

CHURCHCARE FABRIC REPAIR AND CONSERVATION GRANTS PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Final Report

APRIL 2021



Cathedral & Church Buildings Division (CCBD)

The Wolfson*
Foundation

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division (CCBD, also known as ChurchCare) of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England administers a number of grants programmes for the repair and conservation of Anglican Parish Churches. Until 2020, these programmes included the ChurchCare / Wolfson **Fabric Repairs Grant Programme** (awarding funding to Anglican parish churches across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to carry out urgent essential fabric repairs) and the ChurchCare **Conservation Grant Programme** (awarding funding to Anglican parish churches within England for the conservation of historic interiors). The Conservation Grant Programme covers funding for the conservation of historic bells, books and manuscripts, church plate, clocks, listed churchyard structures, metalwork, monuments, organs, paintings and wall paintings, stained glass, textiles and timberwork. It also funds the preparation of conservation reports.
2. Arcadis was commissioned by CCBD to undertake an evaluation of the two grant programmes from 2015 to 2019 inclusive. The evaluation has considered programme aims and objectives, outcomes and impacts, funding processes and delivery, and how the value of the programmes has been communicated. The evaluation has been based on findings from a combination of primary and secondary research, including online surveys targeted at recipients of fabric repair, conservation grant and conservation report grants during the period 2015 to 2019; telephone interviews with grant recipients, representatives of the main partner funding organisations, heritage experts (notably Chairs of Conservation Committees), and with a selection of unsuccessful grant applicants. Discussions with key ChurchCare staff responsible for managing and administering the grant programmes have been ongoing throughout the study.
3. During the period covered by the evaluation (2015 to 2019), a total of 821 grants were awarded across the programmes, totalling over £3 million in value. The table below provides a summary breakdown of grants awarded by year over the evaluation period.

Breakdown of Grants Awarded 2015-2019

Year	Total Amount Awarded	Fabric Repair Grant	Conservation Grant	Conservation Report Grant	Totals
2015	£578,600	47	49	46	142
2016	£595,735	51	63	20	134
2017	£639,220	66	62	39	167
2018	£669,225	65	77	31	173
2019	£675,613	79	87	39	205

Fabric Repair Grant Programme – Key Findings

4. The Fabric Repair Grant Programme has, until 2020, been a funding partnership between The Wolfson Foundation and ChurchCare. Up to **£400,000** has been awarded each year by The Wolfson Foundation for the repair of the fabric of listed church buildings, with grants recommended and administered on the advice of ChurchCare. Fabric repair grants range in value from £3,000 to £10,000.

Meeting Programme Aims and Objectives

5. Programme aims and objectives were to reach as many parishes as possible, ensure a wide geographical spread and to fund parishes in areas of high deprivation; ensure buildings are in a better long-term condition than before the work was carried out, causes of deterioration are addressed, encouraging good practice for appropriate repair works through targeted funding and advice; and ensure transparent decision-making.

6. Whilst the level of funding received by ChurchCare from the Wolfson Foundation has not changed significantly over the course of the evaluation period, the *number* of grants awarded annually has risen from **47 grants** in 2015 to **79 grants** in 2019, with an equivalent increase in the number of smaller grants made. Reasons behind this change have been attributed to an increase in eligible funding applications from 2017 onwards, coupled with a strategic decision to award all eligible applicants a grant of some value. Analysis of the effectiveness of the approach to award more smaller grants has revealed little difference in terms of perceived impact from respondents in receipt of large or small grants; recipients of small grants have described the '*confidence*' which a successful grant award has given them, with one interviewee stating that '*the ChurchCare grant showed other funding bodies that we were worth helping*'.
7. In terms of geographical spread, there are clear clusters across the country where a greater number of grants have been awarded. Factors influencing this spread include the distribution of listed buildings across the country and also the support offered by individual DACs. Postcode analysis undertaken for grants awarded in 2018 (as a sample year) against the Index of Multiple Deprivation showed that **42%** of the fabric repair grants awarded were to churches located in areas categorised as 'more deprived', with **12%** of grants awarded to churches located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.
8. Roof repairs have formed the greatest proportion of works for which fabric repair grants were applied for, followed by repairs to rainwater goods / drainage and repairs to masonry / stonework. A majority of grants covered a mixture of fabric repair. There has been a net increase in the number of churches on the Heritage at Risk Register over the evaluation period, with more buildings becoming at risk, highlighting the demand for fabric repair funding. Better connections could be fostered between dioceses and Historic England in relation to churches identified for inclusion on the Register.
9. Decision-making for fabric repair grants between 2015 and 2019 was made by means of the Fabric Repairs Committee, comprising a Chair and four committee members. Decisions made by the Committee were verified by the Wolfson Foundation's expert panel and trustees. Evidence from stakeholder discussions showed that no amendments to ChurchCare recommendations for grant funding were made by the expert panel during the evaluation period; this relatively 'hands off' approach to funding has been an acknowledgement of the quality of specialist advice represented by Fabric Repair Committee members and trust in the quality of decisions made.

Fund Processes and Delivery

10. The average success rate of fabric repair grant applications between 2015-19 was 76%. Findings from the evaluation show that the grant application and support process provided by ChurchCare has been well received – a high proportion of respondents to the online survey found the process of applying for a fabric repair grant to be straightforward and generally no more time consuming than for other grant applications. Where issues were identified, these primarily related to difficulties using the online application form and challenges around finding supporting documentation to accompany the application.
11. Analysis of information relating to grant management, monitoring and evaluation highlighted areas where further support may be needed for applicants, for example in terms of good practice guidance around the tendering process. The level of technical skills and ability within parishes to seek and apply for funding is a wider consideration. Areas of challenge are primarily associated with wider issues of funding fabric repair works to churches (e.g. fundraising, project complexities and timescales). The evaluation has highlighted the role of ChurchCare in providing support and advice during both the application process and subsequently during the works themselves.

Outcomes and Impacts

12. Findings from the online surveys and telephone interviews with recipients of fabric repair grants illustrated the breadth of direct and wider impacts the fabric repair funding has had. The fact that 50% of the funding for works had to be in place in order to be eligible for a fabric repairs grant meant that local fundraising has been a critical part of the funding jigsaw for grant recipients. Although this can be an arduous undertaking, it has also inspired local people ('*the fundraising didn't just have the effect of raising the money, it had a wider effect on community*'). Impacts of grant activities themselves have included extending outreach activities and profiles and the removal of churches from the Heritage at Risk register. Fabric works themselves have generated interest in church buildings, not just the end result.
13. Unintended consequences associated with fabric repair grants were described by many grant recipients through the online surveys. Examples included the creation of links with other churches ('*the finished*

church has led to visits by other churches with a similar wish to create a new Vision and Mission') a heightened sense of community spirit, better use of the church for a variety of activities, more volunteering and more visits 'active participation and involvement in the whole workings of the church has sparked people's curiosity and....the building is much revered and loved in the village'.

Communicating the Value of the Programme

14. The evaluation has considered the extent to which the value of the programme has been effectively captured and communicated – to stakeholders, funding partners and importantly to parishes, together with an assessment of the extent to which this has incentivised good practice. Since 2017, ChurchCare have primarily directed resources towards taking a 'hands-on' approach to assisting prospective and current grant recipients, rather than on development of case study and related material for wider circulation. Communicating value at parish level has to an extent been undertaken by parishes themselves as part of wider dissemination activities through local press, community newsletters and so on in relation to specific projects.
15. Evidence around the extent to which grants have incentivised good practice for fabric repair works is mixed; responses to the online surveys have identified instances where grant recipients have said the award gave them a better understanding of maintenance needs and requirements of the building. Other feedback revealed a real mixture of approaches to church maintenance with much of this related back to the skills, ability and priorities of individuals with responsibility for church buildings.

Fabric Repair Grant Programme – Recommendations

16. The administration of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme has now passed to the NCT, who over time will develop their own methods, processes and priorities for funding. Recommendations arising from the evaluation which may inform future thinking are as follows, in order of priority:

Recommendation 1 – Wider communication of the value of the programme. The evaluation has highlighted that although there has been dissemination of the direct and indirect impacts of grant awards at project level in many instances (much of which has proved effective in terms of raising awareness of funding and associated outcomes), wider communication of the value of the programme could be more effective. This should take place using a variety of means – annual reports, website content, use of social media – to ensure the benefits and value of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme are promoted. A selection of annual case studies could help support this information.

Recommendation 2 – Providing support for parishes in relation to fund-raising. All parishes in receipt of a Fabric Repair grant would have had the benefit of external advisers in relation to heritage / fabric repair aspects (for example architects, chartered building surveyors), but few parishes have been in receipt of professional assistance in relation to fund-raising. This is an area which so many parishes have highlighted as a struggle, for example due to time/capacity, skillsets and awareness. Further support could be provided for parishes in this area – a simple task could be the preparation of a guidance note identifying the breadth of other funding sources available and information around success rates / eligibility criteria (information gathered as part of this evaluation could help showcase the variety of potential funders available); a further option could be circulation of good practice case studies highlighting fund-raising ideas and good practice tips from other grant recipients; a more innovative option could be a funding support officer to directly assist parishes with funding applications and putting together the 'cocktail' of funding options for their project.

Recommendation 3 – Work with DACs to encourage applications. As part of a drive to promote awareness of grant-giving possibilities for fabric repair projects, ensure effective communication and close working with DACs continues to encourage applications where appropriate.

Recommendation 4 – Introduction of targets to improve geographical spread of grant awards. Evidence has shown that there have been clear clusters of grant awards across the country (partly due to the distribution of listed buildings within dioceses, but also due to the awareness, priorities and support offered by individual DACs to parishes). Target setting could help increase the number of grants awarded to churches within the most deprived areas of England (for example a goal to award a quarter of grants per year to churches within the 20% most deprived areas). This approach could galvanise a marketing campaign within highlighted coldspots, linked with wider communication (Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 5 – Working with parishes to help produce maintenance plans. Evidence from grant recipients revealed a very mixed approach to maintenance at parish level, for a variety of reasons including awareness, skillset, financial ability, priority, relationships with church architects and availability of appropriate contractors. Given that good and regular maintenance is of such importance to heritage buildings in terms of prevention and protection, further assistance at parish level (whether this is through funding, communication of effective approaches, dissemination of good practice via written guidance or face to face training workshops) to enable the preparation and implementation of effective maintenance plans would be beneficial.

Conservation Grant Programme – Key Findings

17. Between 2015 and 2019, a total of **338 conservation grants** were awarded by ChurchCare in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust, the Oswald Allen Bequest, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the Anglican Parish Churches Fund (APCF) and the Founder's Fund. A further **175 conservation report grants** were awarded during this period; since 2017 they have been offered solely in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust.
18. The decision-making process for the Conservation Grant Programme is structured around the Conservation Committee system, with six Conservation Committees (Bells, Clocks, Organs, Paintings and Wallpaintings, Sculpture and Furnishings, and Stained Glass), each comprising a number of individuals selected for their specialist knowledge. In addition to their grant work, committees provide advice to CBC and CFCE on technical aspects of parish and cathedral proposals, and help the Division with the formulation of advice (including the formulation of policies).

Meeting Programme Aims and Objectives

19. Aims and objectives for the Conservation Grant Programme are to ensure a wide geographical reach and spread of grants; ensure objects are in a better long-term condition than before the work was carried out, causes of deterioration are addressed, and that good practice for the appropriate repair and conservation works is encouraged; and to ensure transparent decision-making.
20. The average annual success rate by each of the six Conservation Committees was relatively stable during the evaluation period, ranging from **87%** for the Clocks Committee to **47%** for the Organs Committee (both noticeably higher than other funding organisations, for example equivalent figures for the NCT Cornerstone programme stand at 25%). Evidence from stakeholder discussions suggest that committee processes ensure proposals are largely well-conceived and to a high conservation specification; however, evidence from grant recipients (from both online surveys and from grant recipient interviews) suggests that parishes do not always understand the reasoning behind the need for a specific conservation approach to be taken.
21. Potential changes to the committee system which might aid transparency and agility have been discussed with various stakeholders (including funding partners and Committee Chairs) and have included greater use of virtual committees to improve efficiency and consistency between individual committees; and reducing the administrative burden on ChurchCare through having either fewer committees, smaller committees or alternatively introducing a rolling committee membership (although concerns were raised that the value of the committee system may be diluted). The lack of diversity represented on committees, together with the need for succession planning to add value to future committees were common themes.

Conservation Grants

22. The number of grants awarded per year increased from 49 in 2015 to 87 in 2019 (due both to the increase in available funding but also to an increase in smaller value grants being made). The latter trend can be attributed to factors including the number of grant applications made to individual Conservation Committees, with applications that meet eligibility criteria largely being awarded a grant of some value. By awarding more, smaller grants, the aim of reaching as many parishes as possible has been met. Evaluation findings suggest that small grants have been effective, giving a 'seal of approval' to a project, often giving parishes a much needed 'boost', and providing a reliable sign to other funders of the worthiness of a project. For some areas of impact reviewed – notably in relation to whether the condition of objects or artefacts have been improved, or whether members of the church community have learnt more about heritage, there appears very little difference in perceived impact from recipients of either large or small value grants.

23. In terms of type of heritage for which grants were awarded, a lower number of grants were awarded to areas including books and manuscripts, textiles, church plate and metalwork. This may be a function of awareness amongst parishes that funding can be sought for these types of project, together with an understanding of conservation needs.
24. The relationship between ChurchCare and its funding partners is unusual in terms of the longevity of partnerships and continuity of arrangements. Currently, the Conservation Grants Programme is well-aligned with aims and objectives of its funding partners – for example supporting the conservation of historic contents and structures (Pilgrim Trust) and supporting the development and practice of skills, knowledge and experience that underpin the UK's heritage and crafts sector (Radcliffe Trust). There is a general feeling amongst funding partners that *'we need to preserve the good and build on it'*. Discussions with funding partners have emphasised the need to be flexible and agile in terms of what is being funded, in order to be able to respond to 'customer' needs.

Conservation Report Grants

25. The year-on-year change in number of conservation report grants awarded was relatively static, with the exception of a dip in 2016 (believed to have been due to a combination of factors including less total funding, fewer applications received and also less promotion of the grant programme at that time due to the focus on the appointment and bedding in of new Committee Chairs and committees). In 2017, additional funding was provided by the Pilgrim Trust specifically for conservation reports, and promotion of the grant programme was increased. Conservation report grants have contributed to heritage aims and objectives through identifying underlying causes of deterioration and encouraging good practice for appropriate repair and conservation works. The evaluation has shown there can be philosophical differences in the approach taken to conservation. ChurchCare has acted as an interface between the technicalities of heritage issues and understanding on the one hand, and the day to day operation of churches and understanding of parishioners on the other.

Fund Processes and Delivery

26. The evaluation has sought to learn about what has worked well / less well; where improvements to delivery and fund processes could be made; to develop an understanding of funding profiles; and understanding the extent to which a ChurchCare grant has helped to attract additional funding for projects. Areas of interest have included:
- **Conservation Grants** – depending on heritage type and Committee, either one or two application rounds take place each year. Potential applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice to confirm eligibility and requirements of the application process. Over 65% of respondents to the online surveys stated that they had sought help or advice from ChurchCare prior to or during the application process for a Conservation Grant, with all of these respondents affirming the usefulness of this advice. Telephone interviews with unsuccessful applicants for a Conservation Grant provided an interesting perspective on the pre-application advice – for example, requests for more guidance around the level of funding to apply for were highlighted. Helping get messages across to prospective applicants about application content and process was deemed to be an important area by members of the ChurchCare funding team.
 - **Conservation Report Grants** – the process is slightly different to that for the wider Conservation Grant Programme in that applications are accepted all year round. Amounts awarded are balanced against estimated application numbers, which can have an impact on the size of grants distributed throughout the year. During the evaluation period, more projects relating to paintings, sculptures and furnishings and stained glass had made an application than was the case for projects relating to organs, clocks and bells. There may be a difference in attitude / perception in relation to different types of objects – for example organs, bells and clocks are typically viewed as functional elements of the church rather than something necessarily to be conserved.
27. Findings from the online surveys showed that, for both conservation grants and conservation report grants, the majority of respondents found the application process to be straightforward and that information requested as part of the application was generally considered to be proportionate to the level of funding applied for. As for the fabric repair grants, challenging aspects identified by a small minority related to use of the online application form and finding supporting documentation. Discussions with Committee Chairs highlighted the need to find a balance between being prescriptive in terms of the

information required to apply for grants and to support projects and being overly prescriptive such that it becomes off-putting / disproportionate to the level of grant received. There is equally a danger of over-simplification. Committee Chairs felt they had worked hard to make new and better decisions around caseload and capacity, ensuring that processes were streamlined where possible; there is scope to continue to review what is asked for as part of grant applications.

Funding Profiles

28. The online surveys presented a picture of the funding profiles developed for individual projects. A wide variety of other funding organisations have contributed to projects across the evaluation period. Other funders were equally divided between national, regional and local organisations, trusts and charities; similarly there was a relatively even spread between funders whose principal area of funding interest related to religion, conservation / heritage and community.

Outcomes and Impacts

29. The evaluation has sought to understand the outcomes and impacts arising from the Conservation Grant Programme, considering the extent to which impacts are a direct result of the grant award, whether wider impacts can be evidenced, and an assessment of what might have happened in the absence of the grant programme. Impacts have related to the legacy associated with restoring artefacts for future generations to enjoy; to the fact that conservation work has either revealed more historically important detail or alternatively revealed the need for further conservation; to the benefits that restoration of artefacts such as church organs have had on worship and particularly the ability to then hold a greater variety of events and activities within the church, from weddings to concerts; and to the wider community role that bells and clocks have as a part of community infrastructure.
30. Primary research findings highlighted how grants had enabled members of the church community to develop new skills (for example in fundraising) and confidence, as well as friendships and links with new community organisations. A range of new partnerships and links were developed as a result of projects, including with local schools, local foundations and friends groups; and with local universities.
31. The benefits of conservation reports in terms of helping parishes establish priorities and a framework for their conservation projects were clearly articulated within the evaluation evidence. The flip side of this benefit, however, is the associated cost required for carrying it out, with parishes concerned as to how they would raise further (in some cases quite significant) funding. Equally, the conservation report grants have been viewed by many parishes as a significant first step in conserving heritage, with parishes following up with conservation grant applications to undertake the main works.
32. Interviews with unsuccessful grant applicants have been used to determine what might happen in the absence of grant funding. The interview findings showed that, in around half of cases, the parish had ended up using money out of their own reserves to pay for the project. Comments included that *'for churches without masses of trusts, endowments or reserves, ongoing maintenance and conservation work would continue to be problematic'* and *'there are a lot of things that are not terribly exciting and not worthy of a lot of grant programmes'*.

