

from **The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance**

*an independently-funded group
within The Heritage Alliance*

We bring together those working for a secure future
for historic religious buildings

Tracey Crouch, MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport,
Tourism and Heritage
DCMS, 100 Parliament St
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5 May 2017

**The
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Dear Ms Crouch

CLOSURE OF HLF GRANTS FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP SCHEME

Thank you for your letter of 24 April in reply to mine of 3 April. We appreciate your taking the trouble to reply at what must be a very busy time.

We look forward to the reply of your officials to the points made in our original letter about the closing (not 'merging') of the Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) scheme.

I am pleased that prior to formulating their response, your officials will be discussing these matters with HLF. However as I know you will appreciate, **it is the response of the Government**, not HLF, which we are specifically looking forward to receiving – over the lack of consultation, the change to the funding landscape, the issue we raised in our penultimate paragraph about the appropriateness of decisions of this type being made by an arms-length public body without consultation, and whatever assurances you are able to give about the forthcoming consultation on HLF's forthcoming strategic framework.

You will know that your officials are now writing a standard letter in reply to those of our members who have written to DCMS about the closure of GPOW. That standard reply does not, as far as I can see, cover these points.

The letter from your officials does say that HLF remains fully committed to these buildings. We welcome that assurance: but our interest is in the way that HLF's commitment is expressed through appropriate grant schemes going forward.

The letter does include one new piece of information, namely that HLF are willing to consult on possible changes, such as 'increasing the thresholds for Our Heritage grants to levels significantly higher than £100k'. This is the first time this has been suggested. It is an interesting idea and worth pursuing. However we are left

Our members are non-government, voluntary and private organisations that promote, conserve, study and involve the public in **our heritage**.

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more baffled than ever that the allocation of public money is being decided in what has the appearance of being an ad hoc and piecemeal way.

I am copying this letter to Historic England in their role as government's statutory advisor on heritage.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Cooper
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