to keep church buildings open and in use for communities and for worship. However, it we do need to prioritise.

3.2 The key challenges this strategy seeks to help address

1. There are 305 historic buildings, 86% listed, mostly medieval, scattered across almost every community in Cornwall, often in small villages, with many requiring significant repairs.
2. Many churches and all deaneries have plans to grow disciples, extend their mission and improve sustainability. To do this most churches need maintenance, repairs and improvements.
3. These buildings are being sustained by an increasingly elderly cohort of extraordinary volunteers who are sometimes pushing themselves beyond their abilities or capacity. The number of available volunteers is reducing year on year and pressure on those that do it is growing, exacerbated by new and expanding requirements.

¹⁰ The House of Good Health, National Churches Trust (2024).

4. The funds available for repairs and maintenance are dwindling and insufficient, mostly married to reducing congregation numbers.
5. Each church has a significant and similar maintenance burden, e.g. renewing insurance, instructing quinquennials, cleaning gutters and some find it hard to identify suitable people to carry out the work. The bulk of the work is managed by clergy and churchwardens, taking away from other acts of ministry and mission (although, for some it is their calling).
6. Closed churches are expensive and complicated to manage and become a liability for the TDBF and the community.
7. Communities are not consistently stepping up to care for the buildings which they say they value so much.
8. As some congregations reduce there can be a sense that a place gets to a point of no return, and closure is inevitable - PCCs need help before this point to make planned decisions.

3.3 Context

Strategic context

*‘The first strategic report of modern times [about church buildings] was published in 1951, under the title *The Preservation of Our Churches*. It was produced by a special Commission appointed by the Church Assembly, the forerunner of the General Synod of the Church of England. The two main themes of this 1951 report were maintenance and repairs, and finance.’¹¹*

It is likely that in the hundreds of years before this churchwardens and clergy were fretting about how to mend holes in the roof and keep their flock warm. The context for this strategy is not new, but it is different and key factors such as decline in church attendance, increased costs, increased expectations (access, facilities etc), inconsistent maintenance and leadership compound a historic challenge. As the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance notes: ‘They find themselves inadvertent custodians of national cultural heritage providing benefit to the wider community but largely paying for it out of their own pockets.’¹²

The national Church

Many dioceses have church buildings strategies and there is significant diversity in approach, with ours aligning closely with Norwich. The national Buildings for Mission programme seeks to ‘protect and sustain [churches] as centres for worship and community service’¹³ by providing funding that ‘will help foster robust and flourishing congregations and release resources, energy and potential for mission and outreach.’ As of March 2026 our diocese has been awarded funding to extend

¹¹ **Sustaining historic churches: what does recent research tell us?** Charlotte Dodgeon - the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (2022)

¹² **Written evidence submitted by the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance to Culture, Media and Sport Committee** (Feb 2025)

¹³ [Church of England announces £9 million to help parishes with repairs and specialist advice | The Church of England](#)

the current Church Building Support Officer role for a further 3 years. We hope to secure additional Minor Repairs and Improvement Funding later this year.

Outside the Church of England

Our challenges mirror closely those experienced by others who also hold responsibility for a large number of historic buildings. The sheer volume of reports from organisations such as Historic England, the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, the National Churches Trust, the National Trust and other denominations evidence this. This strategy reflects learning from these organisations. We acknowledge that the Church of England and these other bodies have identified that it is a problem too big to be solved alone - all have repeatedly asked the government to intervene and provide more support. The 'Places of Worship Renewal Fund' will provide some support but with estimates that the Church of England faces a £1 billion 'repair bill'¹⁴ for churches over the next 5 years, a share of £92 million over 4 years is not the answer.

Climate change/Net Zero

*'Church buildings are often solidly built and, when maintained well, have withstood the weather over the centuries. However, as the climate changes, and weather events becomes more extreme, they can become vulnerable.'*¹⁵

There are specific challenges posed relating to water management that need to be responded to. Whilst church buildings can also play a role in community resilience.

Our support for church buildings has already fully aligned with the diocesan Environment strategy. The Cut Carbon Support Officer (CCSO) and Diocesan Environment Officer sit within the Buildings, Environment and Land team at Church House. The CCSO is funded by the national churches' Net Zero programme for 3 years from 2026, and is able to allocate £30,000 pa of national funding in quick wins grants for reducing carbon emissions and energy costs. All of which is reflected in the planned delivery towards this strategy.

Our Diocese

Diocesan Plan for Change & Renewal

In the Diocesan Plan it says:

'The commitment in this plan to work towards a model that can support and sustain our church buildings is not a trivial one. The cost of repairs and maintenance, insurance and utilities for Church of England buildings in Cornwall,

¹⁴ <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/only-11-public-are-aware-who-funds-church-repairs>

¹⁵ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/climate-resilient-church>

without major restoration works, is significant. Unlike many dioceses, with a very small central team, Truro only has one Church Building Support Officer and a part-time DAC Secretary.

‘Solutions for the challenge of church buildings in Cornwall will not come easily but the Diocesan plan recognises that if we are to continue to be stewards of this important inheritance then parishes will need diocesan support. We will look for increased community use of buildings and an improved environmental and financial sustainability, we expect diverse responses to the challenge - one size will not fit all!’¹⁶

This Church Buildings strategy is how we will deliver this element of the Diocesan Plan.

This strategy also explicitly supports the aims and activities of other diocesan strategies including Growing Younger. Church buildings need to support the mission and ministry of today and the future.

The Assets Strategy

In 2023 the Diocese of Truro committed £22 million taken from Diocesan reserves over the next ten years to support parish and deanery plans; investing in the life and mission of the church in Cornwall. £2 million of this is to be used to support parishes in their stewardship of historic church buildings.

Deanery plans

‘Our buildings...cause us to be anxious.’¹⁷

‘We don’t want to be curators’

‘We seek to treasure, transform and safeguard our churches and buildings now and for future generations’

Each deanery has a plan, and each plan says something about buildings, some more explicitly than others. The key themes are:

- Capacity and resources to care for and develop them
- Helping make buildings an asset in mission, including how they can be used as part of school life
- Having a people and community centered approach focussing on welcome, sustainability and varied usage

¹⁶ Diocesan plan for change & renewal

¹⁷ Quotes from deanery plans

Existing capacity

Currently the TDBF employs a DAC Secretary (0.8 FTE) and a Church Buildings Support Officer (1 FTE). The Diocesan Advisory Committee consists of 25 volunteer specialists who advise on works on churches.