Communicating the Value of the Conservation Grant Programme

33. This is an area of critical importance, enabling awareness raising of the valuable work undertaken by ChurchCare and describing the direct and wider impacts of projects funded by the grant programme. In terms of impacts, there could be clearer articulation around what the public benefit of grants awarded have been and the associated added value provided by ChurchCare. Other opportunity areas include greater co-ordination between funding organisations to better support the sector (including developing better partnerships / collaborative working practices), raising profiles and staying close to the Institute of Conservation ('stronger together'). The portfolio of ChurchCare as a grant-awarding body has been relatively low during the evaluation period; the time spent by ChurchCare in building relationships with parishes and grant recipients is valued by funding partners and the outcomes and impacts to arise from Conservation Grant funding again could be more clearly articulated.
34. Disseminating project results with the wider community has happened at project level in many varied and creative ways, from using community newsletters, social media and findings / papers published on academic websites through to asking villagers to 'sponsor a pipe' for an organ project. Evidence from stakeholder interviews has suggested that a conservation grant from ChurchCare encourages others to

fund, *'raises the bar'* and both stimulates and incentivises good practice. The conservation grant is a mechanism through which ChurchCare anticipate good practice is incentivised, through greater understanding of a historical artefact or object, of underlying causes of deterioration and of appropriate conservation / restoration works.

Conservation Grant Programme – Recommendations

35. A series of recommendations have been identified in relation to the Conservation Grant Programme, set out below. Recommendations are grouped according to priority (high / medium / low). Recommendations 1 and 2 are considered most likely to have a significant impact on improving grant aiding.

High Priority

Recommendation 1 – Establish annual programme of activity for communicating the value of the Conservation Grant Programme. Communicating the value of the programme both internally and externally is essential to increasing the reach and spread of grants. It is recommended that a programme of activities is developed for action on an annual basis – as a minimum including preparation of an Annual Report, identifying up to five case studies per annum for inclusion, and drawing out benefits and impacts. Such a programme could be used to help with targeting 'coldspots', could help potential applicants understand more about heritage significance, and could emphasise the importance of using accredited conservators.

Recommendation 2 – Target funding 'coldspots' through closer working with DACs. There would be benefits in convening closer working relationships with DACs across the country specifically in relation to funding opportunities and processes, for example through targeted efforts at local level with those DACs located in 'coldspots' across England and through clearer understanding by DACs of what works can and cannot be funded through the Conservation Grant Programme. In developing closer working relationships, there may be benefits in terms of level of understanding and consistency of approach, together with encouraging DAC specialist advisers to input to grant applications.

Recommendation 3 – Reinstate an annual virtual meeting of Committee Chairs. Each of the Conservation Committees cover different aspects of heritage and have a different membership accordingly. Reinstating an annual meeting of Committee Chairs (this could be virtual to ensure cost efficiency) to discuss the approach taken by individual committees, could have benefits in terms of ensuring consistency in decision-making and thereby endeavouring to ensure that worthy conservation works are not excluded from grant funding.

Recommendation 4 – Encourage more diverse representation within the committee system. Improving the diversity and inclusion on committees is an issue which ChurchCare is aware of and keen to address. Ongoing discussions are being held with the NCI's Inclusion and Diversity team.

Recommendation 5 – Seek ways to incorporate succession planning into the committee system. Involving students and emerging young professionals in the committee system would have benefits both for promoting diversity and for succession planning through ongoing mentoring.

Medium Priority

Recommendation 6 – Strengthen guidance for applicants where relevant. Particular areas where guidance could be strengthened include identifying relevant sources of information which applicants could refer to; further emphasising basic information required; and providing broad guidance about amounts to apply for (the latter could potentially be achieved through inclusion of case study information).

Recommendation 7 – Include information about Heritage at Risk in grant monitoring. Outcomes of funding can importantly contribute to the removal of churches from the Heritage at Risk Register. Understanding at application stage whether or not the church is on the Register would be useful as part of ongoing monitoring of grant impacts.

Recommendation 8 – Review eligibility criteria to include churchyards. Churchyards are currently not covered by the Conservation Grant programme, other than as separately listed structures. A review of eligibility criteria for this category would be beneficial as it could enable unlisted but significant monuments or structures which are integral to the historic setting of the church, to be included. Whilst the impact would likely be small in terms of *number* of grants awarded, in terms of meeting objectives to conserve heritage the impact would be greater.

Recommendation 9 – Seek continuous improvement in relation to guidance documents to support grant applications and supporting information. It is typically volunteers who are making the approach to ChurchCare and completing the application forms. All information produced by ChurchCare therefore needs to be as straightforward and simple in terms of language and terminology as possible. It is noted that ChurchCare reviewed, simplified and republished guidelines in 2020. This should lead to improvement, but there is still variation/inconsistency across and within disciplines.

Low Priority

Recommendation 10 – Widen funding scope to include conservation cleaning. The most common reason for applications being rejected was due to them being for cleaning or routine maintenance, activities not funded under the Conservation Grant Programme. The rationale is clear as to why routine maintenance should not be grant aided and should be carried out by any responsible parish, however it is less clear as to why *cleaning* is not eligible. Appropriate conservation cleaning can be expensive and needs to be carried out by specialists and can also sometimes enable more to be learnt about the significance of the heritage asset in question.

Recommendation 11 – Work with specialist conservators to encourage wider accreditation. There are highly skilled conservators who have never sought accreditation. If the requirement for accreditation of conservators were to be formalised (noting that most other funders require specialists to be accredited), then work needs to be done to encourage more people to become accredited.

Recommendation 12 – Produce specific guidance for parishes in relation to the tendering process. Parishes should demonstrate a best practice approach when tendering works for projects funded by conservation grants. Consideration should be given to developing clear and simple guidance for parishes about the tendering process and who carries out grant-aided works.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division (CCBD, also known as ChurchCare) of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England administers a number of grants programmes for the repair and conservation of Anglican Parish Churches. Until 2020, these programmes included:
- ChurchCare / Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants Programme, which awarded £400,000 per year to around 60-80 Anglican parish churches in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to carry out urgent essential fabric repairs. The programme has operated in this way between 2000 and 2020; since 2020 grants made by the Wolfson Foundation are now administered by the National Churches Trust (NCT).
 - ChurchCare Conservation Grants Programme, which awarded around £220,000 per year to Anglican parish churches for conservation of their historic interiors. This included funding for the preparation of conservation reports and for the conservation of historic bells, books and manuscripts, church plate, clocks, listed churchyard structures, metalwork, monuments, organs, paintings and wall paintings, stained glass, textiles and timberwork. The Conservation Grants Programme has been in operation for over 50 years.
- 1.2 Arcadis has been commissioned by CCBD to undertake an evaluation of the two grants programmes from 2015 to 2019 inclusive. The evaluation considers programme aims and objectives, outcomes and impacts, funding processes and delivery, and how the value of the programmes is communicated.

Overview of the Grants Programmes

- 1.3 During the period covered by the evaluation (2015 to 2019), a total of 821 grants were awarded across the two programmes, totalling over £3 million in value. Table 1 provides a summary breakdown by year.

Table 1 Breakdown of Grants Awarded 2015-2019

Year	Total Amount Awarded	Fabric Repair Grant	Conservation Grant	Conservation Report Grant	Totals
2015	£578,600	47	49	46	142
2016	£595,735	51	63	20	134
2017	£639,220	66	62	39	167
2018	£669,225	65	77	31	173
2019	£675,613	79	87	39	205

- 1.4 The primary aims of the grant programmes are as follows:
- For parishes
 - to ensure that the building / object is in a better long-term condition than before the work was carried out
 - For funders
 - that all funding provided goes directly to the work at hand
 - that robust, transparent decisions are made
 - For ChurchCare
 - to encourage good practice for appropriate fabric repair and conservation works, through targeted funding and advice
 - that the underlying causes of deterioration are addressed

- to reach as many parishes as possible with the funds available
- to reach a wide geographical area
- to reach parishes in areas of high deprivation (Fabric Repairs Grants only)
- to be as transparent and robust as possible with regards to funding decisions

Overview of ChurchCare

- 1.5 The Church of England is responsible for some 15,700 Anglican parish churches, of which over 12,000 are listed buildings. The Church of England is 'a Christian presence in every community'; the primary aim is mission. There are seven national administrative bodies that work together to support the mission and ministries of the Church. These are called National Church Institutions (NCIs).
- 1.6 One of the NCIs is The Archbishops' Council, which co-ordinates, promotes, aids and furthers the work and mission of the Church of England by providing national support to the Church in dioceses and locally, working closely with the House of Bishops and other bodies of the Church. CCBD is part of the Archbishops' Council. It works to make the Church of England visible, relevant and accessible to all by maintaining the national profile of church buildings, and helping dioceses, cathedrals and churches to grow by getting the best out of church buildings. CCBD champions churches, working to ensure their contributions to the spiritual, social and economic life of England are understood and appreciated. This is achieved through providing advice to parishes and cathedrals on their historic buildings and interiors, developing and promoting national policies and campaigns, and providing grants for conservation of historic church buildings, their interiors and historic furnishings.
- 1.7 Principal roles relating to the administration of ChurchCare grant schemes are as follows:
- **Conservation Grants Administrator** – full-time position dedicated to the grants programmes. The role includes processing grant applications, processing grants claims, providing secretariat support for the grants committees (for example taking minutes, arrangements of meeting logistics, liaising with grants committee members), keeping the website up to date, keeping the grants database and financial reporting up-to-date, providing information for the annual reports and organising site visits relating to grant applications as necessary.
 - **Head of Conservation** – 0.3FTE dedicated to the grants programmes. Role involves governance and management of the grants programmes, including line management of the Conservation Grants Administrator. Secretary to all grants committees, ensuring they are governed and managed effectively and efficiently. Ensures procedures are followed for the award of grants, manages communications with funders and decision makers, fundraises for the programmes, liaises with the Charity Commission. Manages the fabric repairs and conservation committees and their membership, and liaises with the Committee Chairs, who are all members of the Church Buildings Council.
 - **Church Buildings Officer (Conservation)** – approximately 0.2FTE from June 2019 (and therefore towards the very end of the evaluation period) as secretariat support for the grants programmes. Main role is to assess technical content of grant applications for committee. Assessment of applications and preparation of a 'topsheet' with information for committee members. Attends and inputs into committee meetings.
 - **Senior Church Buildings Officer** – Deputy Secretary to organs and bells committees. Attends the meetings in lieu of the Head of Conservation, and provides information for the Church Buildings Council on recommendations of awards for these two committees.
- 1.8 All finances connected with the grant programmes are processed, managed and audited by the NCIs Finance and Resources Division.
- 1.9 External communications can be managed by the NCIs' Communications Division, however ChurchCare mainly does its own communications around the grants programmes through the Division's Twitter account @CofeChurchCare, regular emails to Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) Secretaries (sent out weekly) and through presentations given at regional, national or diocesan conferences. Social media and website support are provided by a Digital Projects Officer.

Objectives of the Evaluation

- 1.10 The objectives of the evaluation, as set out in the study brief, are listed in Table 2. The key areas to which they relate are programme aims and objectives; outcomes and impacts; fund processes and delivery; and communicating the value of the programmes.

Table 2 Objectives of the Evaluation

Area of Interest	Objectives
Programme Aims and Objectives	<p>To what extent have the grants met the programmes' aims, objectives and criteria over the evaluation period?</p> <p>To assess whether the programme aims are the right ones?</p> <p>To assess the effectiveness of the current approach – is it achieving desired impacts / maximising impacts / in what circumstances are small grants more or less effective?</p> <p>To assess progress against programme targets.</p>
Outcomes and Impacts	<p>To what extent are impacts as a direct result of the grant award?</p> <p>Assess whether impacts, including wider community impacts, can be evidenced.</p> <p>Assess what would have happened in the absence of the programmes.</p>
Fund Processes and Delivery	<p>To enable learning about what works well / less well, to improve delivery and fund processes going forward (for example robustness and proportionality of the application process, eligibility criteria, grant management, monitoring and evaluation).</p> <p>To aid understanding of funding profiles – for example what other sources of funding are most often obtained.</p> <p>To what extent does a ChurchCare grant attract additional funding?</p>
Communicating the Value of the Programme	<p>Capture feedback and highlight impact case studies to communicate the value of the programme.</p> <p>Do the grants incentivise good practice?</p>

Report Structure

- 1.11 The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2** sets out the research methodology, including the logic model, primary and secondary research together with limitations.
- Chapters 3 & 4** present the findings of the evaluation as they relate to each of the two grant programmes – fabric repair and conservation grants. The chapters describe the background context to each programme and discuss the areas of interest to the evaluation using findings from discussions with stakeholders, findings from online surveys, telephone interviews and secondary research. Each chapter concludes with a series of recommendations of relevance to each grant programme.
- Chapter 5** sets out an overarching summary of findings presented in this evaluation report and summarises the recommendations.

2 Research Methodology

Introduction

- 2.1 This evaluation has been based on findings from a combination of primary and secondary research.

The Logic Model

- 2.2 Logic models represent the theory of how an intervention (in the case of this evaluation, grant funding) produces its outcomes; they identify and describe how change is expected to happen and the causal relationships which may exist.
- 2.3 A logic model for the grant programmes was developed at the outset of the evaluation. The model, shown in Figure 1, describes inputs, activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, outcomes and impacts arising from the grant programmes. Organisations / stakeholders responsible for undertaking specific processes are also shown where relevant using coloured arrows. The logic model has helped us to understand and structure data requirements for the evaluation. It has also enabled an assessment of whether the grants programmes operate as intended.

Primary Research

- 2.4 Primary research has comprised the following activities:
- Online surveys targeted at recipients of fabric repair, conservation grant and conservation report grants during the period 2015 to 2019.
 - Telephone interviews with a selection of grant recipients across all grant schemes in order to obtain detailed information.
 - Telephone interviews with representatives of the main partner funding organisations.
 - Discussions with key ChurchCare staff responsible for managing and administering the grant programmes.
 - Telephone interviews with heritage experts, notably the chairs of conservation committees.
 - Telephone interviews with a selection of unsuccessful grant applicants, to explore the counterfactual.

Online Surveys

- 2.5 Two online surveys were designed and circulated during 2020 in order to ascertain information about the ChurchCare grant programmes (Fabric Repair, Conservation Grant and Conservation Report Grant). Both surveys contained a mixture of open and closed questions, designed to elicit information from parishes about a range of topics relating to grants they had received.
- 2.6 A pilot survey was tested by three parishes to ensure it was fit for purpose and to identify any improvements or changes necessary; a number of minor amendments to the survey were made following the pilot. Surveys were then circulated to all grant recipients, with reminder emails sent out after four weeks. A copy of the survey questions from each survey is contained in **Appendix A**.
- 2.7 Survey One was distributed to 606 parishes in receipt of a single ChurchCare grant during the period 2015 to 2019. These comprised:
- 269 parishes in receipt of a Fabric Repair Grant
 - 220 parishes in receipt of a Conservation Grant
 - 117 parishes in receipt of a Conservation Report grant.
- 2.8 A total of 320 surveys were completed, representing a 53% overall response rate. Of these:
- 151 responses related to a Fabric Repair Grant (56% response rate)
 - 128 responses related to a Conservation Grant (58% response rate)
 - 41 responses related to a Conservation Report grant (35% response rate)

- 2.9 Survey Two was distributed to 62 parishes who had been in receipt of *multiple* ChurchCare grants during the same period. A total of 52 surveys were completed, representing a 74% response rate.
- 2.10 Across both surveys, therefore, a total of **372 complete responses** were received, equating to an overall response rate of **55%**.

Grant Recipient Interviews

- 2.11 Interviews were undertaken with a selection of grant recipients, the purpose of which was to provide more detailed information about the experiences of individual parishes and to illustrate specific issues raised during the online surveys.
- 2.12 The online surveys included a question asking whether parishes would be willing to participate in further stages of the evaluation. A total of 194 parishes responded positively to this question (52% of respondents across both surveys). Subjects for the detailed interviews were selected from this pool of parishes. The following criteria were then applied as part of the selection process, to ensure that a representative sample was obtained:
- Grant scheme (fabric repair, conservation grant or conservation report grant)
 - Geographical location (diocese)
 - Year grant was awarded (2015 to 2019)
 - Level of funding awarded (high / medium / low)
 - Listing of church (Grade I, II* or II)
 - Type of heritage (Conservation Grant only, ensuring at least one interview selected from each category)
 - Other reasons (for example if a particularly interesting issue had been identified through the online survey that was deemed worthy of further exploration).
- 2.13 Potential interviewees were identified, together with a reserve list. Interviewees were initially contacted by ChurchCare, with follow up invitations issued by members of the evaluation team. A total of eleven detailed interviews with grant recipients were undertaken, including recipients of multiple grants. Detailed interviews included four recipients of a Fabric Repair Grant, eight recipients of a Conservation Grant and four recipients of a Conservation Report grant. Two interviewees had been in receipt of all three grants.

Exploring the Counterfactual

- 2.14 In order to explore the counterfactual (what would have happened in the absence of the grant programmes), a series of telephone interviews were undertaken with parish representatives who had been unsuccessful in their applications to one or more of the ChurchCare grant programmes. Interview subjects were identified from a list of rejected applications for each of the Fabric Repair and Conservation Grant programmes over the period 2017 to 2019. A total of 39 unsuccessful applicants were approached to participate in a telephone interview, of which a third confirmed. The sample included representation across all types of heritage (Conservation Grant), a mixture of Grade I, II* and II listed churches and variation in level of grant applied for.

Stakeholder Interviews

- 2.15 Telephone interviews have been undertaken with a range of stakeholders during the course of the evaluation, including funding partners, members of ChurchCare and Chairs of the various conservation committees.

Secondary Research

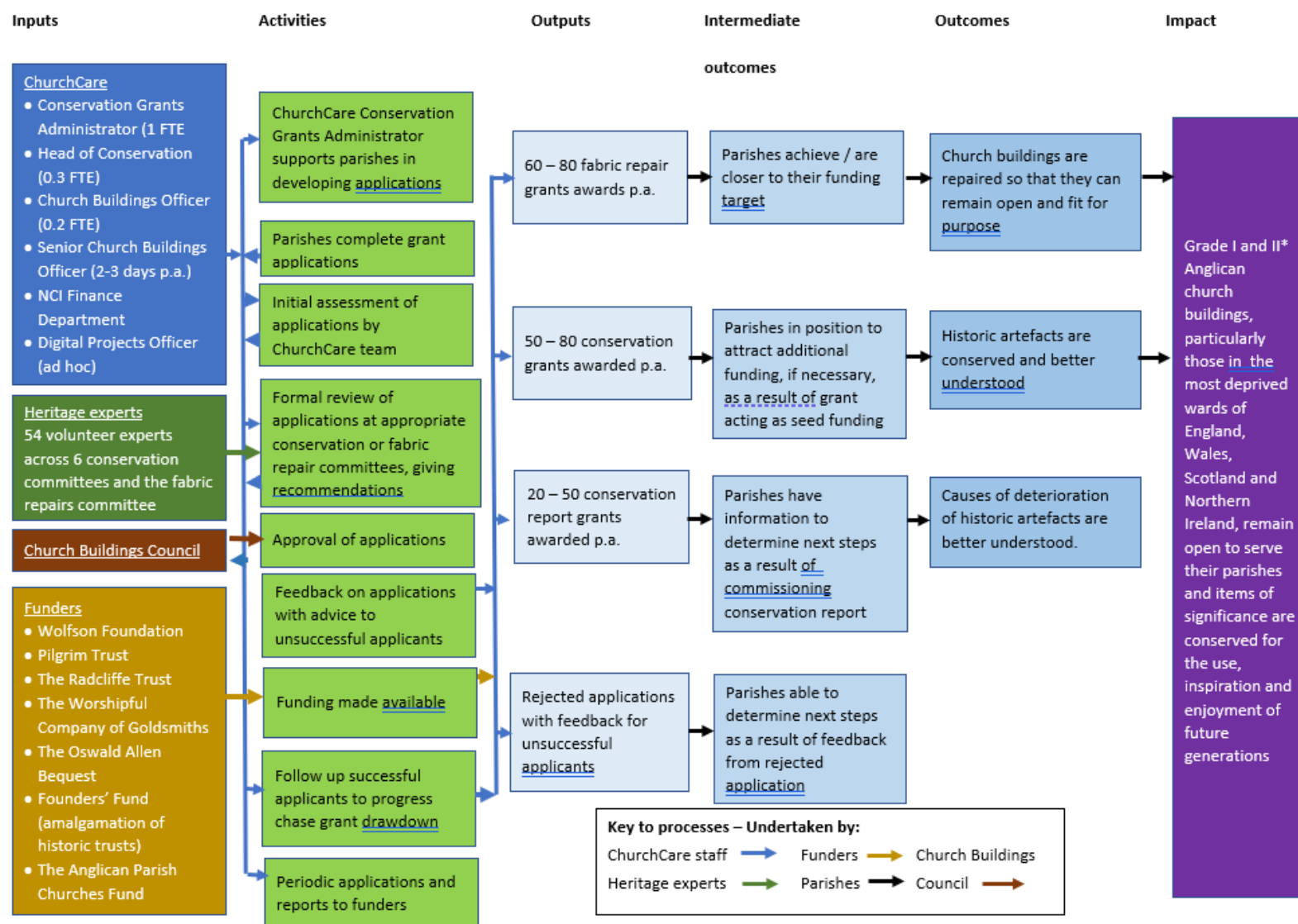
- 2.16 Secondary research has comprised a review of documentation and materials associated with the grant programmes, including funding agreements, eligibility criteria, existing data on applications / awards, evaluation reports and project plans.

