

Richard Bellamy
 Head of the HLF, Wales
 James William House
 9 Museum Place
 Cardiff
 CF10 3BD

26 June, 2017

Dear Mr Bellamy,

We write as the Wales Heritage Group (WHG) in connection with the Heritage Lottery Fund's recent decision to close the Grants for Places of Worship (GPOW) scheme.

As you will see from the enclosed Terms of Reference, the WHG is an alliance of statutory consultees and voluntary national organisations active in the conservation of the built environment in Wales. You will know that there are over 4,200 churches and chapels in Wales, cared for by dedicated volunteers, most of which have no experience in fundraising or managing complex building projects. The importance of churches and chapels to the heritage of Wales and the sense of place for many local communities cannot be under-estimated. Churches and chapels represent 45% of all Grade I listed buildings in England and Wales. The Church in Wales alone owns 977 listed buildings, including 29 per cent of the Grade I listed buildings in the country. Other denominations also manage highly significant buildings.

The HLF's GPOW programme has played a very important role in supporting the conservation of historic places of worship in Wales. In December 2016, the HLF awarded a GPOW grant of £94,000 for urgent roof repairs to St Michael and All Angel's Church in Lower Machen. We believe that this type of project is at risk in Wales due to the demise of the GPOW scheme.

Members of the WHG are appreciative of the role that the HLF has played in supporting historic places of worship through the GPOW scheme. Although the HLF has stated that places of worship will continue to be funded under its open programmes, the members of the WHG have significant concerns about how the demise of the ring-fenced GPOW funding for places of worship will impact on churches and chapels in Wales.

Recent research on the support needs of places of worship in Wales, conducted by the National Churches Trust on behalf of the Wales Places of Worship Forum, has found that 67% of churches and chapels have a project that they are seeking funding for. Of this total, 65% are seeking funding for fabric repairs. Just over 59% of projects have a total cost of under £100,000, suggesting that many projects now funded under the GPOW scheme would likely need to apply under the HLF's Our Heritage programme in the future. However, the annual budget for the Our Heritage programme in Wales is small, with a monthly allocation of under £90,000 for all heritage projects. Indeed, it is our

Grŵp Trefadaeth Cymru Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig Cymru, 1/07 Creative Quarter, Morgan Arcade, Caerdydd, CF10 3AF

Wales Heritage Group Civic Trust Cymru, 1/07 Creative Quarter, Morgan Arcade, Cardiff, CF10 3AF



understanding that the average size of an Our Heritage grant in 2016-17 was approximately £35,000. Our analysis of the 60 GPOW grants awarded in Wales to date show that 30 were for grants over £100,000, with another 10 for grants of £75,000 - £100,000. These projects are more likely to be a better fit for the Heritage Grants programme. Only six grants were for projects with grants under £50,000, with only four under the 2016-17 average grant of £35,000. This leaves 13 projects awarded grants of £50,000 - £75,000, which would most likely be appropriate to Our Heritage, but which would significantly stretch the OH budget in Wales. The members of the WHG would appreciate the HLF clarifying its budgets for the Our Heritage and Heritage Grants programmes in Wales in 2017-18, and how it will ensure that church fabric repair projects under £100,000 in Wales are not disadvantaged by the small Our Heritage budget.

We would also appreciate understanding how the HLF will ensure that the quality of fabric repairs remains high, now that it will no longer be a requirement for churches to engage a conservation architect or surveyor. This will be dramatically at odds with Cadw's decision to introduce the requirement, from early 2018, to employ such a professional when it is being asked for grant aid.

Members of the WHG are concerned that the GPOW programme is now being closed without consultation, and without an equality and impact statement on how the changes will affect places of worship in Wales. The HLF chose to make its changes unilaterally, without consultation with the WHG or the Wales Places of Worship Forum. Members of the WHG would value constructive engagement with the Wales HLF team to consider this strategic issue in more detail. We would not want any of Wales' historic places of worship to be lost as a result of the changes.

Yours sincerely,

Wales Heritage Group

Grŵp Trefadaeth Cymru Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig Cymru, 1/07 Creative Quarter, Morgan Arcade, Caerdydd, CF10 3AF

Wales Heritage Group Civic Trust Cymru, 1/07 Creative Quarter, Morgan Arcade, Cardiff, CF10 3AF