The Cut Carbon Support Officer advises churches and issues small grants in order to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs whilst improving building condition.

The two Archdeacons advise on making changes to churches and decisions about governance and management by PCCs.

One Generous Giving Advisor (1.1 FTE) supports churches with generosity including giving campaigns and digital tools.

It should also be noted that there is potential to better develop the connection between encouragement of discipleship, working in partnership with the Ministry team at Church House. Using church buildings for mission is probably less about what activities they provide in rural communities and increasingly about how churches engage community volunteers with conversations about faith.

4. Strategic approach

4.1 Culture

The approach to developing this strategy and the strategy itself embody the principles of the Diocesan Plan:

- Mutuality - as partners in the life and future of our church - doing together, not doing to. What is needed to really make a difference?
- Faithfulness - recognising that for most our church buildings as core to our mission, worship, ministry and discipleship in Cornwall, however it is expressed.
- Curiosity - exploring options and opportunities with honesty (and realism), transparency and a willingness to learn from what has gone before and think differently.

4.2 Theology - *Revd Laura Bushell Hawke*

Our church buildings hold so much of the story of faith in this part of the world. They are where generations have come to pray, to celebrate, to grieve, and to seek God in the ordinary rhythms of life. Even for those who rarely step inside, these buildings are woven into the identity of our communities. They stand as familiar companions in our landscapes and our memories.

This strategy begins with a conviction that sits at the heart of Christian faith: God chooses to be present in real places. The incarnation tells us that God does not

wait for us to reach up to heaven, but comes to dwell among us—in the dust, the homes, the villages, and the everyday life of the world. Our buildings, in all their beauty and their fragility, echo that truth. They are signs of God’s nearness, places where the holy and the ordinary meet.

But being rooted in place does not mean standing still. Incarnational presence calls us to pay attention to the realities around us. Many of our buildings are deeply loved, but they also carry significant responsibilities. Without a clear and compassionate plan, the weight of caring for them can fall heavily on clergy and volunteers, sometimes obscuring the very ministry these places are meant to support.

This strategy is an attempt to hold all of that honestly and hopefully. It aims to protect the future of our historic churches, to create spaces that are safe and welcoming, to reduce the pressures that hinder ministry, and to equip parishes to make confident, informed decisions. It has been shaped through listening—listening to parishes, to data, to experience, and to the wider Church.

Above all, it is rooted in our calling to be a Church that is present: present to God, present to our communities, and present to the future. Our buildings are not ends in themselves. They are gifts entrusted to us for the sake of the gospel. When they are cared for wisely and imaginatively, they become places where people encounter hope, hospitality, and the presence of Christ.

Our prayer is that this strategy will help us steward these sacred places with courage and kindness, so that we remain rooted in place; growing in faith—and so that these buildings continue to be signs of God’s life among us for generations to come.

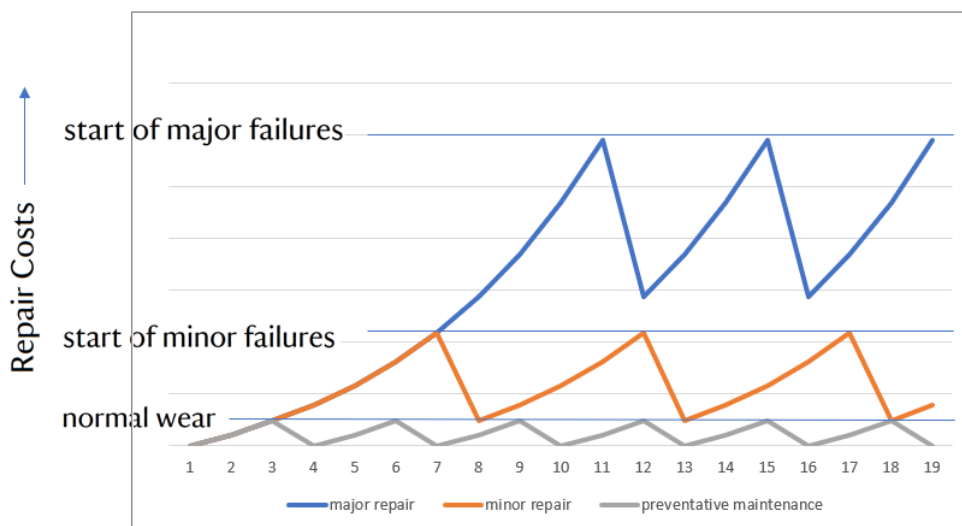
4.3 Key policy decisions

‘The choices we make today are about what we want to carry forward into a tomorrow we want to see.’¹⁸

1. We will prioritise investing in those places that might become ‘at risk’ without it.

Evidence consistently shows that investing in repairs and maintenance early on is significantly more cost effective and prevents decline.

¹⁸ Sustaining historic churches: what does recent research tell us? Charlotte Dodgeon - the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (2022)



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The ‘stitch in time’ approach, as recommended by the Church of England, has been piloted in the diocese of Truro through Buildings for Mission grants, and whilst evidence is mainly anecdotal at this stage, evaluation feedback from churches highlights the grants enabling essential works which are otherwise hard to fund and would result in further decline if not carried out (e.g. lead replacement, repointing, drainage and timber replacement). As shown in the above charts, investing earlier on reduces expenditure later on, hence focusing on those that might become ‘at risk’ without investment.

It should also be noted that this approach means smaller grants can have more impact and the funds can stretch further.

It is also important to recognise that ‘at risk’ is about much more than the state of the fabric, it is also about the churches that are ‘most vulnerable to diminishing usage in terms of financial, practical and volunteer support’²⁰. Therefore, the work in this strategy requires more than just grant giving, and reaches beyond the ‘buildings’ team to the Diocesan plan for Change & Renewal, the deanery plans and the wider work of the Church House team.

2. We will prioritise those places that need support with their building to support their plans for fruitfulness and sustainability.