Limitations

- 2.17 The Covid-19 pandemic during 2020 inevitably led to changes in the way the methodology was structured and the timescales for the project. The impact of the first lockdown in March 2020 on individual parishes was significant in that places of worship were closed, members of the church and wider community were isolated, and priorities for parishes at that time were focused necessarily on care of vulnerable community members. Online surveys were subsequently delayed until a point during the summer of 2020 when the situation had eased slightly. Face to face meetings planned during autumn 2020 were replaced with telephone interviews.

Churchcare Fabric Repair and Conservation Grants Programme Evaluation

Figure 1 Logic Model for the Fabric Repair and Conservation Grant Programmes



3 Fabric Repair Grant

Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter presents the findings from the evaluation of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme, taking into account secondary research data, stakeholder evidence and findings from the online surveys of grant recipients and telephone interviews undertaken during 2020.

Context

- 3.2 The Fabric Repair Grant Programme has been operational since 2000 and until 2020 has been a funding partnership between The Wolfson Foundation and ChurchCare. Up to £400,000 has been awarded each year by The Wolfson Foundation for the repair of the fabric of listed church buildings, with grants recommended and administered on the advice of ChurchCare. Between 60-80 Anglican parish churches in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have been in receipt of funding under this programme on an annual basis.
- 3.3 Parishes are expected to have 50% of funds already in place at the time of application to be eligible for a grant. Grants are awarded up to £10,000 in value. Grade I and II* buildings are eligible to apply for works (A or B+ in Northern Ireland) that are urgent and essential; these are typically category A or B recommendations in quinquennial inspection reports. The financial need of a parish is taken into consideration when considering eligibility, using both the parish's financial situation and the UK Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Projects must be overseen by an architect or chartered building surveyor with an appropriate conservation accreditation. Finally, churches should not have benefited from a ChurchCare/Wolfson Foundation fabric repair grant in the previous five years.

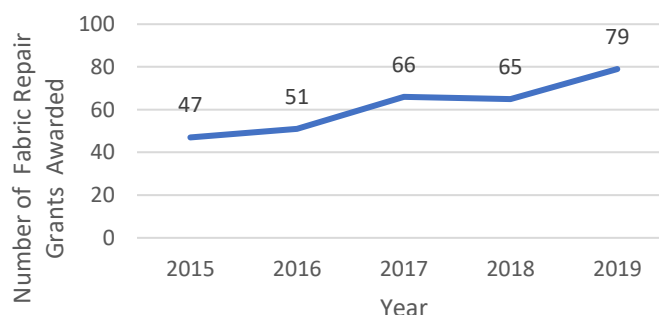
Programme Aims and Objectives

- 3.4 The Wolfson Foundation is primarily a capital funder, with a dedicated capital programme for heritage and the arts. The partnership between the Wolfson Foundation and ChurchCare grew out of a need for an appropriately experienced expert body to deal with both the volume and technicalities presented by the large volume of Anglican churches who were potentially eligible for capital funding. The partnership, which lasted for twenty years, came to an amicable conclusion in 2020 as part of plans to provide parishes with a simplified route to access fabric repair funding under the auspices of the NCT. The programme aims and objectives are set out in Chapter 1 of this report, relating to parishes, funders and ChurchCare themselves. This section reviews the extent to which these aims and objectives have been met and considers the effectiveness of the approach taken by ChurchCare to do so.

Reach and Spread of Grants

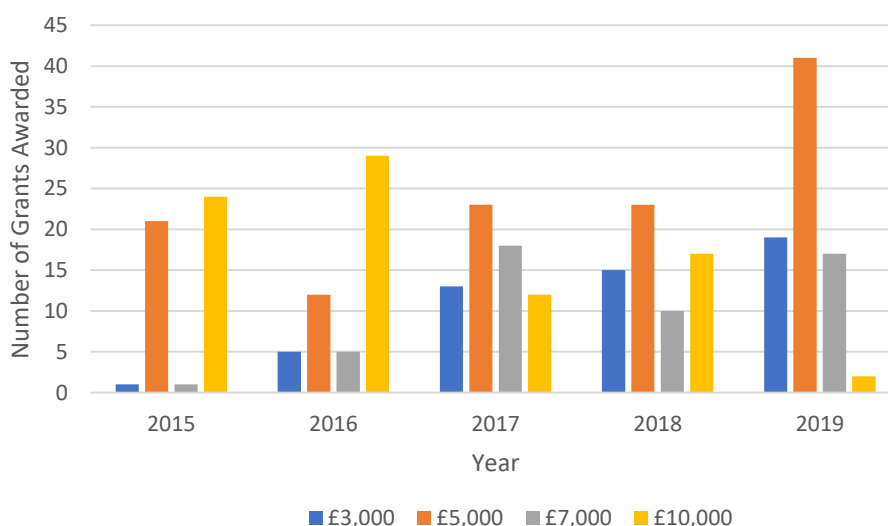
- 3.5 Programme aims and objectives have included to reach as many parishes as possible, to have a wide geographical spread and to fund parishes in areas of high deprivation. The level of funding received by ChurchCare from the Wolfson Foundation has not changed significantly over the course of the evaluation period – in 2015, funding for fabric repair grants totalled £357,000, rising to £400,000 in years 2016 to 2019. Figure 2, however, shows how the number of grants awarded has risen by year over the course of the evaluation period, with a rise from 47 grants in 2015 to 79 grants in 2019.

Figure 2 Number of Fabric Repair Grants Awarded 2015-2019



- 3.6 There has been a corresponding change in the value of grants awarded over the evaluation period. Fabric repair grants range in value from £3,000 to £10,000¹. Figure 3 shows how the number of grants awarded of each value changed between 2015 and 2019. The number of small grants (£3,000) increased significantly over this time period, from a single grant in 2015 to nineteen grants in 2019; there was a similar increase in the number of grants of £5,000 in value. The number of grants awarded of the highest value (£10,000) declined from 24 grants in 2015 to two grants in 2019.
- 3.7 Evidence from stakeholder interviews describe the principal reason behind this change as being due to an increase in eligible funding applications from 2017 onwards. In line with the aim to ‘reach as many parishes as possible’, all eligible applicants were awarded a grant of some value; with a higher number of eligible applications, the value of grant awarded per applicant was necessarily reduced. Stakeholders have attributed the increase in applications for fabric repair grants to changes within the wider funding environment.
- 3.8 The increase in applicants is thought to have largely been caused by the introduction of the National Heritage Memorial Fund’s Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund (LPOW) which operated in 2015 and 2016 and which highlighted more widely the possibility of accessing funding for this type of work; LPOW applicants may have subsequently applied to ChurchCare for fabric repair grants in the period from 2017 onwards. Despite this, funding priorities for the ChurchCare / Wolfson Foundation fabric repair programme have remained relatively consistent over time and processes appear to have been reliable (*‘everyone knows what to expect and when’*).

Figure 3 Number of Fabric Repair Grants Awarded by Value 2015-2019

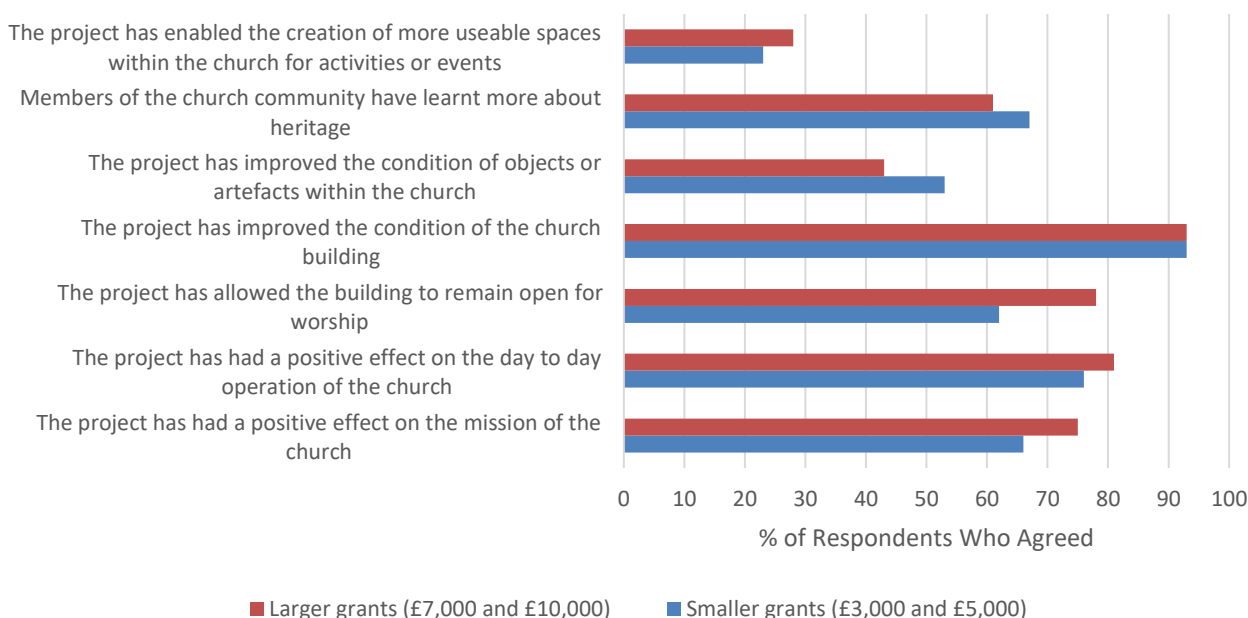


- 3.9 The increase in number of grants awarded over time is clearly in alignment with the programme aim to reach as many parishes as possible. However, due to the finite pot of funding available, this has resulted in more smaller grants being awarded; the evaluation has therefore sought to consider the effectiveness of this approach (i.e. what the impact of smaller, as opposed to larger, grants may have been) through analysis of data from the online surveys. A total of 95 respondents to the online surveys had been in receipt of a fabric repair grant of either £3,000 or £5,000 between 2015 and 2019, compared to 69 respondents who had been in receipt of a larger grant during this time (either £7,000 or £10,000). Both online surveys asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed (or had no opinion) with seven statements about the perceived impact of their grants.
- 3.10 Analysis of the extent to which respondents agreed with these statements is summarised in Figure 4. The figure shows that for some areas of impact – notably condition of the church building and positive effects on the day to day operation of the church – there is very little difference in perceived impact from respondents in receipt of either large or small grants. Smaller grants appear to have had a

¹ Note there is a single grant award anomaly during this time of £9,000, which has been included in Figure 5 as the highest level of grant awarded for ease of presentation.

greater perceived impact in relation to the condition of objects or artefacts within the church building (likely to be a result of a smaller overall project cost) and also in terms of members of the church community learning more about heritage. Findings from telephone interviews with grant recipients further corroborate this evidence, with recipients of small grants describing the boost which a successful grant application gave them.

Figure 4 Perceived Impact of Grant Funding by Value of Grant Awarded

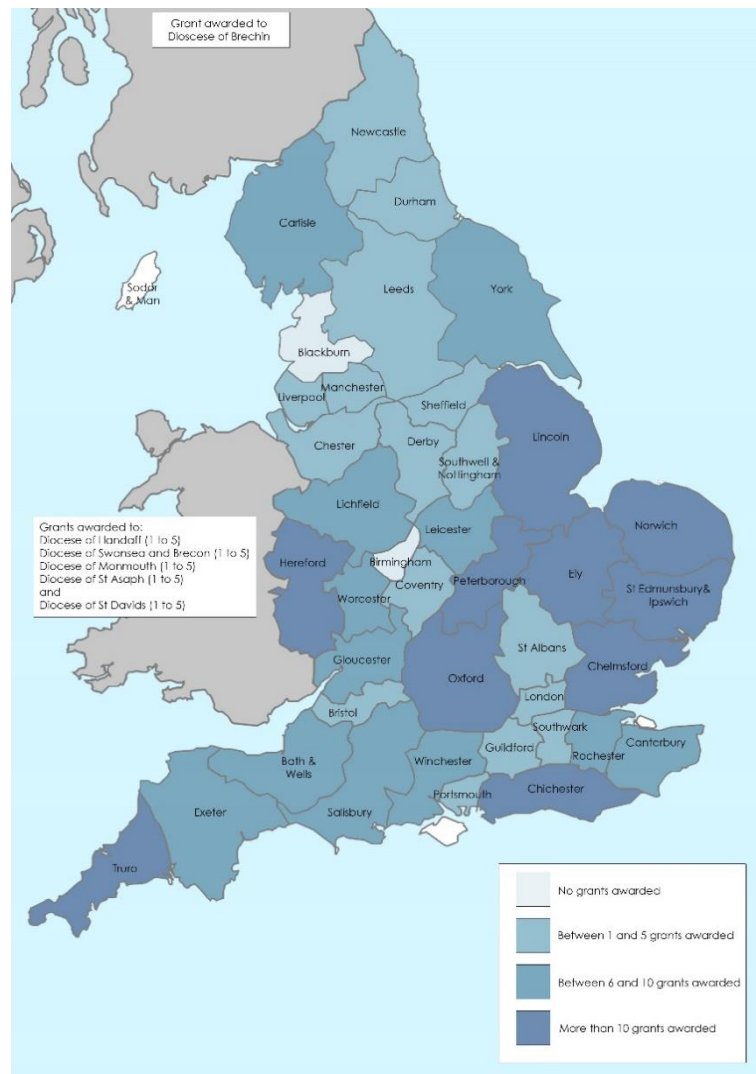


3.11 The transfer of administration of the fabric repair grant scheme to the NCT should be of benefit to the wider church community by way of streamlining grants offered in this area (the NCT already operates their own fabric repairs programme). Whilst core areas of support are likely to remain the same, there may potentially be a greater reach across non-Anglican churches as the NCT funds other Christian denominations.

The geographical spread of grants awarded by diocese is illustrated in

- 3.12 Figure 5. The figure shows that between 2015 and 2019, fabric repair grants have been awarded to churches within all dioceses across England with the exception of Blackburn and Birmingham; a total of eleven grants have been awarded to churches within Wales, with a single grant awarded to a church in Scotland during the evaluation period. The figure also shows a number of clear clusters where a greater number of grants have been awarded, notably Peterborough (7.8% of all fabric repair grants awarded between 2015 and 2019), St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (7.1%), Norwich (5.8%) and Chelmsford (5.5%).
- 3.13 Findings from stakeholder discussions have highlighted factors likely to influence geographical spread of grants including the distribution of listed buildings across the country and also the support offered by Diocesan Advisory Committees (DACs) – in relation to the latter, some DACs may be better at encouraging parishes to make applications to ChurchCare than others.
- 3.14 There are around 15,700 Anglican parish churches within the UK, of which over three quarters (78%) are listed. The Church of England is responsible for 4,277 Grade I and 4,2348 Grade II* listed buildings. It is noted that the distribution of listed church buildings across the UK is not even and a high proportion are located in rural areas. This helps to contextualise the geographical spread shown in Figure 5. For example, the proportion of Grade I and II* listed churches in Blackburn and Birmingham (i.e. those eligible for fabric repair grants) equate to 18% and 22% of the total number of churches within the diocese respectively; equivalent figures for the dioceses of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and Peterborough are 84% and 80% respectively.

Figure 5 Geographical Spread of Grants Awarded 2015-2019

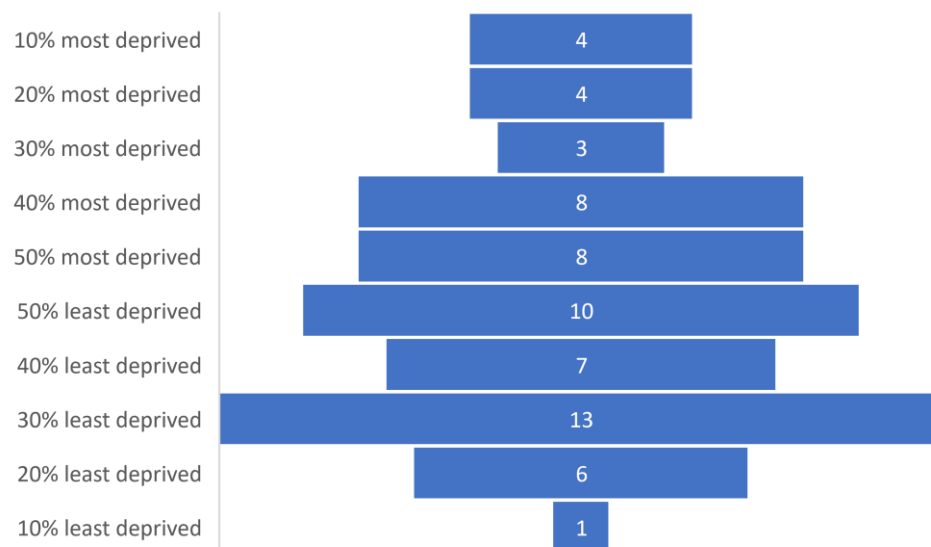


One of the aims and objectives of the fabric repair grant is to target churches located in areas of high deprivation. Postcode analysis has been undertaken for grants awarded in 2018 (as a sample year) against the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015)². The findings from this analysis are summarised in

² It should be noted that the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (although the most recent data available) is not relevant to grant awards made during the evaluation period.

- 3.15 Figure 6. Each grant is located within a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), which are then ranked according to their relative deprivation within England (least to most deprived). The figure shows that 42% of the fabric repair grants awarded in 2018 (58%) were to churches located in areas categorised as 'more deprived', with eight awards (12% of grants awarded that year) being to churches located within the 20% most deprived areas of England. The extent to which this aim has been met by the Fabric Repair Grants Programme has been influenced by the grant applications received – if a lower number of applications have been from churches located in more deprived areas, then this has been reflected in the grant award data. For the number of applications from more deprived areas to increase, more active marketing of the grant programme would be required. This approach is understood to already be taken by NCT, in relation to target areas.