‘The sacred spaces of our historic churches, and people’s care and appreciation of them, have sometimes been the catalyst of renewal, and, without exception, integral to fruitfulness in mission.’²¹

¹⁹ National Trust

²⁰ Lifelines for Historic Churches and their Communities - Keeping church buildings open - Report of the Church Buildings Commission for Diocese of Norwich (2023)

²¹ Small churches in the Diocese of Truro, An extended reflection written by the Rt Revd Graham James for the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd David William (2025)

‘We are not Starbucks’²² - churches are not the same and never will be, one place may offer something quite different to another. The strategy will resource this difference but there must therefore be an agreed articulation of how investing in the building will support ministry and mission now and for the future.

3. Churches are the focus not church halls and churchyards

Church halls are important, but a wider range of funding is available to them and there are fewer restrictions on them. We recognise that many halls are used to generate funds for churches and church life, so if there is a clear plan and evidence of usage for mission and ministry, may be supported in exceptional circumstances.

4. Conservation matters but this strategy will focus on actions that support usage, sustainability, ministry and mission.

Fruitfulness and substantiality are essential to grow a thriving church. History, craftsmanship and architecture are important but should support, not lead church life. The DAC provides ongoing tailored conservation support for churches.

5. We will explore alternative models for managing church buildings

‘Buildings take up a huge amount of capacity. I have no qualifications in maintaining or project managing them, and few volunteers who will help. In this day and age, it seems ridiculous that we have these amazing assets, and expect handfuls of volunteer amateurs to enable the thriving of such high value assets.’²³

The current model is struggling, the TDBF needs to work with parishes to explore new ways of working and resourcing. This is not about ‘taking over’, it’s about being a more active partner. This strategy enables us to explore what will work in our context, recognising the capacity of Church House; the reality of church life and the legal frameworks we operate within.

6. TDBF funds will be used to leverage further investment, resources and support

£2 million could pay for 5 roofs. It would help 5 churches but fundamentally change nothing else. This is a chance to work differently: with PCCs, with funders, with statutory agencies, the national church, public, private and voluntary sector, and with communities.

4.4 Note about closing churches

Over the last ten years 5 churches have closed in our diocese. It is a decision that is typically very difficult, and is always led locally by the PCC. “The diocese”

²² Member of Episcopal College

²³ Quote from a Churchwarden response to 2025 consultation

simply has not got the legal power to close a church. A closed church is usually a sad and lasting liability for the TDBF to manage. The deanery plans don't identify specific locations where churches might close, but we should expect this pattern of a few churches closing and a few churches opening to continue as it has for decades.

*'While there may be some occasions when a church building ought to be closed (if dangerous or superfluous since another is very near, for example), it's when we leave a community without a church building at all - and the historic one remains in place as a symbol of church decline - that the renewal of the church as a body of believers in that community seems unlikely.'*²⁴

It should be noted that in not actively seeking to close churches we are deviating in our strategic to approach to a number of dioceses. We have assessed that this is the right way for our context.

5. Strategic Goals, priorities and actions

5.1 Summary [on next page]

²⁴ **Small churches in the Diocese of Truro** - An extended reflection written by the Rt Revd Graham James for the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd David Williams (2025)

Help protect the future of our church buildings			
<i>Preserve and invest in Cornwall's historic churches so that as many as possible remain open and sustainable</i>			
What we will aim for by [date] (intended impact)	Increase in number of church buildings assessed as sustainable (or improving in sustainability) across condition, financial, and missional criteria.	Increase in the number of buildings moving from 'poor/at risk' to 'fair or good'.	Churches have greater access to predictable, suitable, timely funding that reflects the needs of their buildings.
	Churches able to remain open for worship and community use due to repair and sustainability interventions.	Increase in the number of parishes with funded, active maintenance plans for their historic buildings.	
How we'll measure success	QI reports and strategic review data. Parish income vs expenditure. % parish expenditure on repairs & maintenance. Engagement figures. PCC member capacity.	QI reports. Maintenance plans.	Total value of investment secured annually for repair, conservation, and improvement of historic church buildings
What we'll do	Give grants for up to £10k for repairs, maintenance & improvements intended to make safe, usable and prevent deterioration.	Provide a Church Buildings Support Officer to give tailored support focussed on fabric, including advice, training and project management. (0.8 FTE)	Give match funding grants of up to £20k for larger repairs and improvements works.
	Give grants for up to £10k for repairs, maintenance & improvements that will cut carbon emissions.	Subsidise the cost of quinquennial surveys for churches unable to pay for them.	Improve our use of data, particularly from QI inspections, to know more about the condition of church buildings to inform decision making, proactive work and prioritisation.
	Develop policy and practice to support churches with water management, for places that don't have any and those	Development partnerships with relevant training providers & heritage organisations to grow	Resource Generosity through teaching, practical tools and guidance in order to grow financial sustainability.

	that have too much. Inclusive of adapting to respond to climate change.	the pool of tradespeople with the necessary skills.	
Develop safe, welcoming and mission-focussed spaces			
<i>Ensure buildings support worship, ministry, and vibrant community life</i>			
What we will aim for by [date] (intended impact)	More parishes have buildings that meet the needs of the existing congregations and potential users = ‘fit for purpose’.	Parishes and their buildings are more sustainable through increased usage and available funds.	More parishes are able to deliver new or expanded ministry and mission activities due to improvements in their buildings.
How we’ll measure success	Church condition records.	Parish funds and engagement levels.	Ministry and mission activities.
What we’ll do	Give grants for up to £10k for improvements that enable more usage of buildings for a diversity of purposes e.g. children’s work, social action or community events.	Provide a Church Buildings Support Officer to help plan, resource and manage additional uses of church buildings to generate income and engage communities (0.5 FTE).	Work with the team delivering Growing Younger to prioritise investment where it is needed for children’s and youth work.
	Actively work with partners such as local authorities, charities, businesses and faith organisations to re-grow the role of churches in their communities.		