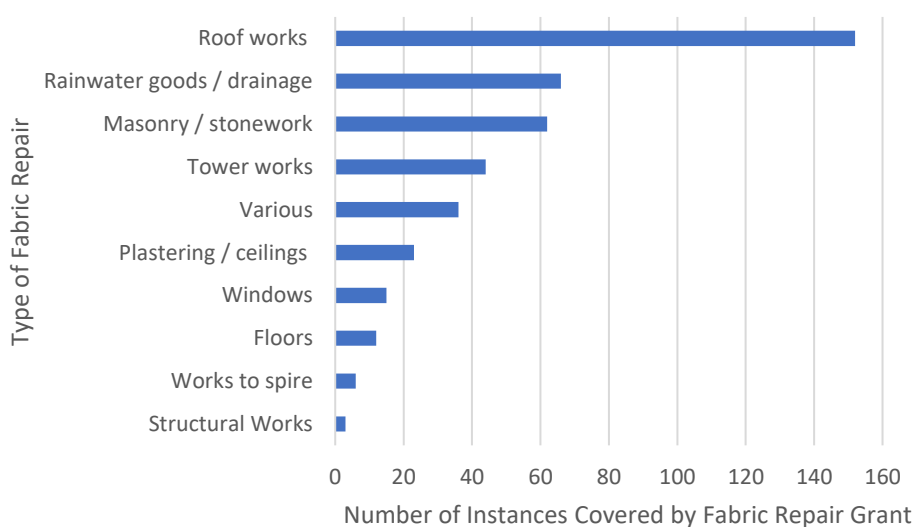
Figure 6 Analysis of 2018 Fabric Repair Grant Awards Against Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015)



Heritage

- 3.16 Aims and objectives of the fabric repair grant in relation to heritage have been to ensure the building is in a better long-term condition than before the work was carried out; to ensure the underlying causes of deterioration are addressed; and to encourage good practice for the appropriate repair works through targeted funding and advice.
- 3.17 The type of fabric repairs covered by awarded grants between 2015 and 2019 are summarised in Figure 7. The figure shows that roof repairs formed the greatest proportion of works for which grants were applied for, followed by repairs to rainwater goods / drainage and repairs to masonry / stonework. A majority of grants covered a mixture of fabric repairs. Note that the figure records the number of instances a type of repair is recorded, rather than number of grants (so for example a grant specifying works to roof, rainwater goods and floors has been included within each of these three categories; where 'various' has been recorded, this is how the grant award has been described).

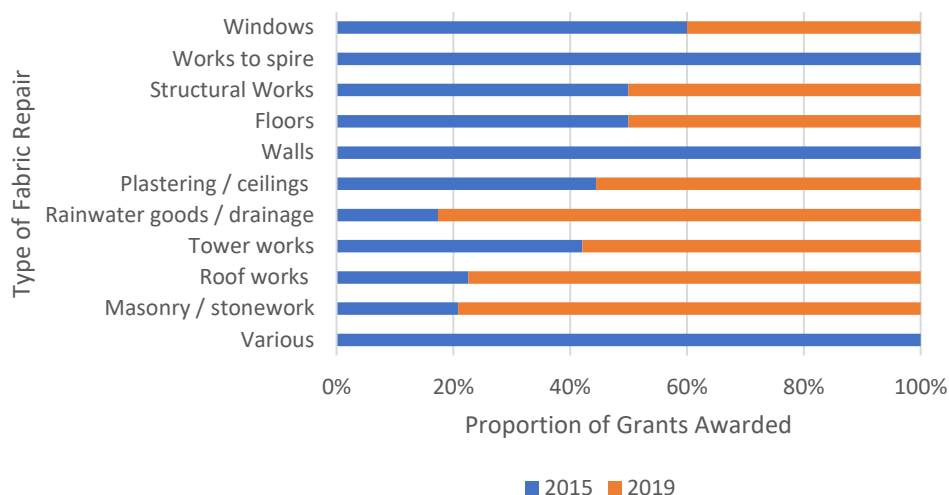
Figure 7 Type of Fabric Repairs Covered by Awarded Grants 2015-2019



- 3.18 Around 23 grants over the period 2015-2019 were in relation to re-leading; 17 of these grants have been categorised specifically as being for replacement of stolen lead. Looking at the latter category, five instances were recorded in 2015 and a total of twelve in 2019.

- 3.19 Figure 8 shows the change over time across type of fabric repair, looking at grants awarded in 2015 and 2019 only. The proportion of funding roof works, works to improve drainage and works involving repair of masonry and stonework clearly increased significantly during the intervening period. In terms of actual instances, the greatest increase was in grants awarded to fund roof works, which increased from 14 grants in 2015 to 48 grants in 2019.

Figure 8 Analysis of Fabric Repairs Funded Over Time – 2015 and 2019 Only



- 3.20 In relation to additional criteria which could be explored when considering eligibility of applications for funding, one area to arise during stakeholder discussions related to whether or not churches are on (or at risk of being on) the Heritage at Risk Register and whether this should be better understood when considering funding. There has been a net increase in the number of churches on the Register over the evaluation period, with more buildings becoming at risk. Better connections could be fostered between dioceses and Historic England in relation to churches identified for inclusion on the Register.

Transparent Decision-Making

- 3.21 Decision-making for fabric repair grants between 2015 and 2019 was made by means of the Fabric Repairs Committee, comprising a Chair and four committee members. Two of the five members were appointed to the committee in 2011, with the remaining three (including the chair) appointed in 2016. Decisions made by the Committee were verified by the Wolfson Foundation's expert panel and trustees. Evidence from stakeholder discussions showed that no amendments to ChurchCare recommendations for grant funding were made by the expert panel during the evaluation period; this relatively 'hands off' approach to funding has been an acknowledgement of the quality of specialist advice represented by Fabric Repair Committee members and trust in the quality of decisions made.

Fund Processes and Delivery

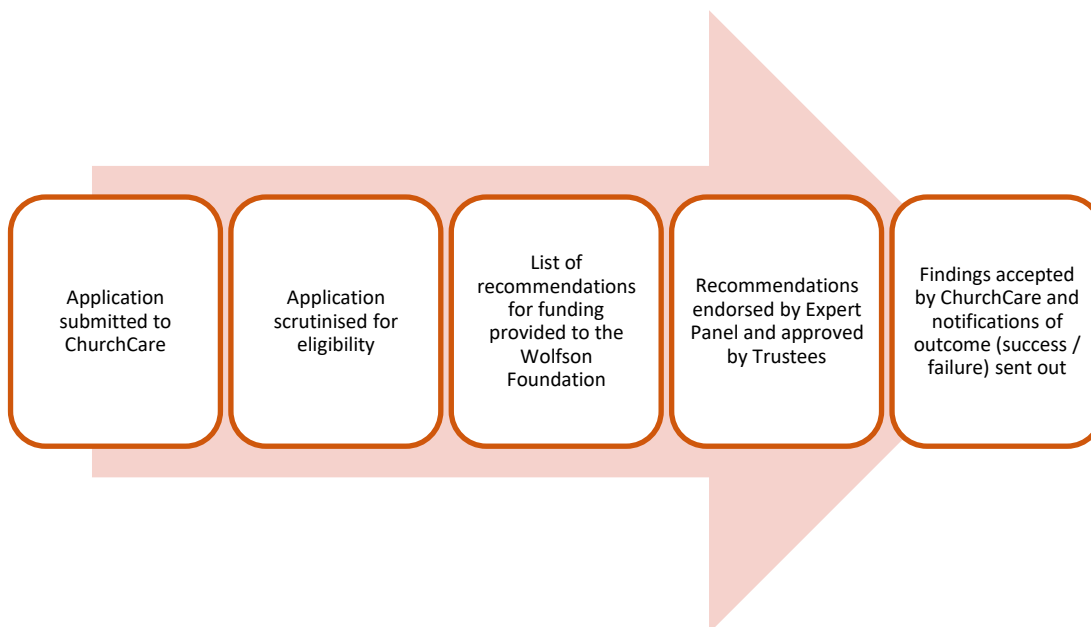
- 3.22 The objectives of the evaluation as they relate to fund processes and delivery include learning about what has worked well / less well; where improvements to delivery and fund processes could be made in the future (including for example robustness and proportionality of the application process, eligibility criteria, grant management, monitoring and evaluation); developing an understanding of funding profiles (for example what other sources of funding have been obtained); and understanding the extent to which a ChurchCare grant has helped to attract additional funding for projects.

Application Process

The application process and relationship between ChurchCare and The Wolfson Foundation is summarised in

3.23 Figure 9. During the evaluation period 2015-2019, there have been two funding rounds per year, in April and October.

Figure 9 Summary of Application Process – Fabric Repair Grants

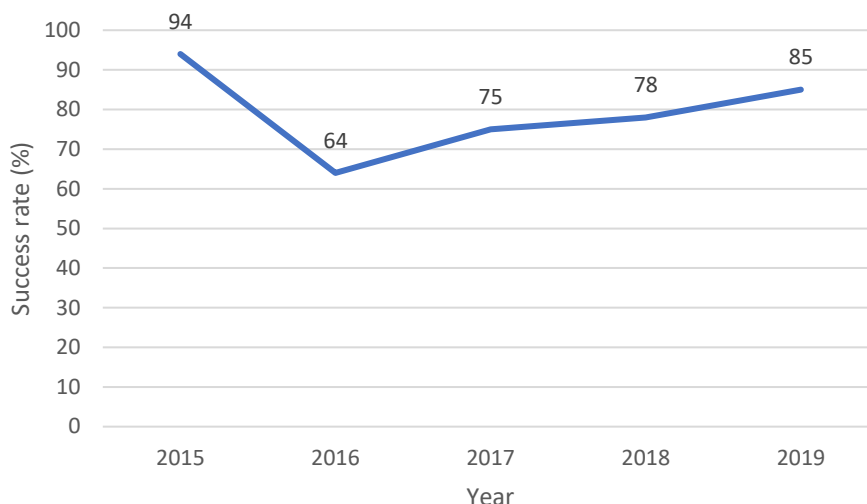


3.24 Over this period, an average of 54 applications were submitted to ChurchCare for each round of funding. Secondary evidence has shown that of these applications, approximately ten applications per round were not taken forward due to failure to meet eligibility criteria. Reasons given typically included that:

- the work was due to be completed before the decision date for the grant award
- 50% of the net funding had not been raised
- Churches were not Grade I or II* listed.

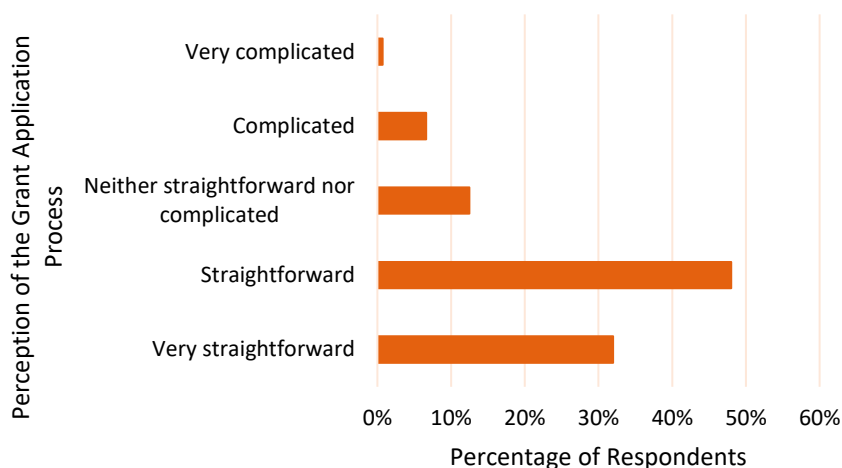
3.25 Once applications progress through to the decision-making stage, the success rate was shown to be high, at an average of 76% across rounds. By comparison, the success rate for the National Churches Trust's Cornerstone grant programme (which offers grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 for projects including urgent structural works) is around 25% (one in four applications). Figure 10 shows the fluctuation in annual average application success rate between 2015 and 2019. The 2017 and 2018 rounds were more in line with the average success rate across the evaluation period, with the success rate in the 2019 round proving to be higher than average. Re-application rates during the evaluation period were very low.

Figure 10 Fluctuation in Success Rate of Applications Between 2015 and 2019 (annual)



3.26 Discussions with both the Wolfson Foundation and ChurchCare have highlighted that the application process is considered to be relatively straightforward for applicants. This would appear to be largely borne out by findings from the online surveys, where respondents were asked how they found the overall grant application process. Figure 11 shows that nearly 80% of respondents to Survey 1 (parishes in receipt of a single ChurchCare grant) who had received a fabric repair grant found the application process to have been either straightforward or very straightforward. A similar picture was presented by respondents to Survey 2 (parishes in receipt of multiple ChurchCare grants) in relation to fabric repair grant applicants (80% of respondents found the application process to have been either straightforward or very straightforward).

Figure 11 Perception of the Grant Application Process (Fabric Repair Grant)



3.27 Just under a quarter of respondents to Survey 1 (23%) found aspects of the application process to be challenging; of the twenty respondents to Survey 2 who were in receipt of a fabric repair grant, only four respondents identified challenging aspects to the application process. The main issues cited across both surveys included difficulties using the online application form and challenges around finding supporting documentation to accompany the application. Other reasons were given as:

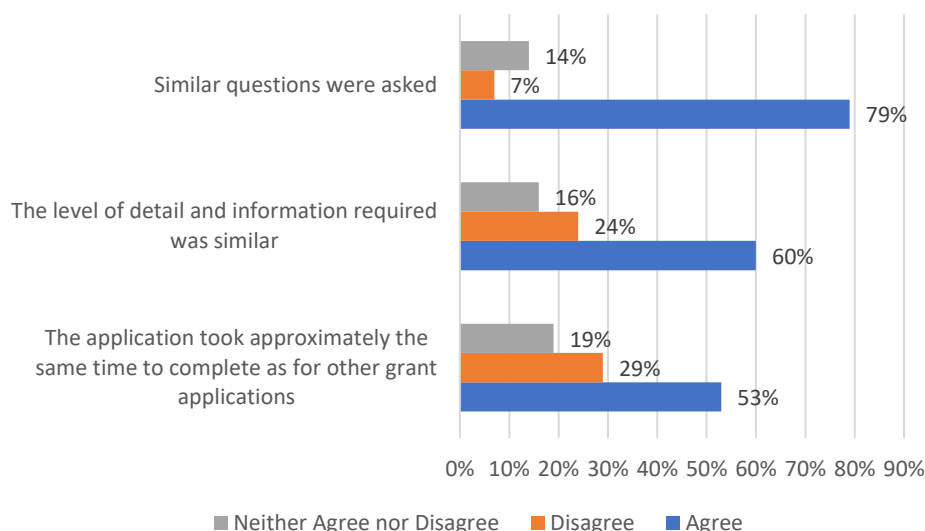
- Difficulties uploading all the information required due to factors such as limited IT equipment, or difficulty understanding what was required
- Time consuming
- Issues to do with completing the forms themselves – for example estimating other grants required to calculate the project funding shortfall, or analysis of VAT costs and costs to date.

3.28 Respondents were also asked whether the information requested as part of the application was proportionate to the level of funding applied for. Over 80% of respondents to Survey 1 and 90% of respondents to Survey 2 who had received a fabric repair grant found the information requested to be proportionate. The online surveys provided respondents with an opportunity to set out further thoughts in relation to this question; responses included:

- Other grant bodies did not require as much detail
- Online applications are complicated for many people
- Respondents who had already submitted applications to other funders felt they had more information readily available
- Respondents expressed benefits of using external advisers (e.g. surveyors) in many instances. No respondents specifically highlighted use of professional funding advisers to complete applications / undertake fundraising.
- Recipients of larger grants (£10k) largely stated that they expected to have to provide relevant information and documentation (one recipient to Survey 2 stated that '*considerable sums were being applied for...so (it was) fair enough*').

3.29 The vast majority of respondents to both surveys (97%) had applied for grants from other funding organisations. The online surveys explored how similar the fabric repair grant application process was to other funders, with findings shown in Figure 12. Over half of respondents agreed that the time taken to complete the fabric repair grant application was approximately the same as for other grants; for those that disagreed with the statement, the majority found other grant applications to be more onerous (with several references made to NLHF applications). A similar pattern of responses was identified for respondents to Survey 2 (multiple ChurchCare applications).

Figure 12 Similarity of Grant Application Process to Other Grant Programmes (Survey 1)



3.30 Over seventy comments in relation to the similarity or otherwise of grant application processes between funding organisations were received from respondents across Surveys 1 and 2. Comments related to the following areas:

- Other grants highlighted as being more complex included the LPOW roof repair grant and NLHF applications (over twenty responses).
- Whilst the fabric repair grant application process was described by several respondents as being much simpler and more user-friendly than NLHF applications, other respondents noted that, whilst the NLHF was more complex, much of the information could be translated to other grant applications.

- Various other approaches were described, with respondents describing the benefits and disbenefits (for example the application approach of the Garfield Weston Foundation was both commended for its ease and criticised for the disproportionate amount of time this took).

'Of the 22 applications I submitted to various charitable trusts I would suggest that the ChurchCare application was less complicated than some, for example the LPOW Roof Repair Fund, and more complicated and extensive than others, but on balance I had little difficulty in managing the information required and suggest ChurchCare leaves what is in effect a straightforward process unchanged'

'The application here was for a contribution to a specific section of a larger project. In some ways that was easier to write than for the broader project'

'HLF was a major funder so their info and forms were much more involved. Having got this info other funding bodies applications were more straightforward'

- 3.31 Detailed interviews undertaken with recipients of fabric repair grants identified that the level of work required to complete the application process should not be underestimated – even for an application which is supposedly straightforward. Interviewees commented that the ease of completion of the application form was often affected by the level of support available (for example where there was a very good relationship with the architect / other professional support or where the PCC was particularly supportive or helpful, then this made the process easier). One interviewee described how they had been turned down twice for an LPOW grant but then had made a link with a particularly effective grants officer who *'was a revelation'* and assisted them to access both NLHF and ChurchCare funding. Another interviewee noted that the fabric repair grant was the third ChurchCare grant for which they had applied and that *'once you get the hang of it, it's quite straightforward'*. The level of technical skills and ability within parishes is clearly an important factor when considering grant application processes.
- 3.32 A significant proportion of respondents to the online surveys and all interviewees highlighted the role of ChurchCare in providing support and advice during either the application process or subsequently during the works and grant claiming process (*'always at the end of the phone'*, *'gives sound common sense'*, *'the continuity and ease of contact have been great'*).
- 3.33 Online survey findings show that just over half of fabric repair grant applicants sought help from ChurchCare during the application process (51%). Respondents were asked to provide information on what areas of the application or grant process help was required for; findings are summarised in Table 3. **All** respondents stated that the advice they were given was helpful.