Reduce the operational burden on clergy and volunteers			
<i>Streamline building responsibilities so people are freed for ministry and mission</i>			
What we will aim for by [date] (intended impact)	Reduction in clergy and volunteer time spent on building-related care and maintenance.	Parishes are more able to access funding and resources to support the care and maintenance of church buildings.	Alternative models for church maintenance are tested and learned from.
How we'll measure success	Self-reported data from clergy and volunteers about their experience (clergy wellbeing surveys and Articles of Inquiry).	Funding sourced. Resources accessed.	Cost savings from shared resources and services. Parish expenditure on repairs and maintenance.
What we'll do	Provide a Church Buildings Support Officer to help identify, apply for and manage funding (0.5 FTE).	Pilot a centrally managed provision for key annual maintenance tasks in 2 deaneries over 2 years. Paid for by the Diocese of Truro.	Pending the outcome of the maintenance pilot, roll out provision to all deaneries.
	Provide small grants for resources that will open up churches for use and reduce workload, e.g. heaters, automated locking, giving machines.	Explore possible ways of providing low-cost access to shared resources such as drone surveys, scaffolding towers and temporary heating.	Review the provision of resources for churches including those on the diocesan website and the QI format, considering models from other organisations.

Equip parishes to make confident, informed decisions about their buildings <i>Provide a clear framework and support that guides local choices about the use, care and future of their buildings</i>			
What we will aim for by [date] (intended impact)	Decisions about the future of church buildings are made more strategically, in line with local and diocesan plans.	Parishes are more supported when making decisions about the future of their church buildings.	Alternative options for long-term management of at risk churches are piloted, enabling different thinking tailored to context.
How we'll measure success	Strategic review data tracking church buildings at risk. Deanery planning reflecting plans for church buildings.	'Church at risk' plans in place. Strategic review data tracking church buildings at risk.	Proposals for long-term management of churches that parishes cannot sustain.
What we'll do	Provide a Church Buildings Support Officer to support churches with decision making about the future of their buildings. (0.2 FTE)	Develop a toolkit for decision making to guide churches that are at risk through the condition of the building, the capacity of the PCC or the finances.	Work with partners (other dioceses, the national church, heritage organisations) to explore alternative models of management of church buildings.
	Embed this strategy in the work of deaneries, the Diocesan Plan for Change & Renewal and Growing Younger to ensure buildings can support wider strategy and investments are co-ordinated.	Carry out a strategy review of church buildings using the Church Buildings Council approach - to enable more strategic decision making about buildings and to inform wider strategy.	

5.2 Measuring success

The key indicators of success for this strategy are:

1. % church buildings supported to remain open and sustainable
2. % church buildings fit for purpose, enabling the mission and ministry in their community
3. % of those who care for church buildings report a reduced operational burden
4. % PCCs feel better able to make strategic decisions about the long-term future of their church building.
5. % of churches that have started a new mission initiative following support for their building.

More detail of how we will measure success is included in section 5.1.

5.3 Questions that need answering:

In order to implement this strategy, there are some outstanding questions which need to be answered, so will be part of the first stage of implementation:

1. What does a sustainable church look like in our diocese (we have started this work, using key indicators and available data relating to financial position, volunteer capacity, compliance with requirements, mission statistics and condition report of building).
2. What does 'fit for purpose' look like in our diocese? Essentially that the building condition, availability and facilities support the actual, planned and potential mission and ministry of the parish' with examples, e.g. a toilet, a kitchen, warmth, watertight, not mouldy, open...
3. Further detail regarding grant criteria, to support decision makers and parishes, e.g. does payment of MMF affect eligibility? If a church might close, do we not support it. Etc.

Continued on next page

6. Budget and resourcing

6.1 Budget

Expenditure	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	Total
Help protect the future of our church buildings									
Emergency grants up to £5k	10000	20000	20000	20000	20000	20000	20000	20000	150000
Grants up to £10k inc Quick Wins	65000	65000	65000	65000	65000	65000	65000	65000	520000
Match funding grants up to £20k	40000	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000	460000
Fabric CBSO (80%)	18300	36600	36600	36600	36600	36600	36600	36600	274500
Subsidise quinquennials	5000	9750	9750	9750	9750	9750	9750	9750	73250
Grants administrator	3350	6700	6901	7108	7321	7541	7767	8000	54688
Develop safe, welcoming and mission-focussed spaces									
Community & enterprise CBSO (50%)	12063	24125	24849	25594	26362	27153	27967	28807	184857
Reduce the operational burden on clergy and volunteers									
Fundraising CBSO (50%)	12063	24125	24849	25594	26362	27153	27967	28807	184857
Maintenance pilot (2 years)		35000	35000						20000
Shared resources pilot (equipment)		10000	10000						13601
Maintenance administrator		6700	6901						240000
Maintenance roll out 4 more deaneries				120000	120000				
Equip parishes to make confident, informed decisions about their buildings									
Church future CBSO (20%)	4575	9150	9150	9150	9150	9150	9150	9150	68,625
								Total	2,244,378
Income									
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	Total
Buildings for Mission CBSO	25150	51938	53633	27193					157914
Quick Wins small grants	15000	30350	30350	15000					90700
								Total	248614
								Total	1,995,764

6.2 Resourcing the strategy

The Assets strategy

£2 million allocated to be spent over 8 years (to end of 2033).

Other sources of funds

Funding bids to increase the scale of this strategy are in train, and further options will be explored, leveraging the diocesan investment.

Grants for the CBSO and the CCSO have already been detailed earlier in this document.

Staffing

This strategy proposes recruiting 1 more full time CBSO and meeting the 25% match requirement for the existing CBSO, and 1 day a week of a grants administrator and 1 day a week for administering the maintenance pilots (to be increased proportionally if the pilots are later expanded).

All other provision will be managed and delivered by existing Church House staff.

7. Risk

[next page]

Risk	Description / Impact	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation / Management Actions
Insufficient scale of funding	The £2m allocation is small relative to the condition, number, and complexity of church buildings, risking limited or fragmented impact.	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise projects with lasting impact. • Use funding as seed funding to unlock grants. • Clearly communicate funding limitations.
Overall funding gap	Total resources are insufficient to address backlog maintenance, adaptation, and compliance needs.	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a long-term financial plan. • Support access to external grants. • Promote preventative maintenance and shared services. • Test different approaches.
Limited diocesan authority over PCCs	The Diocese cannot direct PCC decisions, risking poor uptake if the strategy lacks perceived value.	Medium-High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position the strategy as a partnership offer. • Co-design with clergy and PCCs. • Use incentives and support rather than direction.
Complex stakeholder environment	Multiple stakeholders with differing priorities risk conflict, delay, or lack of clarity.	High	Medium-High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map stakeholders and interests. • Provide clear governance and decision pathways. • Use facilitation where conflicts arise. • Plan careful communications.
Emotional and	Church buildings hold strong emotional, cultural, and identity	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge emotional ties openly. • Engage communities early. • Frame change as care for long-term future.

community attachment	significance beyond worshipping communities.			
Regulatory and heritage constraints	Faculty, planning, and heritage controls can limit adaptation and increase costs.	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed DAC in strategy delivery. • Engage heritage bodies early. • Align heritage significance with contemporary use. • Provide clear PCC guidance.
Diversity of buildings and contexts	Wide variation in condition, use, and location makes uniform approaches ineffective.	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong data set to support triage and prioritisation. • Apply flexible pathways.
Reputational and public scrutiny risk	Decisions attract significant community and media attention, with risk of negative publicity.	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use proactive communications. • Prepare leaders for public engagement. • Ensure transparency and fair decision-making.

8. Stakeholder and Communications Plan

Key communications approach

Audience	Message purpose	Key messages	Channel
Board	Alignment & decision-making	Strategic direction, milestones, risks, funding needs	Strategy presentation to BDC, reporting
Senior leadership	Alignment with other strategies	Priorities, expectations, performance metrics	Strategy, leadership meetings
TDBF staff	Awareness, alignment with delivery & implementation	What's changing, why, benefits, how it affects them	Staff meeting, strategy, email and Teams updates
Delivery team	Implementation	What's changing, why, benefits, how it affects them	Team meetings, 1-2-1s, strategy and teams updates
PCCs (esp CWs)	Awareness	Service changes, benefits, timelines, processes	Email, newsletters, website, drop ins & training
Clergy/lay leaders	Awareness	Service changes, benefits, timelines, processes	Email, newsletters, website, drop ins & training
National church	Alignment & awareness	Strategic direction & shared learning	Email and partnership meetings
Church members	Awareness	Service changes, benefits	Website, socials & newsletters

Receiving

The implementation of this strategy involves doing many new things and changing how we work currently. This means that we must ensure we have ample channels to gather feedback and for it to influence activity. Mainly this will be through:

- Consultation at key points (agreed as part of valuation approach)
- Collating anecdotal feedback to staff and via comms channels including socials
- Co-creation of key projects such as the maintenance pilot with key stakeholders
- Regular Advisory Group meetings

9. Monitoring, Review and Governance

Monitoring and evaluation

Governance and Accountability

The implementation of the Church Buildings Strategy will be overseen by the Advisory Group established during its development phase. This group will continue to act as the primary forum for strategic oversight, challenge, and learning, and will report formally to the Bishop's Diocesan Council (BDC).

Day-to-day responsibility for delivery will sit with the Deputy Diocesan Secretary as lead officer, working closely with officers in the Buildings, Environment and Land team.

Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

Delivery of the strategy will be supported by a detailed four-year action plan, with an accompanying outline plan for the preceding four years to ensure continuity and long-term perspective. These plans will set out:

- Specific actions and milestones
- Roles and responsibilities
- Resource implications
- Success measures and indicators

Progress against the action plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis, with formal progress reports produced every six months. These reports will be reviewed by the Advisory Group and subsequently submitted to the BDC, highlighting achievements, risks, lessons learned, and any proposed adjustments to priorities or approach.

The strategy will remain a living document, with monitoring information used not only for assurance, but to inform adaptive decision-making in response to changing circumstances, emerging opportunities, and learning from practice.

External Evaluation and Learning

To ensure that assessment of impact and learning is independent, credible, and robust, an external evaluator will be commissioned from the outset of the strategy. The evaluator will work with diocesan officers and stakeholders to develop an appropriate evaluation framework, including both qualitative and quantitative measures.

External evaluation findings will be used to:

- Assess the effectiveness and impact of strategic interventions
- Inform future planning and investment decisions

- Strengthen accountability to stakeholders and wider communities

Interim and final evaluation outputs will be shared with the Advisory Group and the BDC, and learning will be disseminated appropriately across the Diocese to support continuous improvement.

10. Appendices

10.1 How this strategy has been developed

It is vital that this strategy reflects the lived reality of our churches, the people that care for them and the communities they sit in. Therefore, we have undertaken a year-long process of research, consultation, thought and discussion. This is a summary of this process:

1. Formed a buildings strategy advisory group

We drew together a steering group made up of representatives of different stakeholders in our diocese: churchwardens, stipendiary and retired clergy, architects, funders, historic advisors and the DAC. This group has advised on the development of the strategy, considered the data and consultation results, discussed the options and helped devise the final goals and priorities proposed.

2. Asked people in parishes what they need for church buildings

We have carried out a stakeholder survey consulting on what support would be most useful for churches across our diocese. This was sent to churchwardens and clergy who were asked to share with their PCCs.

3. Evaluated the data

We already hold a lot of data about finances, giving, energy use, attendance, building condition, engagement, volunteering and demographics. All of which is being used to consider how priorities are set; where the gaps are; and what we don't know (and might need to find out).

We also looked at the Deanery plans, taking what they say about buildings.

4. Researched what is and isn't working elsewhere

We spoke to a wide range of organisations and individuals across the country including other dioceses, other denominations, heritage groups, churches trusts, heritage charities such as the National Trust and Historic England, national church advisors, DAC members, heritage architects and surveyors and the Heritage Lottery. We have used reports, books and online resources to learn from what has gone before.

At the start of this process, and once draft priorities were identified, Episcopal College and the Bishop's Diocesan Council were consulted. Diocesan Synod were consulted in February 2026 on the priorities and actions proposed.

10.2 How the options were identified

There are many priorities, approaches and ways of spending money that we considered when preparing this strategy. The result is based on extensive research, stakeholder input and our own experience and knowledge. Not all of it may work exactly as we hope, but we have sought to balance risk with impact - if we do not try something new and build on what is working, we will not stand still, instead the decline will accelerate.

'If there was an easy answer, then I'm sure it would have been found by now. We could have said, "Look what is happening in that Diocese over there. Let's copy what they are doing'.²⁵

The key areas of activities are:

Grant giving

The stakeholder consultation in the diocese prioritised grant giving above all else for this strategy. This approach is fully supported by the available studies (including the 2017 Taylor Review); data from the national church, other dioceses and other heritage bodies; and our own experience. Beyond the repairs they enable, the encouragement it gives volunteers and clergy is a very important direct benefit.