Table 3 Areas of the Application Process for which Help was Sought from ChurchCare by Fabric Repair Grant Applicants

Issue	Number of Responses
Minor clarifications regarding process / general procedures (e.g. uploading)	21
Queries around the nature of works proposed (e.g. timing / eligibility)	18
Supporting information required (e.g. accounts)	13
General help and encouragement	8
Changes to the level of grant sought / other funds available	3
Reapplication after rejection	1

- 3.34 Comments made in relation to the help received were positive, with words such as 'clarity', 'prompt' and 'supportive' used regularly. A selection of comments is provided below:

'the ability to talk to a real person who knew the system and was processing the application was invaluable'

'prompt responses and very helpful'

'communications with ChurchCare were easy and helpful, and we felt supported through the process'

'contact with ChurchCare as the application proceeded was at all times helpful'

- 3.35 General comments made in relation to the application process by respondents to the online surveys include:

'a one-size fits all approach should be tailored to project size and complexity. But overall the focus on proof of completion and follow-on maintenance is proper and should be continued'

'maybe smaller grant applications could be routinised in some way'

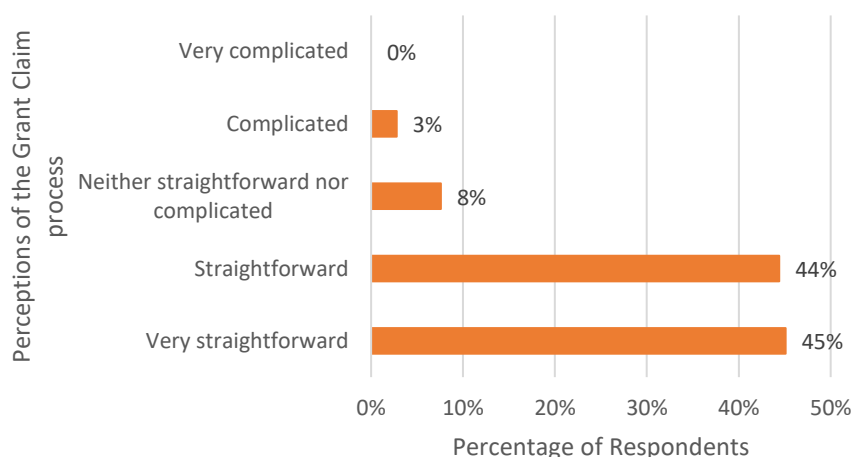
- 3.36 Of the twenty respondents to Survey 2 who had received a fabric repair grant in addition to other funding from ChurchCare, nearly half (45%) agreed with the statement *'I found making second and subsequent applications to ChurchCare more straightforward because I knew more about the process and work involved'*.

Grant Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.37 This section relates to management and delivery processes beyond the awarding of a grant to a parish, covering the grant claim process and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

- 3.38 The majority of respondents to the online surveys stated that they had found the grant claim process to be either very straightforward or straightforward (89% in total), as shown in Figure 13.

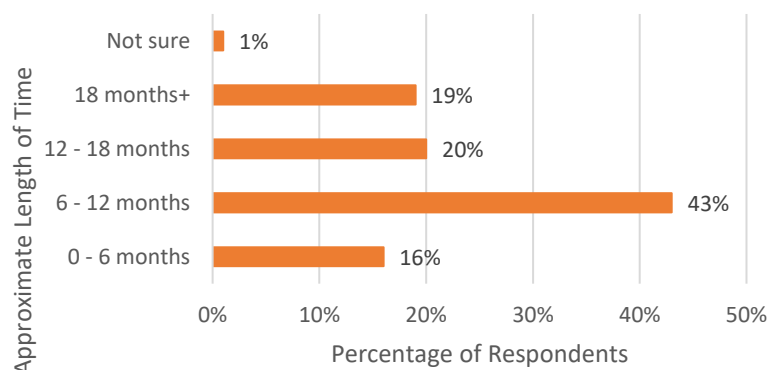
Figure 13 Perceptions of the Grant Claim Process



- 3.39 Of the minority (3%) who found the process to be complicated, the principal reasons related to slight uncertainties around timescales for payment or to difficulties experienced by applicants who felt they did not have sufficient computer skills to be able to complete the tasks. Again, support from ChurchCare during the grant claim process was specifically highlighted by respondents as helpful.
- 3.40 A number of respondents to the online surveys highlighted issues around the tendering process (for example finding the process complicated / not understanding how to go about it / or simply coming across problems or issues which they may not have been expecting). Discussions with stakeholders around this point highlighted some of these complexities and identified a potential need for good practice advice or guidance for parishes in relation to this area.
- 3.41 The approximate length of time from grant award to project completion is obviously highly variable across projects; this can be demonstrated by

- 3.42 Figure 14 which shows the length of time as estimated by respondents to the online surveys. The data shows that the majority of projects (over 40%) took between six and twelve months from grant award through to project completion. Around a fifth of projects fell into each of the 12-18 months and over 18 months categories. A number of respondents highlighted during the surveys that there had been delays to their intended programme as a result of unforeseen factors.

Figure 14 Approximate Number of Months from Grant Award to Completion



3.43 A condition of the fabric repair grant is for six monthly progress reports each year until the grant is fully claimed, in order to understand how the project is progressing and as part of the due diligence process of The Wolfson Foundation. A Final Report is required no later than one year from the date of project completion; The Wolfson Foundation describe these reports as being 'light touch rather than burdensome' with a report template provided to guide the process. Over the period 2017 to 2019, a total of 45 Final Reports had been received for completed projects. It is noted that there is no incentive for grant recipients to deliver Final Reports on completion of projects (for example all grant payments have been claimed by this point); furthermore, chasing outstanding reports is a time-consuming activity for grant administrators and has not been a priority for ChurchCare. However, the reports do provide important information which can later be used to communicate the value of grant funding to a wider audience.

3.44 The Final Report template provides an opportunity for grant awardees to provide feedback on Wolfson funding programmes, in particular the application process, the system for claiming grants / reporting project progress or how the grant administration might be improved. Approximately one fifth of the 45 Final Reports provided feedback in relation to one or more of these points. The principal themes of feedback provided related to the simplicity of the application and grant claim processes and to the helpful advice provided by ChurchCare at various points in the application process (for example advising on whether an application should be made, assisting with the application process itself, or advising on specific issues such as the need for further fund-raising due to unforeseen circumstances). A selection of comments made in relation to these areas include:

'By the time we applied for this grant, we had some experience of such applications. We found the process understandable; it set out clear requirements and explained its terms. It also helped us think out our priorities and why we felt the project was worthwhile, concentrating on the important items'

'(we were) incredibly well supported'

'The help of the Wolfson Foundation, both financially and in the smoothness of the process, along with very good back up from Church Care, has been invaluable and I can't see where you could improve a very easy and efficient process'

'The relative ease of the whole programme is very much appreciated at the parish level where all the work is done by volunteers in their spare time from full-time employment'

3.45 Minor areas of challenge related to the complexities of an online system for parishioners who were not IT literate (one grantee noted they had been *'daunted by the online application system'*); and a potential clarification needed for applicants regarding the difference between a 'two-stage' and a 'joint scheme' application. Wider challenges were highlighted that are associated with funding of fabric repair works to churches more generally, namely:

- Challenges associated with *'maintaining momentum developed through the current project to raise funds to deliver the remainder of the feasibility study'*
- Those associated with local fundraising as a way to obtain a proportion of project funding such that churches can be eligible to apply for particular grants: *'we have been trying to raise the money for two to three years through local fundraising....some of these works will now be getting urgent and we need to be aware of the safety of parishioners and community users'*
- Complications associated with the legislative approval process required to progress the project in terms of complexity and length of time taken.

3.46 A report produced for the Wolfson Foundation in 2019³ presented the findings of research into grantee and applicant perceptions (this related to a survey of 886 recipients of Wolfson Foundation grants, outside of those administered by ChurchCare). Findings of interest of relevance to the evaluation of the ChurchCare fabric repair grant programme include:

- The value of the Wolfson Foundation's specialism in capital funding
- Benefits of a non-prescriptive and straightforward application process
- Both grantees and unsuccessful applicants were united in their view that the Wolfson Foundation has an excellent reputation as a 'professional, long-standing, capital funder'
- Grantees were impressed by the easy reporting process.

3.47 Only three fabric repair grants were withdrawn during the period 2015 to 2019. These included a proposed reduction in scope of work not being approved (one instance) and works being completed at the time of award (one instance). A further three projects were only part-paid (i.e. not all the grant money committed was required).

Funding Profiles

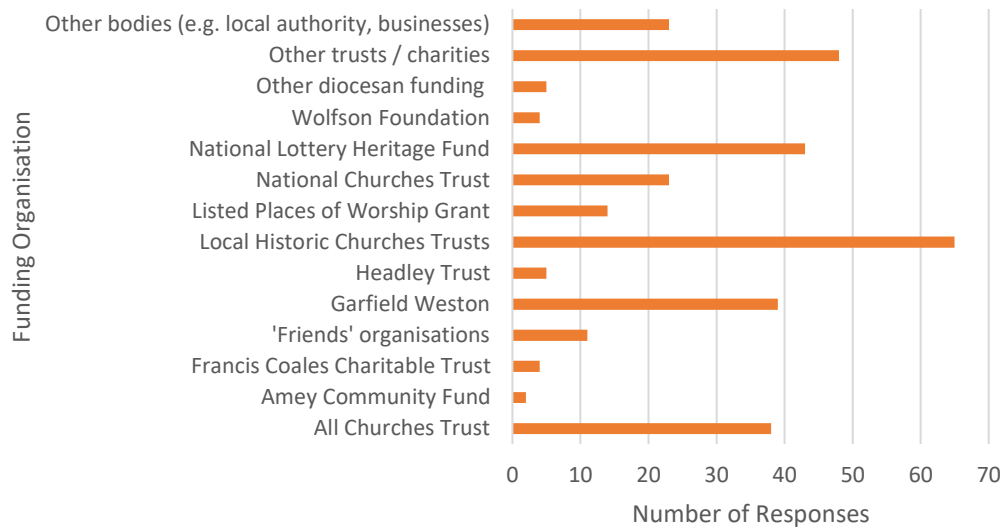
3.48 Objectives of the evaluation include to gain greater understanding of the funding profiles of projects, together with an assessment of the extent to which receiving a ChurchCare grant might attract additional funding. The evidence contained within this section is primarily drawn from the responses to the online surveys together with the detailed telephone interviews.

Over 90% of respondents to the online surveys stated that the fabric repair grant they received had comprised between 0-25% of the total project cost, with the remainder of responses falling into the 26-50% category. The vast majority of respondents to the online surveys (90%) had received funding from at least one other organisation in relation to the project for which they had received a fabric repair grant. The survey responses showed 11% of respondents had received one other grant, 12% had received grants from two other organisations, with the remaining 66% of respondents stating they had received funding from at least three other sources.

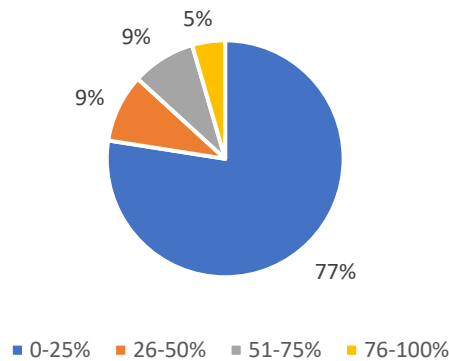
³ The Wolfson Foundation Grantee and Application Perceptions Audit (nfpSynergy 2019), [Wolfson-Foundation-Grantees-and-Applicant-Perception-Audit-2019-v2.pdf](#)

- 3.49 Figure 15 shows the variety of funding organisations that have contributed to projects in receipt of a fabric repair grant. The 'other trusts and charities' category included nearly fifty different organisations.

Figure 15 Funding Received from other Organisations



3.50 Figure 16 shows the value of other grants received; the majority (34%) were £10,000 or more in



value. then shows the approximate percentage of total project value attributed to other grants received. The figure shows clearly that over three-quarters of other grants received comprised up to a quarter of overall project value; only 5% of grants received made up more than three-quarters of overall project value.

Figure 16 Value of Other Grants Received

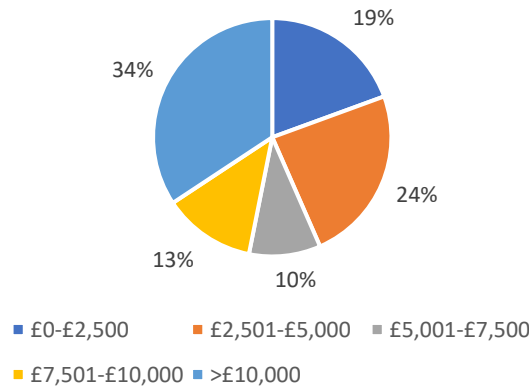
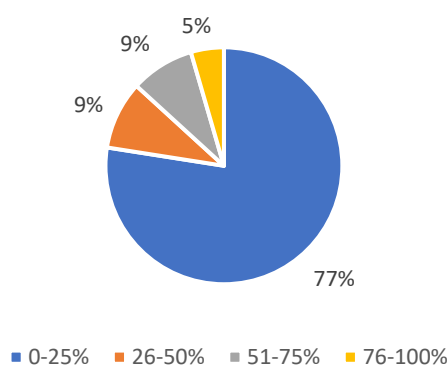


Figure 17 Approximate Percentage of Total Project Value



- 3.51 For a fifth of respondents to Survey 1, the fabric repair funding was the first grant they had received for their project. Just over half of respondents to Survey 1 (52%) stated that receiving the fabric repair grant encouraged them to apply for other grant schemes (either for the current project or in relation to other projects). Comments made in relation to this point highlighted that respondents often submitted applications to various funders simultaneously (a 'blanket' approach). Other comments suggested that the fabric repair grant was the final piece of the funding jigsaw for a number of respondents. Comments included:

'it is very likely that your grant encouraged other smaller but vital donors'

'after receiving some set-backs, it was encouraging to be told we would receive help'

'never underestimate the huge boost caused by the awarding of a grant. The scale of the challenge of a large appeal total is daunting for tiny communities, especially before a penny has been raised'

- 3.52 Respondents to Survey 2 were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with the statement that having a grant from ChurchCare gave them the confidence to apply for grants from other organisations. A total of 33 respondents (63%) stated that they agreed with the statement. Only five respondents (9% of respondents) stated that they disagreed.

- 3.53 Comments made during the detailed interviews revealed the importance attributed by individual parishes to receiving a fabric repair grant in terms of helping to attract additional funding from other organisations and also in terms of the impact receiving a grant had for the morale of the parish:

- *'the ChurchCare grant was a very early one and it was very cheering...it was an enormous boost for the team'*
- *'when applying for funding...if anybody is behind you...it looks better'.*

Outcomes and Impacts

- 3.54 The evaluation has sought to assess the outcomes and impacts arising from the Fabric Repair Grant Programme, considering the extent to which impacts are a direct result of the grant award, whether wider impacts can be evidenced, and an assessment of what might have happened in the absence of the grant programme. The assessment of impacts is largely evidenced from the online surveys of grant recipients together with findings from telephone interviews.

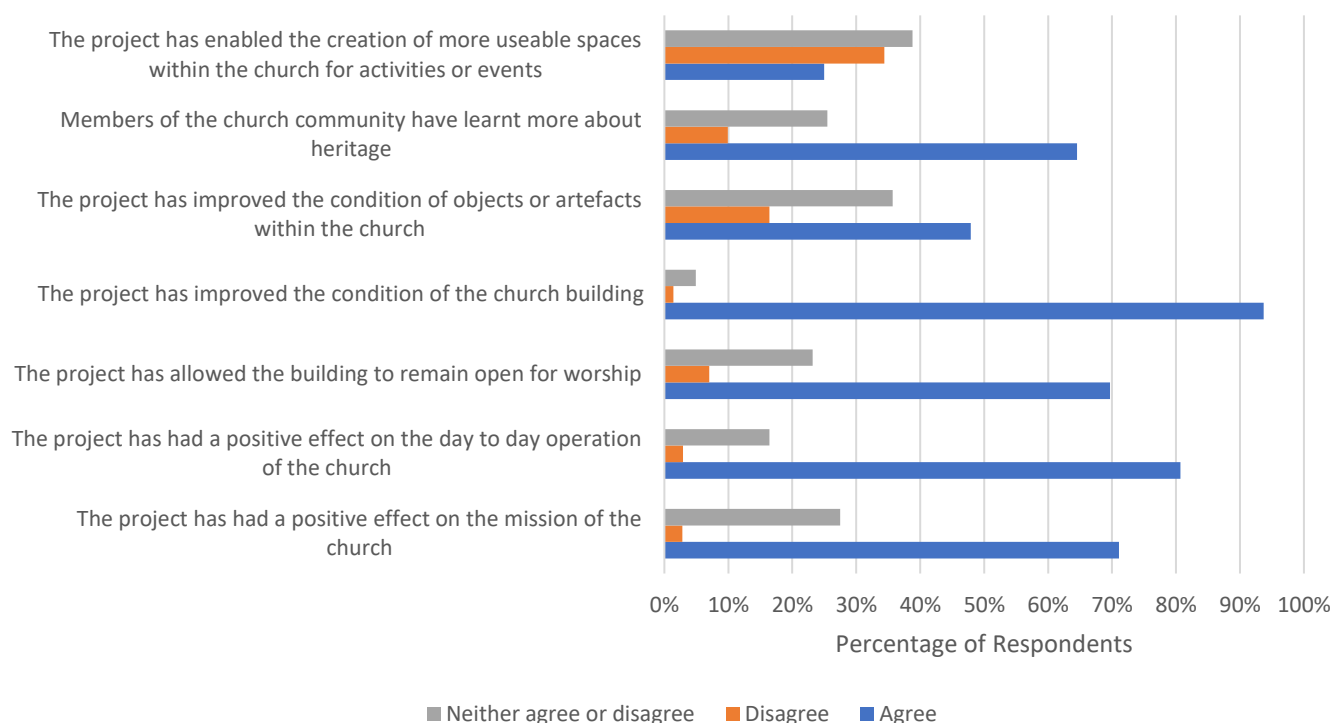
- 3.55 The Wolfson Foundation has priorities focused entirely on architectural and heritage needs; whilst as grant administrators, this has also been the position of ChurchCare, the latter organisation has inevitably also been interested in the impacts that the funding may have had indirectly on mission.

Direct and Wider Impacts

- 3.56 Respondents to Survey 1 were asked about the impacts they considered their project to have had. Direct impacts related to the heritage / condition of the church and day-to-day operation, with more indirect / wider impacts relating to areas including the mission of the church, people's understanding of heritage and the development of new skills for parishioners (for example in relation to fundraising or IT skills).

- 3.57 Figure 18 shows that grant recipients were generally very positive about the impacts of the fabric repair grant on their church, with understandably particularly strong support for direct impacts associated with improvements to the condition of the church building. The figure shows that the grant had wider impacts than simply the direct purpose for which it was made, with positive effects experienced in terms of enabling the building to remain open for worship, on the day to day operation, and also on the mission of the church (71% of respondents agreed with this statement). Areas where grants have had less impact relate to the creation of more useable spaces within the church for activities or events, with only 25% of respondents agreeing and 34% disagreeing with this statement.