'Successive historical funding schemes have shown that funding made available purely for repair work - including fixing roofs, stonework repair, mains and electrical works, etc., which can be hard to fundraise for and may go unnoticed by most visitors when complete - nonetheless brings a range of positive other outcomes in terms of public engagement and increased activity. The emphasis in grant applications should therefore be on the historic fabric first. Public and community benefits (social and community uses) will flow from the building being in good condition. Securing the historic fabric both ensures that the building is available for ongoing activities and enables staff and volunteers to focus on other activities.'²⁶

In addition, grants can help mitigate future expenditure:

²⁵ Lifelines for Historic Churches and their Communities - Keeping church buildings open - Report of the Church Buildings Commission for Diocese of Norwich (2023)

²⁶ Written evidence submitted by the Church of England committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/136636/pdf/

‘By, a steady, sustained stream of capital funding for heritage infrastructure over a longer period would help to balance demand and supply dynamics and reduce inflationary pressures.’²⁷

In improving our use of available data, we can triage and prioritise support for churches and use the funds more efficiently and effectively.

By setting an 8-year programme of grant giving we are seeking to provide greater ‘predictability’ for churches.

Church Building Support Officers

‘When major repair needs arise, they impose an enormous and unfamiliar fund-raising burden on the congregation. As congregations are not set up with professional staff to run projects, it is typically volunteers from within the congregation who find themselves running major projects. It is known that this can cause considerable strain on the relevant volunteer(s).’²⁸

The Taylor review ²⁹ in 2017 considered the effectiveness of Church Building Support Officers (CBSOs) and the Church of England based their Buildings for Mission programme on its findings, providing funding for these roles and minor repairs and improvement grants. The evidence from our own experience is that it adds a vital capacity to the Church House team, working alongside the DAC. Value particularly comes from churches accessing specialist fabric advice, project management and funding guidance and, fundamentally, someone to walk with them.

‘The burden of the building is falling on a few shoulders, with the community itself often not being large.’³⁰

Supported decision making, helping PCCs think strategically about their building and their church life - supporting ministry and mission and seeking to avoid spiralling where shrinking congregations and volunteer capacity are compounded making it harder to avert closure. CBSOs can help them navigate through options and rules, identify opportunities and resources and learn from others.

²⁷ **Sustaining historic churches: what does recent research tell us?** - C Dodgeon - the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (2022)

²⁸ **Evaluation of the Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) programme**, Becky Payne et al (2020)

²⁹ **The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals**, M Taylor (2017)

³⁰ **Written evidence submitted by the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance to Culture, Media and Sport Committee** (Feb 2025)

Support for community engagement, additional usage and enterprise

‘England’s historic churches continue to function as important community anchors today.’³¹ But ‘there is little public understanding of how church buildings are maintained or cared for, or indeed who owns them.’³²

‘Empowering the building to be used more effectively within the community,’³³ is not easy and requires energy, vision and people. By reducing the burden for caring for the building we hope to free up clergy and volunteers for mission and ministry (recognising that for some, their ministry is the stewardship of the building).

Churches across Cornwall and the country are diversifying their use both to expand mission and to increase income. Whilst we need to manage expectations, many factors limit potential, but there are excellent local examples of where it can work, even in the most rural settings. There needs to be exploration and better understanding about whether a community can sustain a church. Supporting PCCs to try new things and build on their strengths can be fruitful and it can also help make more informed decisions about the future.

Support for maintenance

‘Neglect becomes expensive.’³⁴

Our consultation and engagement with churches support the view that maintenance of church buildings is consuming a large part of volunteer time and energy. Whilst churches in the diocese are much cared for, the Quinquennial inspection can become an “inventory of woe”³⁵, listing tasks not completed over the previous 5 years. We know that ‘churches undertaking regular maintenance spend less in the long-term’³⁶ and we know that many churches struggle to carry it out. Finances, availability of contractors and volunteers, even just knowing where to start are all key factors.

The Church of England, working with a number of dioceses; some Churches Trusts; and some other denominations have been piloting a variety of approaches to maintenance partnerships. Evaluation to date is very positive.

The TDBF does not have the capacity to ‘take over’ churches but the pilots show that a tailored, carefully planned approach to shared services can reduce costs and effort whilst significantly improving fabric maintenance.

³¹ **Willingness to pay for historic churches: evidence from a Discrete Choice Experiment** - Historic England (2025)

³² **Lifelines for Historic Churches and their Communities - Keeping church buildings open - Report of the Church Buildings Commission for Diocese of Norwich** (2023)

³³ Quote from consultation 2025

³⁴ **On the Brink: Heritage in the cost-of-living crisis**, A Heritage Alliance Insight Report (2024)

³⁵ Interview with Charles Bain Smith, National Trust

³⁶ **The value of maintenance**, Historic England (2019)

10.3 Proposed grants process

The following grants will be offered

Option	Detail
Emergency grants up to £5k	Urgent repairs to make safe or prevent further damage or closure.
Small grants up to £10k	For: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs • Maintenance • Improvements (including toilets) • Net Zero and water management works (including heating) • Post quinquennial works • Professional fees • Resources (e.g. CCVT, automated locking, giving machines) Priority is to prevent further decline and encourage mission and growth.
Medium grants up to £20k for match funding	For larger projects to repair and/or improve the buildings. Can only be used where needed as match funding for larger projects.
Fundraising matching (up to £20k)	Using the 'Give to Go Green' model where we match local fundraising to double the small grant allocated.
Grants up to £650 for quinquennial inspections	Only where churches can evidence they do not have the funds to pay (including less than 6 months of reserves).

Criteria

Required	a) Meeting MMF call or clear explanation of why not. b) Most recent annual report and accounts submitted to Church House. c) Completed most recent returns for Statistics for Mission, Return of Parish Finance and Energy Footprint Tool. d) Signed up to Eco Church and working towards at least Bronze. e) Alignment with deanery plan (doesn't have to be in it). f) Support of PCC and incumbent (if have one).
Excluded	a) Church halls, unless being used for worship. b) Curtilage of church, unless for health and safety purposes. c) Church closed or already consulting on closure (provide further detail re definition).
Other	a) Usually only one grant from each strand will be permitted per calendar year. b) Heating systems can be included but not fossil fuel boilers.