Figure 18 Impacts of The Fabric Repair Grant



- 3.58 Box 1 contains a flavour of the many comments made by respondents to Survey 1 in relation to impacts of the grant funding on the condition of the building, the heritage, church activities and the community. A number of respondents referred to the projects funded by the ChurchCare grant as being very much a 'first step' for their building; once the structural issues (or other issues such as damp or roof condition) had been dealt with, respondents cited their intention to move on to more 'people' and 'mission' based improvements. Many respondents referred to the wider role of the church in local communities, for both worshippers and non-worshippers, and the benefits the projects funded have provided in terms of interest and learning about heritage.

Box 1 Impacts of Fabric Repair Grant

'By completing the project a very unhappy chapter in the history of our church was closed'

'Primarily, the aim was to ensure the continued survival of this important 11th century church.....It is used for worship regularly, so is not merely a monument, although an important and much-visited one. The fund-raising effort not only raised vital funds, but brought the community closer together as a result of shared endeavour and a well-attended programme of events, such as concerts and lectures.'

'(the repairs) have helped to reinforce the significance of the church as an important heritage building within the community'

'This roof repair was the first step in a wider ambition to re-purpose the Church and make it fit for the 21st Century'

'The project has had a very positive effect on our use of the church and once damp areas are now more usable. In particular an area of prayer and meditation has been created.'

'By making the roof water-tight we will be able to concentrate our energies on prayer and mission rather than the fabric!'

'the restored high ceiling has given us back the old acoustics of a church'

'there is more light in the church. It feels more welcoming'

'The ChurchCare grant helped us achieve the vital goal of repairing and restoring the damaged ceiling. This structural step paved the way to a full lighting, rewiring and redecoration scheme which has transformed the church and enabled many more events to take place for the benefit of the wider local community.'

'Apart from securing the essential physical integrity of the tower, a beacon of optimism has been created'

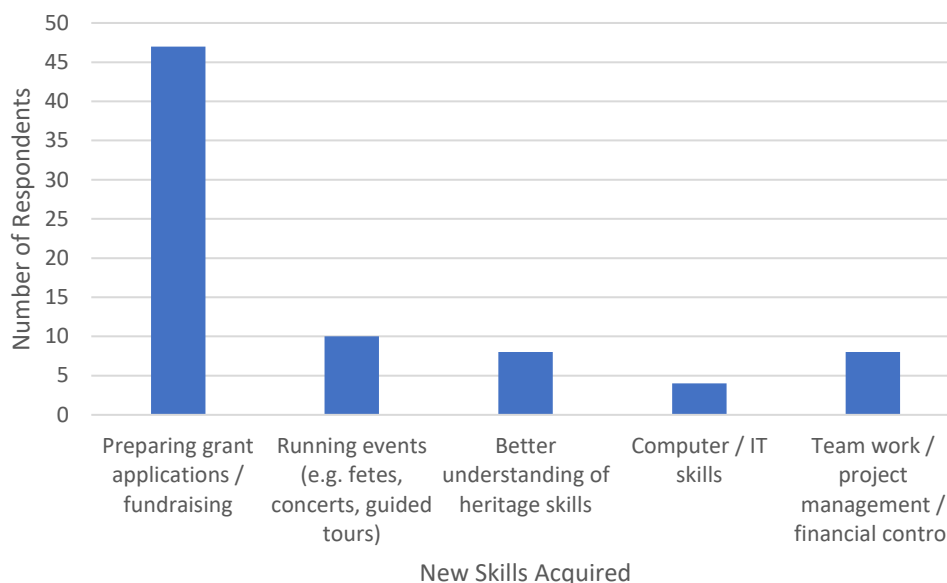
'The project provided a focus for interest in the maintenance of church buildings. The stonemasons were extremely informative, meeting members of the church and public to talk about their work'

'It's hard to evaluate the impact of drains and repointing, but long term it is enabling us to complete the renovations and the restoration of historic monuments. Leading us forward in preparing our church to become the hub of our community once more, providing a space for creative activities as well as worship'

'We were able to involve people from the parish in volunteering to complete this project. These were mainly people who did not attend worship so it was wonderful that they became involved. We were able to understand that the upkeep of the building and its grounds was important to the community as an asset and special place - even if they did not wish to attend services. We have since tried to provide ways of continuing the involvement of the wider community by holding events and activities beyond our normal church services so people can feel involved and part of the church life.'

- 3.59 A majority of respondents (nearly 60%) felt that their project had enabled members of the church community to develop new skills. Figure 19 summarises the main types of skill which respondents felt they had acquired – the majority relate to confidence in aspects of grant applications and fundraising.

Figure 19 New Skills Acquired



3.60 Findings from telephone interviews with recipients of fabric repair grants further reinforced the assessment of direct and wider impacts. The grant was described variously as *'very cheering'* and *'an enormous boost'*. One parish described the impact of the grant as meaning their church was *'saved for the foreseeable future'*, with another stating that *'hopefully drainage problems are now resolved for a generation'*. Further areas of interest raised by interviewees included:

- The fact that 50% of the funding for works has to be in place in order to be eligible for a fabric repair grant means that local fundraising is a critical part of the funding jigsaw. Although this can be an arduous undertaking, it has also inspired local people (*'the fundraising didn't just have the effect of raising the money, it had a wider effect on community'*) and has had legacy impacts. For example, one parish described how they had created a 'Fabric Fund' separate to the church finances which is ringfenced now for payment of architect's fees and future fabric repairs.
- Impacts of funding were described as *'raising our outreach and our profile'*, with impacts also extending beyond the period of the fundraising and fabric repair works themselves. One interviewee noted that the church had been removed from the Heritage at Risk Register as a result of the fabric repair works undertaken and the positive impact of this on the church community.
- Fabric works themselves have generated interest in church buildings (for example instances cited of scaffolding attracting people to the church to see what was happening) – not just the end result.
- The fabric repair grant helped to remove one church from the Historic England 'Heritage at Risk' register which meant the church was saved from closure. Interviewees considered that by supporting the church, *'the ChurchCare grant showed other funding bodies that we were worth helping'*.

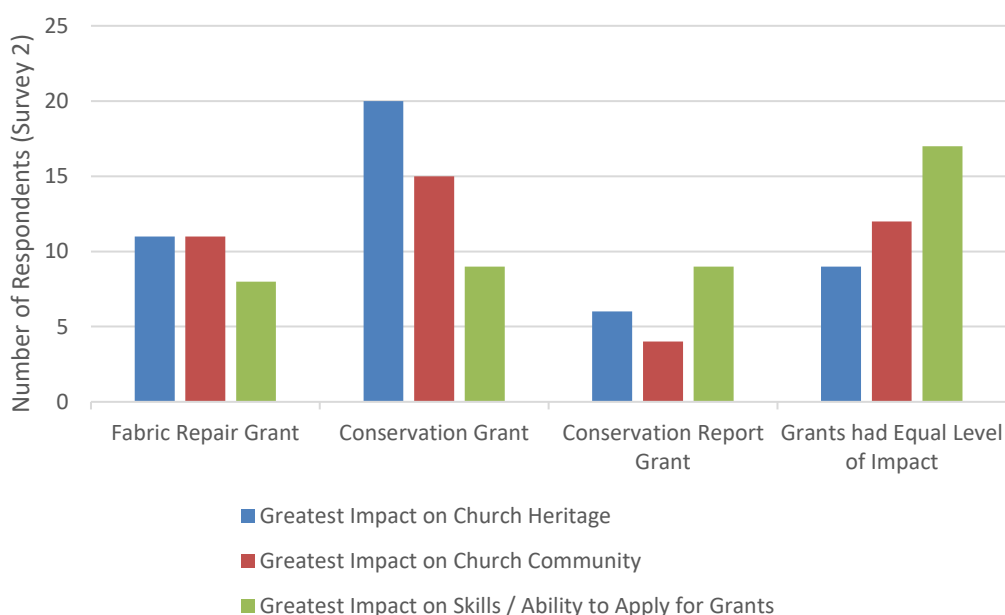
Case Study: Church of St Mary, Chithurst

The Church of St Mary, Chithurst, is thought to date from the 11th century and the external appearance of the building has barely changed since that time. Funding was sought to repair the roof following a Quinquennial Inspection. A Fabric Repair Grant of £10,000 was awarded in 2016 and was one of the first successful applications made for the project, providing *'an enormous boost for the team'*. The project inspired the local community to come together to help with fundraising through a variety of activities including lectures and concerts; this in turn raised the outreach and profile of the church, which has extended beyond the period of fundraising. The project *'has saved the church for the foreseeable future'* and enabled the church to retain its *'special atmosphere'*.



- 3.61 Respondents in receipt of multiple grants from ChurchCare were asked which of their grants had had the greatest degree of impact in relation to church heritage, church community, or on skills and abilities to apply for grants generally. The findings are shown in Figure 20; although the sample of recipients in receipt of multiple grants is relatively small, the figure shows that recipients considered the fabric repair grant to have added a more even level of impact in relation to heritage and community in particular (notably when compared to findings for the Conservation Grant Programme). A majority of respondents considered there to be an equal level of impact in relation to new skills and ability to apply for grant funding across all three grants.

Figure 20 Impacts of Grant Funding (Multiple Grant Recipients)



- 3.62 Interestingly, all the comments made in relation to this question were made by respondents who considered there to have been an equal level of impact of the grant programmes across each of the three areas identified. Comments included:

'As ChurchCare was one of the first funders I applied to, and their response was relatively quick it gave me the confidence to go forward to other providers. All the advice I received throughout was greatly appreciated.'

'It has been a learning curve and I have been encouraged to apply for funding for other projects in this church and for a neighbouring church.'

'receiving a grant told us we had a good conservation/heritage project that would hopefully receive as good a hearing from other grant funders'

'We could not have done the conservation on the bells if the fabric repairs had not been done. They were intertwined.'

- 3.63 Finally, findings relating to outcomes and impacts of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme can be derived from the evaluation reports required by The Wolfson Foundation on completion of projects. A review of these reports has emphasised some of the wider benefits associated with projects to repair the fabric of churches. Examples include:

'(The church) makes an incalculable difference to the life of the local communities. Had we failed to ensure its future, the loss of the building would amount to a genuine catastrophe. By funding the necessary building work, we simply continue to provide these villages with part of their heartbeat.'

'The project really captured the sense of belonging from the village and has renewed interest in the fabric upkeep of the church alongside using the building for community events. This has led to the formation of a Friends of group.'

'Members of the village community have followed the repairs with interest and approval and we expect visits to the church to increase in future.'

Case Study: St Peter and St Paul, Fenstanton (Ely Diocese)

The Church of St Peter and St Paul was awarded a Fabric Repair Grant of £5,000 in 2018 for works including the renewal of external drainage to the nave and works to the north aisle, including external painting and internal replastering after damp remediation. The church is Grade I listed and is the burial place of Lancelot Capability Brown. The church was able to provide initial funding from its Restoration Fund, with other funding sources for the works then including the All Churches Trust and use of the LPOW scheme for VAT repayments. The church had already been in receipt of Conservation Report and Conservation Grant funding from ChurchCare in relation to works to a monument of Capability Brown in time of the 300th anniversary of his birth. Although the problems identified in the north aisle were not stopping worship, they were the potential beginnings of a much longer term problem which were *'hopefully now resolved for a generation'*.



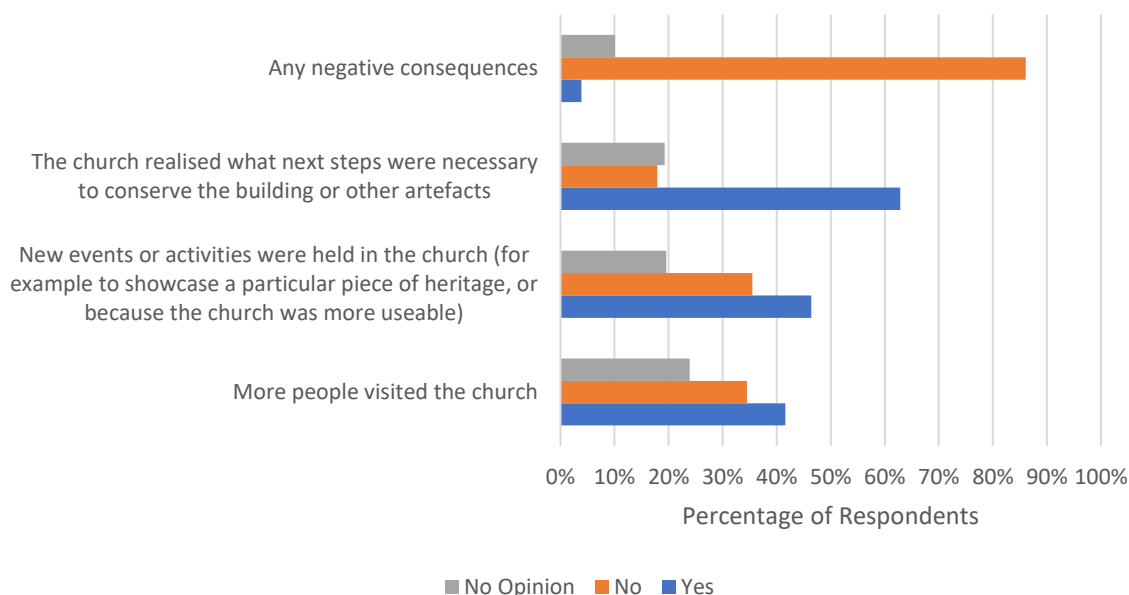
Before and after photographs of the north aisle east end

Unintended Consequences

- 3.64 Survey 1 sought to identify whether there had been any unintended consequences arising from projects in receipt of a fabric repair grant. Figure 21 shows that the principal unintended consequence related to a realisation of what next steps might be necessary to conserve the church building or other

artefacts (63% responded positively). Where negative consequences were identified, these were not related to the funding as such, but rather to factors including the identification of heritage being in a worse state of deterioration than had previously been thought, requiring further fundraising and subsequent delay.

Figure 21 Unintended Consequences of Grant Funding



3.65 Other comments made in relation to unintended consequences include:

- **Links with other churches** – *‘the finished church has led to visits by other churches with a similar wish to create a new Vision and Mission’.*
- **Holding of more events and activities leading to heightened sense of community spirit** – *‘as part of the project we needed to promote a number of events to raise money for our financial contribution to the project and also to increase awareness of the rich heritage of the building. As many events needed the help of a number of people from within the community it led to a better community spirit between our neighbours and other village institutions’.*
- **Better use of the church for activities** – *‘we now have after school clubs from the local school, there are rehearsals of local strings group, we have had more requests for weddings’ and ‘holding various art and craft workshops using the building as inspiration, stained glass, stone carving and so on’.*
- **More volunteering** – *‘groups now give tours of the church, volunteers enlisted to maintain and update website’.*
- **New projects** – *‘the fundraising activity appeared to stimulate more general visits to the church by walkers on the nearby footpath - shown by complementary entries in the visitor’s book. Subsequently the church organ has been refurbished and there has been interest in performance of organ recitals and other appropriate music events to raise more interest, and funds!’*
- **More visits** – *‘active participation and involvement in the whole workings of the church has sparked people’s curiosity and we have regular village visitors to the building which is much revered and loved in the village’.*

Communicating the Value of the Programme

3.66 The previous section revealed the extensive impacts which the Fabric Repair Grant Programme has clearly had on heritage, community and mission during the course of the evaluation period. This

section considers whether the value of the programme has been effectively captured and communicated – to stakeholders, funding partners and importantly to parishes (those in receipt of funding and those who may not have been aware of the grant programme). The section also considers the extent to which the grant programme has incentivised good practice for appropriate fabric repair works, through targeted funding and advice.

Capturing Feedback and Case Studies

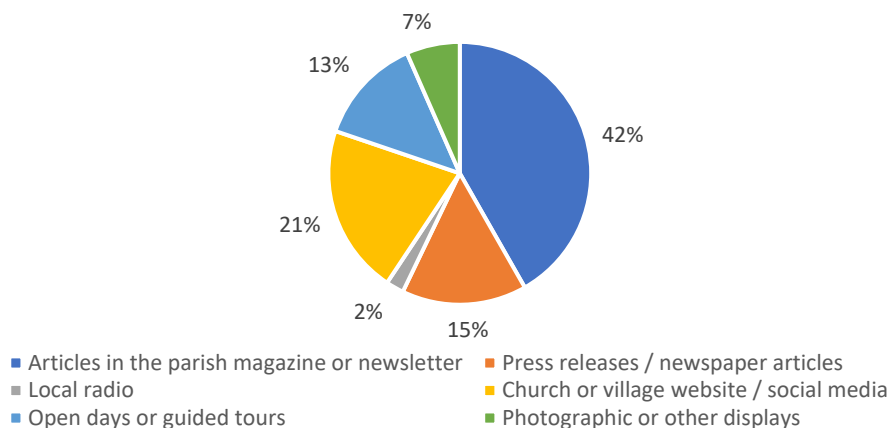
- 3.67 Annual reports produced by ChurchCare in 2015, 2016 and 2017 set out a summary of the organisation's grant-giving activities. The reports have followed a similar structure, providing an overview of grants awarded for each of the funding programmes administered by ChurchCare (noting the church, diocese, purpose of grant and amount awarded). Through photographs and images, the reports provide glimpses into the impacts of the programmes. The 2017 report also included a more detailed case study of King's Lynn Minster, which had been awarded a fabric repair grant of £10k; the case study articulated the significance of the building, the need for the project and identified other funding partners. The case study concluded that 'the Wolfson Foundation grant rounded off the parish's impressive fundraising campaign and enabled them to commence these much-needed repairs'. No formal annual report publication has been produced since 2017. Evidence from discussions with ChurchCare suggests this has been a capacity issue, with resources directed instead towards taking a 'hands-on' approach to assisting prospective and current grant recipients.
- 3.68 Some feedback and case study data is captured in the Final Reports required by the Wolfson Foundation as part of their grant management process. The reports are required for each of the projects in receipt of a fabric repair grant. The report format requires a project summary (final cost, funds raised, total funds committed by the parish); commentary around project outcomes being met; project images for use in publicity information; and feedback on the funding process itself (for example the application, grant claim process). The reports are intended to be light touch and simple for recipients to complete and this is reflected in the varying level of detail and quality of information provided across the reports. The reports together, however, give a body of evidence that could be used as a starting point for developing case studies. Using this information to highlight and publicise impact case studies on an annual basis would greatly assist with communicating the value of the grants programme to would-be participants, potential funding partners and the wider heritage sector.
- 3.69 In order to retain understanding and knowledge of the impacts of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme, an annual CBC / Wolfson Foundation 'road trip' has taken place to visit projects, to understand the reach and spread of the grants awarded and to see how grants are targeted across communities such that a meaningful impact can be had.