Process

Using existing grants process:

1. Triaged by relevant support officer
2. Archdeacon asked if will support
3. Application form issued and completed
4. Panel considered applications monthly
5. Evaluation required for each grant

10.4 Summary of data used

Area	Available data
Finance	<p>Income - giving, grants, legacies, fundraising, trading, dividends & other (restricted and non)</p> <p>Expenditure - giving, MMF, salaries, clergy expenses, activity costs, church running expenses, utility costs, trading costs, church repairs, other property repairs, new building work & other</p> <p>Recipients of diocesan grants: Minor Repairs & Improvement, Quick Wins, Funds for Mission, Rural Churches Repair Fund, LICF and Mission.</p> <p>Recipients of C of E grants: Give to Go Green, Demonstrator, Boiler fund.</p>
Giving	<p>Membership of Parish Giving Scheme.</p> <p>If have digital giving machine (if so, how much receiving).</p> <p>If using an online giving platform.</p> <p>If claiming gift aid.</p> <p>Number of givers.</p> <p>Number of legacies.</p>
Energy & emissions	<p>Expenditure on utilities.</p> <p>Heating system type and age.</p> <p>Use of renewables.</p> <p>Suppliers.</p> <p>Carbon emissions.</p> <p>80 church audit reports.</p> <p>Number of Eco Churches.</p>
About churches	<p>Grade (listing).</p> <p>If on Heritage at Risk register.</p> <p>Date of most recent Quinquennial inspection.</p> <p>Condition rating at last QI (Good to very bad).</p> <p>If in a conservation area.</p> <p>Building footprint.</p> <p>Number of churches in parish.</p> <p>Returns from articles of enquiry (2025).</p>

Mission statistics	Electoral roll Worshipping community size Usual Sunday attendance (adults and children) Usual weekly attendance (adults and children) Festival attendance. Occasional offices. Fresh expressions.
People	Number of officers per parish. Clergy and lay ministry numbers. Number of Creation Care Champions.
National statistics	Includes: Census data - population, demographics, religion, disadvantage etc. Employment data.
DAC	Records of faculties. Some QI reports.
Staff records	Invisible churches (where no team is engaging with them). CBSO and Cut Carbon Support officer engagement and support. Safeguarding dashboard and training engagement. Returns of statistics including financial data. Engagement with giving. Participation in training. Engagement with deanery plans and activities.
Mapping	Can overlay things like disadvantage, school location, service provision onto the diocesan map

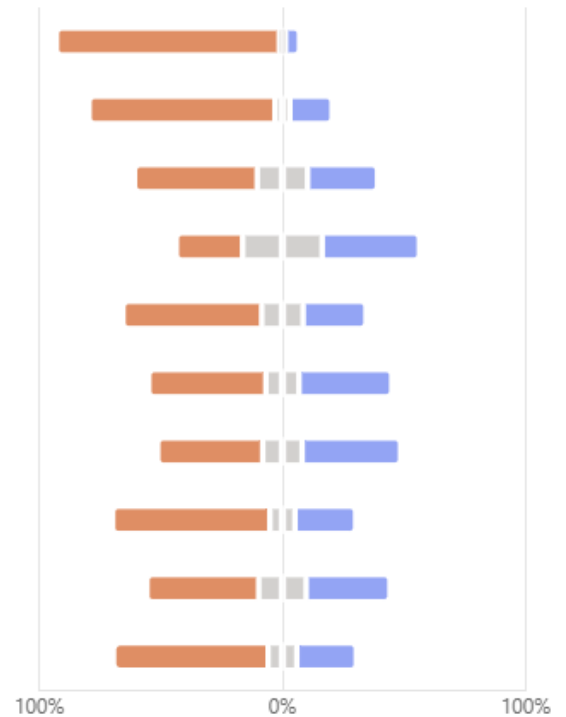
10.5 Consultation data summary

Appendix 1: Results of stakeholder survey - support for church buildings

1. Which of these would you find most helpful for your church/parish? **Please select any you think will help.**

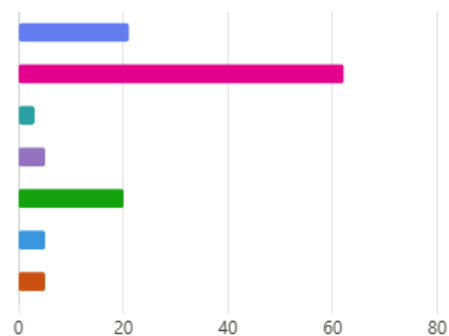
● Yes ● No ● Maybe

1. Small grants (up to £10k) for things like repairs, improvements and professional fees.
2. Free Quinquennial inspections.
3. Free or subsidised resources such as Digital giving machines, automated locking systems, CCTV systems.
4. Annual maintenance tasks by contractors engaged by the diocese and **paid for by the Parish.**
5. Annual maintenance tasks by contractors engaged by the diocese and **paid for by the Diocese.**
6. Diocesan support for groupings of parishes to coordinate shared services such as insurance, surveys, maintenance & repairs
7. More support for making decisions about the care of and future of buildings
8. Help completing funding applications.
9. Help developing additional uses of your church including community engagement.
10. Help generating income for your church such as giving, enterprise and completing funding applications.



3. Your role

- Clergy 21
- Churchwarden 62
- Lay minister 3
- Other parish officer 5
- PCC member 20
- PCC as a group 5
- Other 5



Which description best fits your church(es)

● in a town	31
● in a village	73
● in a hamlet or very rural	42
● Listed	76
● Unlisted	8