Community Dissemination

Communicating the value of the grant programme at parish level is to an extent undertaken by parishes themselves as part of wider dissemination activities through local press, community newsletters and so on. The online surveys asked grant recipients whether the results of projects for which funding had been awarded had been shared with the local community. The vast majority of grant recipients stated that this dissemination and feedback process had taken place (91% of respondents to Survey 1 and 80% of respondents to Survey 2 who had been in recipient of a Fabric Repair grant). Where results had not been shared, this primarily related to more recent grant awards where this has not yet been possible, or in one case *'we have been careful not to announce widely that the roof has new lead, because of the many lead thefts in the area'*. The principal methods used to share the project with the community are shown in

3.70 Figure 22.

Figure 22 Sharing Project Results with the Wider Community



Incentivising Good Practice

- 3.71 Evidence around the extent to which grants have incentivised good practice for fabric repair works is mixed. Responses to the online surveys have identified instances where grant recipients have said the grant award has given them a better understanding of maintenance needs and requirements of the building. For example, in one instance, a respondent stated that they had now developed a five year maintenance plan for the church; in another instance, a respondent stated that they had developed greater vigilance over particular elements of the building (reference was made to the state of the lead on the north aisle roof).
- 3.72 Interviews undertaken with grant recipients revealed a real mixture of approaches to church maintenance and much of this related back to the skills, ability and priorities of individuals with responsibility for church buildings. One interviewee referred to the fact that having little knowledge or experience of heritage buildings *'leads to a great burden on churchwardens to undertake services and also to maintain the building'* in churches (particularly rural churches). Other factors which affect how maintenance activities may be undertaken by churches include the relationship with parishioners and the church architect and inevitably what resources the church might have available. The interviews included churches who had ringfenced fabric funds, or had been fortunate to have been left generous legacies, through to churches for which reserves were low. A further factor appears to relate to the capacity of parishioners to make grant applications – a number of interviewees referred to the need for various works required for their building but considered the prospect of making a significant grant application to be beyond their ability at present.

Summary and Recommendations

- 3.73 The evaluation has provided an overview of the last five years of the funding partnership between ChurchCare and the Wolfson Foundation; a new chapter for the Fabric Repair Grants Programme has now begun with the NCT. The evidence from the evaluation has shown:
- considerable benefit from the funding awarded to parishes over the period from 2015 to 2019, with impacts seen in relation to heritage, community and mission of the church.
 - the value associated with awarding both large and small grant awards in terms of the boost and confidence they inspire in parishes and encouragement they give to making other grant applications.
 - parishes have become more aware of other opportunities with ChurchCare to seek funding in relation to aspects of church heritage via the Conservation Grant Programme.
 - the professional help and support provided to grant applicants by ChurchCare has been noteworthy.

- evidence has shown grant application, evaluation and monitoring processes to be streamlined and straightforward.

3.74 The administration of the fabric repair grant programme has now passed to the NCT, who over time will develop their own methods, processes and priorities for funding. Key areas to arise from the evaluation which may help inform future thinking are as follows:

- **Recommendation 1 – Wider communication of the value of the programme.** The evaluation has highlighted that although there has been dissemination of the direct and indirect impacts of grant awards at project level in many instances (much of which has proved effective in terms of raising awareness of funding and associated outcomes), wider communication of the value of the programme could be more effective. This should take place using a variety of means – annual reports, website content, use of social media – to ensure the benefits and value of the Fabric Repair programme are promoted. A selection of annual case studies could help support this information.
- **Recommendation 2 – Providing support for parishes in relation to fund-raising.** All parishes in receipt of a Fabric Repair grant would have had the benefit of external advisers in relation to heritage / fabric repair aspects (for example architects, chartered building surveyors), but few parishes have been in receipt of professional assistance in relation to fund-raising. This is an area which so many parishes have highlighted as a struggle, for example due to time/capacity, skillsets and awareness. Further support could be provided for parishes in this area – a simple task could be the preparation of a guidance note identifying the breadth of other funding sources available and information around success rates / eligibility criteria (information gathered as part of this evaluation could help showcase the variety of potential funders available); a further option could be circulation of good practice case studies highlighting fund-raising ideas and good practice tips from other grant recipients; a more innovative option could be a funding support officer to directly assist parishes with funding applications and putting together the ‘cocktail’ of funding options for their project.
- **Recommendation 3 – Work with DACs to encourage applications.** As part of a drive to promote awareness of grant-giving possibilities for fabric repair projects, ensure effective communication and close working with DACs continues to encourage applications where appropriate.
- **Recommendation 4 – Introduction of targets to improve geographical spread of grant awards.** Evidence has shown that there have been clear clusters of grant awards across the country (partly due to the distribution of listed buildings within dioceses, but also due to the awareness, priorities and support offered by individual DACs to parishes). Target setting could help increase the number of grants awarded to churches within the most deprived areas of England (for example a goal to award a quarter of grants per year to churches within the 20% most deprived areas). This approach could galvanise a marketing campaign within highlighted coldspots, linked with wider communication (Recommendation 1).
- **Recommendation 5 – Working with parishes to help produce maintenance plans.** Evidence from grant recipients revealed a very mixed approach to maintenance at parish level, for a variety of reasons including awareness, skillset, financial ability, priority, relationships with church architects and availability of appropriate contractors. Given that good and regular maintenance is of such importance to heritage buildings in terms of prevention and protection, further assistance at parish level (whether this is through funding, communication of effective approaches, dissemination of good practice via written guidance or face to face training workshops) to enable the preparation and implementation of effective maintenance plans would be beneficial.

4 Conservation Grant Programme

Introduction

- 4.1 This section presents the findings from the evaluation of the Conservation Grant Programme (which includes both conservation grants and conservation report grants). The evaluation has taken into account secondary research data, stakeholder evidence (from discussions with ChurchCare staff, funding partners and Committee Chairs), findings from the online surveys of grant recipients and telephone interviews with a sample of both successful and unsuccessful grant applicants.

Context

- 4.2 The evaluation has considered conservation grants awarded for the conservation of historic church interiors and churchyard structures between 2015 and 2019 by ChurchCare in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust, the Oswald Allen Bequest, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the Anglican Parish Churches Fund (APCF) and the Founder's Fund. The grants programme supports the conservation of:
- bells and bell frames
 - books and manuscripts
 - church plate
 - churchyard structures
 - clocks
 - monumental brasses and decorative metalwork
 - monuments
 - organs
 - paintings and wall paintings
 - stained glass
 - textiles
 - woodwork and wooden objects
- 4.3 Eligible projects must have artistic, historic, archaeological or architectural significance. Further, eligible projects must demonstrate conservation need, urgency and appropriateness of the proposal. Applicants are not required to have secured any funding prior to submission of their grant request. The grant programme positions itself as a seed funder.
- 4.4 ChurchCare also gives grants of up to £5,000 for conservation reports on historic interiors in Anglican parish churches in England. Conservation reports can be an essential first step in projects involving the repair and conservation of artworks and historic furnishings in churches. They are a key document to support faculty and grant applications. Other types of surveys or analyses that may be needed to work out why an object may need conservation may also be funded, including building performance surveys, environmental surveys and technical analyses such as paint or pigment analysis. Over the course of the evaluation period, conservation report grants have been offered in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust and the Founder's Fund, although since 2017 they have been offered solely in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust.
- 4.5 The management of the Conservation Grant Programme is provided entirely by ChurchCare.

Programme Aims and Objectives

- 4.6 The programme aims and objectives are set out in Chapter 1 of this report, relating to parishes, funders and ChurchCare themselves. This section reviews the extent to which these aims and objectives have been met and considers the effectiveness of the approach taken by ChurchCare. Conservation grants and conservation report grants are considered separately in order to draw out specific findings of relevance to each.

Reach and Spread of Grants

Conservation Grants

- 4.7 The aims and objectives of the Conservation Grant Programme have included to reach as many parishes as possible and to have a wide geographical spread. The total amount awarded to conservation grants under the programme has increased over the evaluation period, from £190,950 in 2015 to £239,613 in 2019, as shown in Table 4. The table also shows the contribution to the total by individual funding partner. Discussions with ChurchCare staff have highlighted that the annual

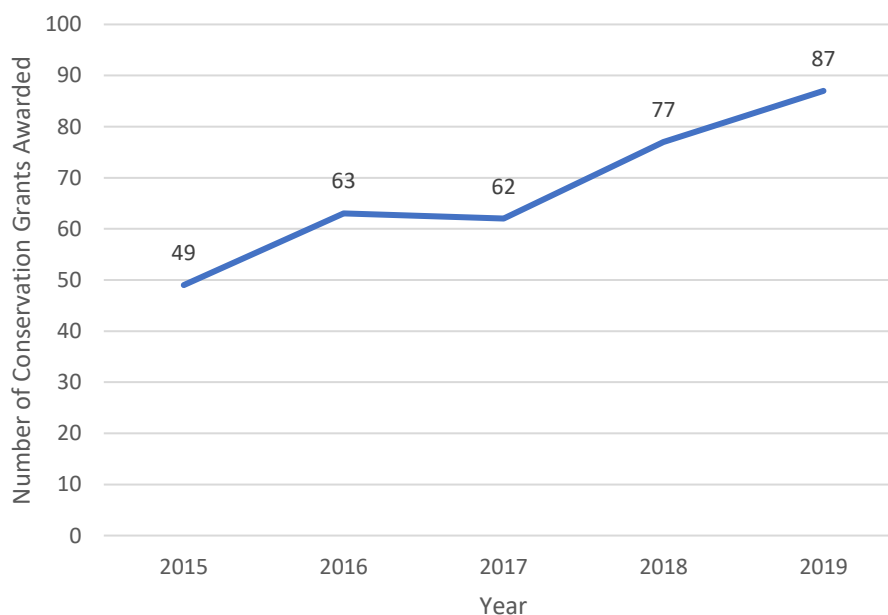
variation in available grant was due to a number of factors, including for example periodic writebacks and reallocation of unclaimed grants. The variation also reflects the type of applications received; for example the Oswald Allen Bequest is a restricted fund for conservation of books and manuscripts *in-situ* in a parochial library, for which no relevant grant applications may be received in any individual year.

Table 4 Total Conservation Grants Awarded Annually 2015-2019 (*excluding* Conservation Reports)

Funder	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
The Pilgrim Trust	£140,050	£142,800	£169,970	£17,660	£178,000
The Radcliffe Trust	£15,000	£13,400	£20,000	£20,000	£25,000
Founder's Fund	£32,400	£17,150	£6,000	£37,000	£19,118
Gunnis Fund	£1,100	£1,250	£1,250	£625	£1,250
Oswald Allen Bequest	£1,600	£7,185	-	-	£6,245
The Goldsmith's Company	£800	-	-	-	-
Anglican Parish Churches Fund	-	-	-	-	£10,000
TOTAL	£190,950	£181,785	£204,220	£234,225	£239,613

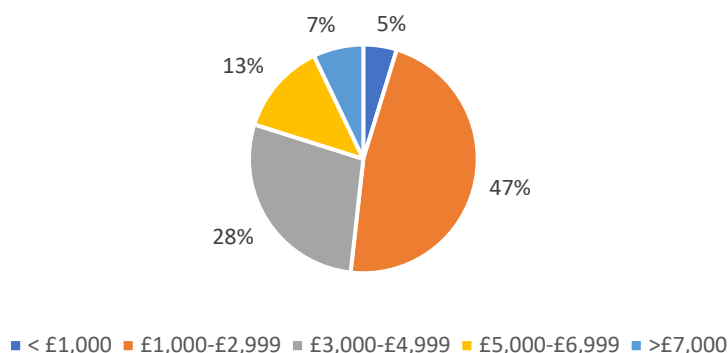
- 4.8 A total of 338 conservation grants were awarded between 2015 and 2019. The total number of grants awarded year by year over this period is shown in Figure 23, with the number of grants awarded increasing from 49 in 2015 to 87 in 2019. This can be partly attributed to the increase in available funding over the evaluation period (an increase of around 20%); it can also be attributed to the size of grant awarded, with more smaller grants being given (discussed later in this section).

Figure 23 Number of Conservation Grants Awarded 2015-2019



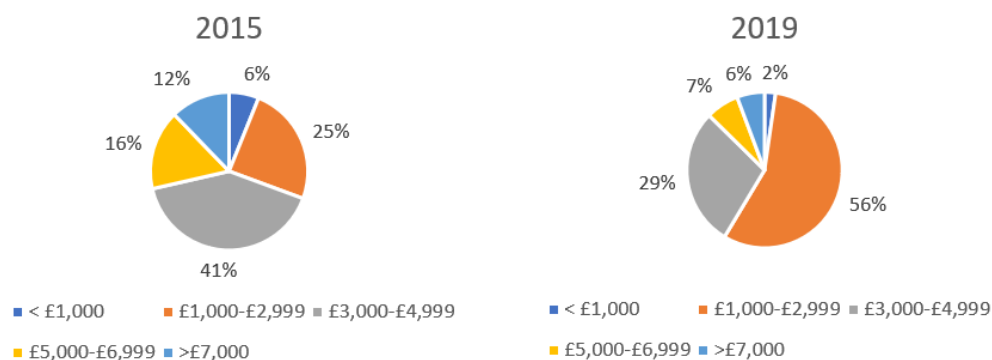
- 4.9 Grants awarded by value over the evaluation period are shown in Figure 24. The figure shows that just over half of all grants awarded during this time (52%) were less than £3,000 in value.

Figure 24 Grants Awarded by Value 2015-2019



- 4.10 Figure 25 compares data for 2015 and 2019 in terms of the proportion of grants awarded of different values. The figure shows a trend towards more smaller grants of a value less than £3,000 – 31% of grants of this size were awarded in 2015 compared to 58% in 2019.

Figure 25 Proportion of Conservation Grants Awarded by Value – 2015 and 2019

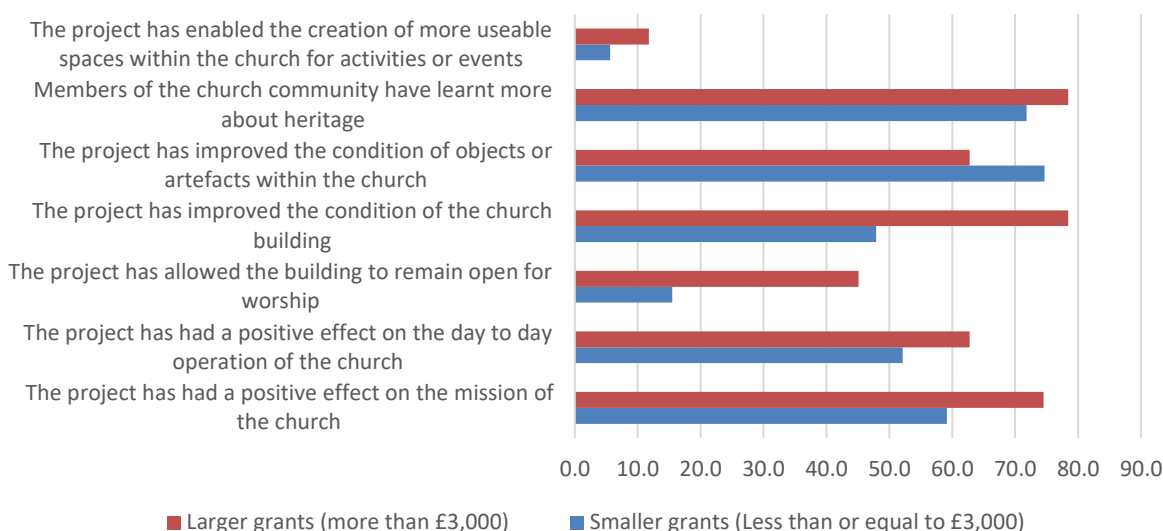


- 4.11 The change over time of giving a greater number of smaller grants can be attributed to a number of factors, including the number of grant applications made to each of the six conservation committees. Applications that meet eligibility criteria have largely been awarded a grant of some value by committees; for committees where a greater number of applications were received, the value of corresponding grants awarded would be lower. This trend has informed the aim of the grant programme to reach as many parishes as possible.
- 4.12 Discussions with Committee Chairs revealed they consider there to be overwhelming support for small grants amongst parishes. One view expressed was that grants can *'make a big difference to small projects but can only act as an incentive on big projects'*. There was a general consensus amongst Chairs that a larger number of small grants has been more effective than fewer larger grants. Small grants were viewed as giving a seal of approval to a project and *'the fact that ChurchCare has the courage to be 'first funder' is important'*. Discussions highlighted that this type of seed funding has given a reliable sign to other funders of the worthiness of a project, which can then have a catalytic effect. Interviewees have acknowledged that this can be difficult to evidence, and therefore it has been difficult to evaluate, given the anecdotal nature of information.
- 4.13 A related perspective was raised through interviews with funding partners – whilst small grants may be seen as having given the *'seal of approval'* to a project, question-marks were raised over whether this has been the most *efficient* approach to funding particularly when considering the size of grant against the total project cost. Stakeholder evidence has also highlighted the importance of flexibility when it

comes to making grant awards, noting that some projects are unavoidably expensive and may be in need of a greater level of financial support. To aid these cases, it needs to be possible to also award larger grants. The evaluation has sought to consider the effectiveness of the approach to award more smaller grants through analysis of data from the online surveys. A total of 95 respondents to the online surveys had been in receipt of a conservation grant of below £3,000 between 2015 and 2019, compared to 69 respondents who had been in receipt of a grant of more than £3,000 during this time. Both online surveys asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed (or had no opinion) with seven statements about the perceived impact of their grants.

- 4.14 Analysis of the extent to which respondents agreed with these statements is summarised in Figure 26. The figure shows that for some areas of impact – notably that members of the church community have learnt more about heritage or in relation to the condition of objects or artefacts within the church building – there is very little difference in perceived impact from respondents in receipt of either large or small grants. Larger grants appear to have had a greater perceived impact in relation to allowing the building to remain open for worship and improving the condition of the overall building. Findings from telephone interviews with grant recipients have emphasised the boost which successful grant applications, of any value, have given them.