Comments, suggestions or questions relating to the above options

Working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is value in local churches working out together how to do things which, if the Diocese did it for them, could encourage a dependency culture. • It doesn't make sense for individual churches/parishes to apply for funding or support without reference to a wider vision or strategic priorities and a joined-up approach.
Engaging wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging the wider community in the ongoing care of their church. If you live in a parish the church belongs to you! • Empowering the building to be used more effectively within the community; which could mean repairs but also changes for community use which help with funding would help.
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds should be allowed to be spent on roofs. Without a roof nothing else matters. That should be a priority especially if church roof repairs are deemed to be urgent. The cost is huge and many funders require match funding. Unsafe roofs and ceilings are probably the biggest risk to closure. • Any works should not be capped at a £10K total cost for a requirement of the grant. • Include church halls and grounds of churches. • Help to reach match funding requirements for other grants. • A focussed fund for bringing all church buildings who can evidence a desire to engage with their wider community up to a reasonable minimum standard and so giving them a fighting chance to be used every day for community engagement not just the Sunday congregation i.e. proper Toilet facilities, reasonable hospitality space and some responsive heating for specific areas. • Diocesan funding would be best channelled into repairs for which it is difficult to get grants because funders consider them "boring" eg rainwater goods, roof & ceiling repairs, pointing etc. • Medium level building expenses (especially if unexpected) - say £3K to £20K - are the hardest to deal with. • There is very little financial help available to support lots of small to medium maintenance expenditures or they seem to be disproportionately hard to access. • Cover for professional fees would be great, these are a 'hidden' cost of getting on with planning projects.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help for urgent repairs. • Essential to have "emergency fund" where no alternative funding/insurance is available. • As a large church we are unusual, having the resources to do most of the routine issues above. Our biggest issue is always obtaining appropriate funding for the many small and large repairs that our church buildings require.
Funding bid support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to help write them and a checking system may be helpful for some, i.e. training sessions. But not employing someone specifically to write them. • If a church does not have the capacity to undertake a funding application, it probably doesn't have the capacity to manage a building project.
Diocesan paid contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea of having diocesan contractors seems possible but will they be able to reply quickly to requests made by a parish? When a local contractor who regularly visit or work may be able to do these tasks quicker. • It is very difficult to find contractors for roof and gutter maintenance, but it would be unrealistic for all of this work to be paid by the diocese. A panel of contractors that could be engaged by parishes would be valuable. • Grass cutting service, perhaps by deanery. • Simple maintenance e.g. gutters etc are often done for free by locals so that's not so much help and we don't want endless advisors- just give us the money! • We would prefer to employ local people to clear gutters, routine maintenance. • Central/regional purchasing can lose the financial goodwill of volunteers/local contractors - consider only the more specialist maintenance works which are harder to source e.g. church windows - to be paid for depending upon ability to pay (4 & 5). • Don't assume that centralised purchasing always reduces cost. For example, insurance is costed against risk on the surveys of buildings - which would not reduce - however, there are advantages from being a "big" client in terms of achieving more favourable terms and conditions.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting with an administrator for parishes would be a big help - i.e. £5kpa to help parishes understand the need for one, and the support one can give to both CW's and Incumbents! • Finding people to carry out small and mid-sized jobs is really tricky, so contractors engaged by the diocese but paid for by parish may be useful - but there would need to be reassurance that they weren't more expensive.
Quinquennials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't support sharing amongst all, e.g. by paying for QIs. This should only be done for churches with less than 6 months General Fund reserves and no use of restricted funds unaccounted for.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quinquennial inspection cost is at least a limited figure, but putting things right that have been identified can be much more difficult to fund so small grants for these maintenance costs • The Quinquennial is a huge cost so any help would be good. • Discussed at PCC meeting and felt that things like QI inspection fees would mean that every church benefits. • We do see the benefit to the Diocese of ensuring that every church has a QI and in collating much better information about the church estate which could prioritise targeted funding/funding bids.
Managing works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone to talk to who could navigate us through significant repairs.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading rainwater gulleys as more water now.
Deanery plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support implementation of Deanery plans and strategic priorities, these resources need to be allocated with reference to the DIT, to focus resources where strategically most useful

General comments

- I like the idea of seeking opinions first before making a decision.
- What a wonderful new prospect.
- If the burden care of for buildings was taken off the PCC it would free up a lot of time and mental energy. (A sort of National Trust for the buildings, with a strategy for attracting parishioners to support it financially) It might attract more mission minded people on to the PCC rather than just preservation minded people, and help the PCC channel funds into ministry.
- Any assistance to help maintain our beautiful churches welcome. But please don't use all the money on administering and allocating the funds with endless meetings, group consultations and new literature.
- Thank you for giving me a voice on something that affects me and takes my time virtually every day. It's lonely trying to fix Church fabric problems even with support from Church members.
- A couple saying spend the money on clergy.
- Money invested where most needed = "means" tested + assessment of church capacity (funding and resources).
- Don't dilute the funding potential with items that can be funded or subsidised from elsewhere.
- In our situation it's very hard to say no to any of the questions.
- The small schemes grants and the diocesan support officers are transforming how the congregation see 'the diocese'. Unfortunately, MMF is seen as a tax and a preventative measure that stops progress. Being able to pay the diocese and get grants back sends a significant and subtle message that the central church cares.

- There has to be a fundamental change in the realism of those who advise on repairs and improvements to churches. Churches should use competent people. Indeed, that is what the Regulations require. Expectations of some DAC members are beyond what rural churches can afford.
- In these financial difficult times, there is a big difference between what is necessary for the continuance of the ministry of the church and what is nice to be done with a lottery grant.
- Continually helping patching up old buildings at all costs can divert from being church. We should encourage different places or worship alongside the existing old stock.
- Help to increase the congregation size seems our first priority, in order to share the church tasks and move forward.
- Buildings takes up a huge amount of my capacity. I have no qualifications in maintaining or project managing them, and few volunteers who will help. In this day and age it seems ridiculous that we have these amazing assets, and expect handfuls of volunteer amateurs to treasure enable the thriving of such high value assets.

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Interviewees

Adrian Daffern - Church of England - Senior Cathedral and Major Churches Officer

Catherine Marlow - Historic England - Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

Charles Bain Smith - National Trust - Senior Building Conservation Manager

Matthew Champion - Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia - Historic Churches Support Officer

Linda Joel - Norfolk Churches Trust - Secretary

Samuel Pedlar - Diocese of Ely - Church and Community Support Adviser

Holly Robinson - Diocese of Ely - Historic Church Buildings Support Officer (input via email)

Dan Crooke - Diocese of Salisbury - DAC Secretary

Church Buildings Team - Diocese of Exeter

Macauley Bristow - Heritage Lottery Fund - Engagement Manager

Christine Salaman - Diocese of Truro - Generous Giving Advisor (input via email)

Cornwall Historic Churches Trust (input via email)