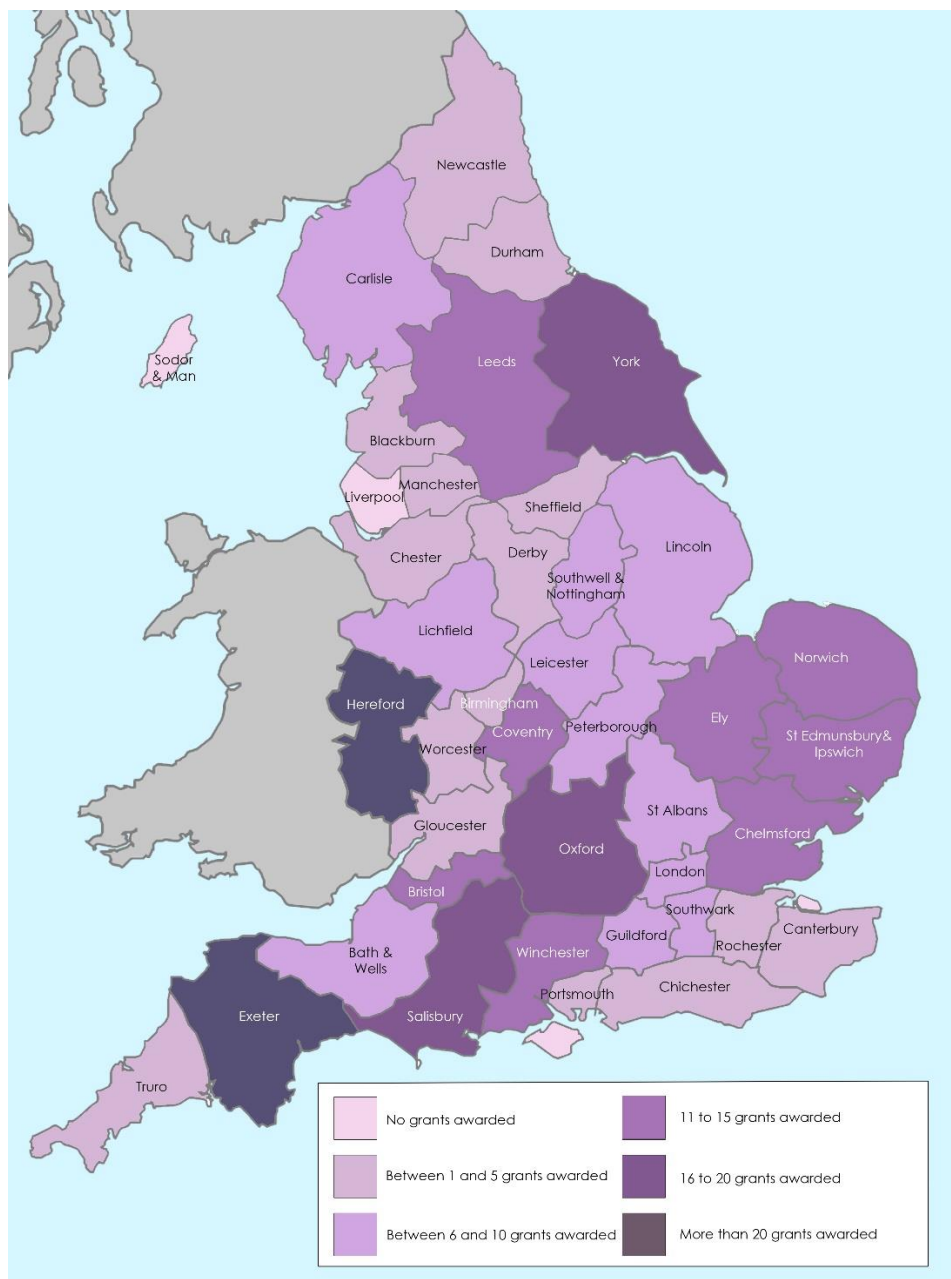
Figure 26 Perceived Impact of Grant Funding by Value of Grant Awarded



- 4.15 The geographical spread of conservation grants awarded is shown in Figure 27. One of the aims of the programme is to reach as wide a geographical area as possible. The figure shows that all mainland dioceses within England have been in receipt of at least one conservation grant during the evaluation period, with the exception of Liverpool. Five dioceses (Exeter, Hereford, Oxford, Salisbury and York) have been awarded more than fifteen grants, with Exeter and Hereford receiving more than twenty conservation grants between 2015 and 2019.
- 4.16 Geographical spread is necessarily uneven, as a result of the distribution of church buildings, the distribution of listed buildings and significant heritage across dioceses (as noted in relation to the Fabric Repair Grant Programme). The Conservation Grant Programme makes awards to both listed and unlisted churches (although in practice very few grants are awarded to the latter, only a handful per year). Dioceses such as Liverpool and Manchester both have a high proportion of unlisted churches (56% and 51% respectively), whereas the equivalent figure for dioceses such as Exeter and Hereford is around 19%; therefore the latter dioceses have significantly more churches likely to have funding potential.
- 4.17 Interviews with Committee Chairs have questioned whether the geographical spread of applications for conservation grants is also influenced by DACs and whether some may be better than others at encouraging applications to ChurchCare. Discussions with ChurchCare have highlighted that funding 'coldspots' are reviewed regularly and used to inform marketing and communications plans;

ChurchCare assert that *‘building relationships (with parishes) is vital’* and that they are *‘more than just a grant giver’*. Awarding conservation grants has provided a mechanism through which a link with parishes can be maintained; this has been borne out through interviews with grant recipients, who have described ChurchCare as *‘approachable’* and *‘helpful’*.

Figure 27 Geographical Spread of Conservation Grants Programme by Diocese 2015-2019

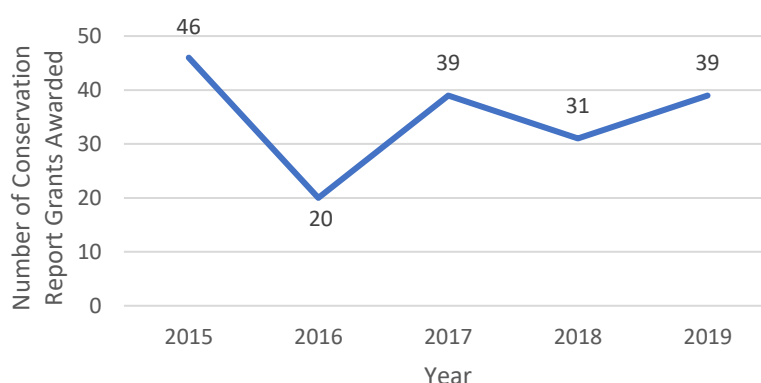


Conservation Report Grants

- 4.18 The total amount awarded for conservation report grants during the evaluation period was £149,845; since 2017 the annual award has remained stable at £35,000 through the funding partnership with the Pilgrim Trust (with the exception of a small award made through the Oswald Allen Bequest in 2019 for £245). Prior to 2017, the annual award for conservation reports was £30,650 and £13,950 for 2015 and 2016 respectively. Funding partners during these two years comprised the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust and the Founders' Fund. A total of 175 conservation report grants were awarded over

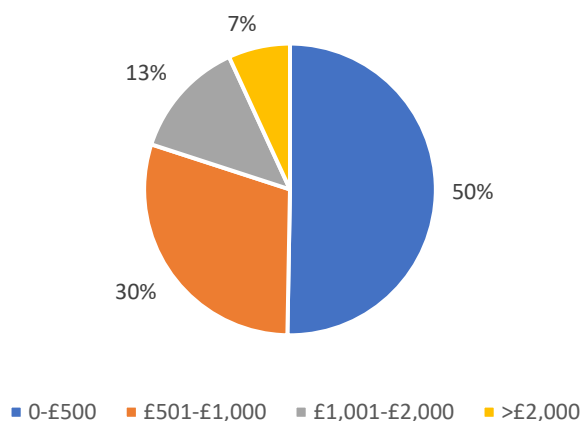
the period 2015-2019. The year-on-year change in number of grants awarded was relatively static, as shown in Figure 28 **Error! Reference source not found.**, with the exception of 2016 which saw a dip in the number of grants awarded. This dip is likely to have been due to a combination of factors including less total funding in 2016, fewer applications received in that year and also less promotion of the grant programme at that time due to the focus on the appointment and bedding in of new Committee Chairs and committees. In 2017, additional funding was provided by the Pilgrim Trust specifically for conservation reports, and promotion of the grants was increased.

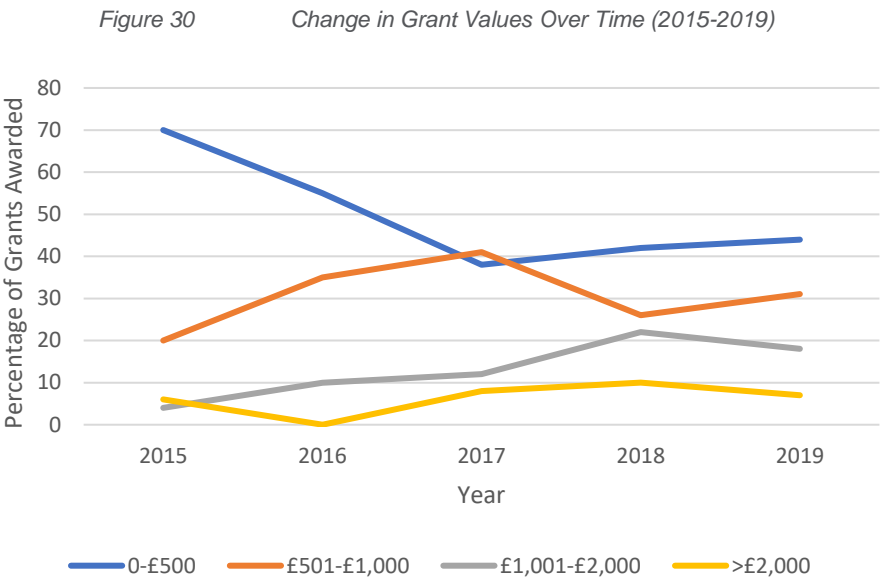
Figure 28 Conservation Report Grants Awarded 2015-2019



- 4.19 The value of grants awarded between 2015 to 2019 are shown in Figure 29 **Error! Reference source not found.**, with half of all grants awarded during this time being up to £500 in value. The change in grant values over time is shown in Figure 30. The latter figure shows that in 2015, around 70% of conservation report grants awarded were up to £500 in value. Over time, and particularly since 2018/19, the data shows the proportion of grants of this size to have reduced to around 40% of total grants awarded, with more medium sized grants (£501 to £1k and £1,001 to £2k) being awarded. The percentage of larger grants (over £2k) has remained more or less stable over time.
- 4.20 Conservation report grants are awarded throughout the year, with amounts awarded balanced against the estimated application numbers which may arise (to ensure sufficient funding remains for applications as the year progresses). The changes in the value of grant awarded over time is therefore likely to have been influenced by several factors, including total applications received within an individual year, together with the needs of applicants in any individual year. There is some evidence from the online surveys that costs of accredited practitioners can be high (thereby necessitating applications for larger grants); this may be due to conservators investigating underlying issues of deterioration of an object in order to ensure that conservation treatments are holistic and more likely to lead to a long-term stabilisation of the object.

Figure 29 Value of Grants Awarded 2015-2019 (Conservation Report Grant)





The geographical spread of conservation report grants is shown in

- 4.21 Figure 31. The figure shows ‘hotspots’ of grant awards for dioceses including Oxford and Exeter (more than ten grants awarded in each during the evaluation period), which corresponds with similar clusters for conservation grants as shown in the preceding chapter. The figure also identifies five dioceses where no conservation report grants were awarded between 2015 and 2019.

Figure 31 Geographical Spread of Conservation Report Grants by Diocese 2015-2019



Heritage

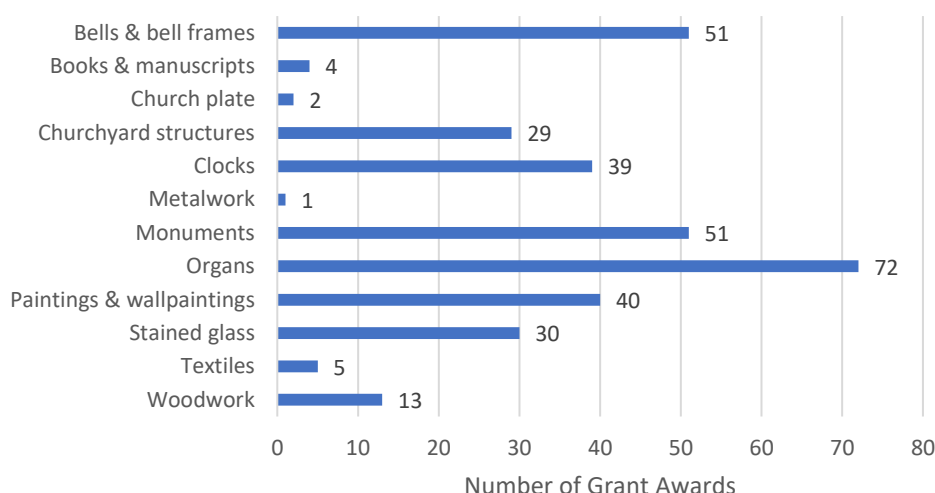
- 4.22 Aims and objectives of the Conservation Grant Programme in relation to heritage are to ensure objects are in a better long-term condition than before the work was carried out; to ensure the underlying causes of deterioration are addressed; and to encourage good practice for the appropriate repair and conservation works through targeted funding and advice.

Conservation Grants

- 4.23 Figure 32 shows conservation grants awarded by heritage category across the period 2015-2019. Areas where numbers of grants awarded were particularly low (for example books and manuscripts, textiles, church plate and metalwork) may be a function of awareness amongst parishes that funding can be sought for these types of project, together with an understanding of conservation needs. This has been borne out through interviews with grant recipients, several of whom felt they had 'stumbled' across the Conservation Grant Programme or had only been aware of the relevance of it to their project from previous interactions with ChurchCare as part of other projects.

- 4.24 Just over 50% of grants awarded have been in relation to organs, bells and bell frames and monuments. Various reasons for greater numbers of grants being awarded to these types of project have been suggested by stakeholders – for example they are more visible artefacts within a church setting for members of the church and wider community (and therefore if they are in need of conservation work or restoration, there are more likely to be local advocates); each diocese has their own advisers for organs, bells and clocks and a route therefore exists for a church to seek advice on work and gain information about potential sources of funding; and finally that there are few dedicated alternative sources of funding for these types of artefact.

Figure 32 Grants Awarded by Heritage Type 2015-2019



- 4.25 The online surveys asked recipients of conservation grants whether their project had improved the condition of objects or artefacts within the church or had improved the condition of the church building. Results showed that more than 70% of respondents agreed with the former statement and more than 60% of respondents agreed with the latter statement. Where respondents stated that they disagreed with the statement that the project had improved the condition of objects or artefacts within the church, reasons included that the project being funded by the conservation grant related to *external* areas (for example the churchyard or external monuments).
- 4.26 Some of the open-ended responses to survey questions highlighted the role of the funding in addressing underlying causes of deterioration in relation to church heritage, in line with the programme's aims and objectives. Comments include:
- 'It's a great relief to know that our recently rebuilt organ is safe from water damage'*
- 'Work on the glass and ferramenta of the windows meant that the stonework also had to be repaired and this has led to a requirement for rebuilding the parapet'*
- 'the newly restored tombs remove a hazard within the churchyard and enhance the other tombs around'*
- 4.27 A concern raised during consultations with funding partners related to the lag time between conservation grants being committed and projects going ahead (for example while additional funding is sought), in that church interiors / heritage could be deteriorating further during this time. This is particularly relevant to situations where the deterioration is caused by factors such as water ingress, which are likely to be ongoing problems. This highlights the complexity of the environment in which grant funding is sought and the interaction between both fabric repair and conservation grant funding.
- 4.28 A related area is therefore the approach that individual parishes take to maintenance of their church building and associated heritage features. The more detailed telephone interviews with grant recipients as well as with those who had been unsuccessful in making conservation grant applications revealed very different approaches to church maintenance, often coming down to the abilities and

priorities of individuals within parishes. Discussions with several parish representatives, for example, acknowledged that maintenance needs may have been neglected within their church (for reasons including lack of awareness, a poor relationship with the church architect, lack of resources), with the result that more work (and thereby more funding) was now required. One interviewee reported that when they became churchwarden, they *'encountered a thirty year backlog of maintenance requirements...a hallmark of previous maintenance programmes not being understood by the incumbent or by previous churchwardens'*.

- 4.29 Discussions with funding partners reflected on this area, citing that *'for parishes there needs to be a better focus on the maintenance needs of churches, otherwise there is a danger that conservation grants are simply rewarding spectacular failure'*. Suggestions included that, with more emphasis on good maintenance, perhaps more small grants could be targeted at finding out the cause of issues / problems, which could then be tackled. This should be balanced by the understanding that, even with an effective maintenance schedule, the materials out of which historic artefacts are made of may simply come to the end of their natural life. Other suggestions related to better reporting in terms of the condition of heritage in order to reduce the need for very expensive conservation works. It is acknowledged that the need for and importance of church maintenance is part of a much bigger picture which is beyond the scope of the Conservation Grants Programme; survey responses have provided a valuable insight into this area.
- 4.30 The CBC is considered by Committee Chairs to *'inspire confidence'* because of the representation by *'top professionals in their field'* on the respective committees, inspiring credibility and trust. CBC is also considered to give attention to detail in terms of the relationship they have with parishioners. Discussions with the ChurchCare grants team have noted that, due to volume of workload, sometimes timeliness of responses to applicants can be an issue. Annual updates have been described by funding partners as *'thoughtful'* and *'giving a vote of confidence...in terms of forward thinking'*.
- 4.31 The relationship between ChurchCare and its funding partners is quite unusual in terms of the longevity of partnerships and continuity of arrangements. Currently, the Conservation Grants Programme is well-aligned with aims and objectives of its funding partners – for example supporting the conservation of historic contents and structures (Pilgrim Trust) and supporting the development and practice of skills, knowledge and experience that underpin the UK's heritage and crafts sector (Radcliffe Trust). There is a general feeling amongst funding partners that *'we need to preserve the good and build on it'*. Discussions with funding partners have emphasised the need to be flexible and agile in terms of what is being funded, in order to be able to respond to *'customer'* needs.

St Andrew's Church, Roker, Monkwearmouth (Durham Diocese)

The Parish was awarded a Conservation Grant of £2,500 in 2016 for the conservation of the Adoration of the Magi tapestry designed by Burne-Jones in 1907. This work followed a grant, for the restoration of a William Morris carpet, from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and administered by Church Care. The Parish described the tapestry as “inspirational” and explained that it ‘stands as a focal point above the high altar. Its restoration has provided the “wow” factor for worship and visitors alike’. The conservation works also revealed an interliner of cotton printed with William Morris’s ‘borage’ pattern. It was found to be in pristine condition as it had never been exposed to light or dust. The conservation work was carried out in Belgium and London and the project was part of a seven-year church restoration project which cost nearly £1m. The result of this was that Historic England was able to remove this nationally important church from the Heritage At Risk Register. The church now receives more visitors and the project has had much publicity.

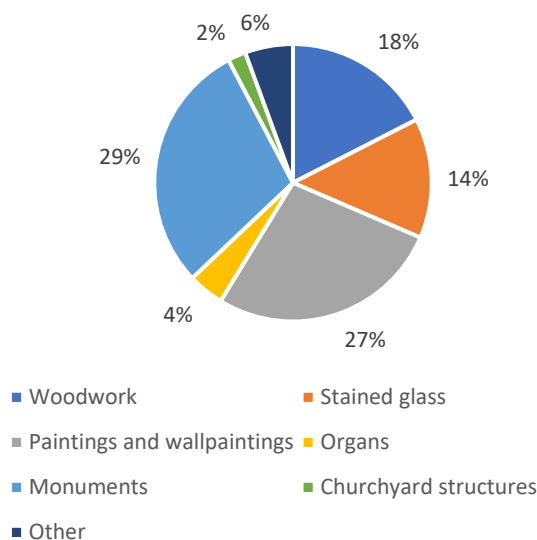


Detail from tapestry, before (left) and after (right) restoration

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.32 Types of heritage covered by conservation reports across the evaluation period are summarised in Figure 33, with principal areas including paintings and wallpaintings, monuments and aspects of woodwork. The largest grants awarded over the evaluation period (over £2k) related principally to decorative elements of heritage (paintings and wallpaintings, a wooden effigy, a stained glass window and a decorative ceiling), together with environmental monitoring and assessment work associated with a new heating system.

Figure 33 Conservation Reports by Type of Heritage (2015-2019)



- 4.33 Both online surveys asked grant recipients to state whether ChurchCare funding had improved the condition of the building, had improved heritage objects or artefacts, or had led to members of the church community learning more about heritage. Combined survey responses for these three areas showed that 40% of respondents agreed with the statement that funding had improved the condition of the building, 49% agreed that the condition of heritage objects or artefacts had been improved, and 65% agreed that members of the church community had learnt more about heritage.
- 4.34 Findings from discussions with Committee Chairs revealed there to be '*a fine line between what is defined as maintenance and what is conservation*'. More maintenance was understood to be required by necessity for objects such as organs and clocks. In addition, there were identified to be disparities in experience and advice across dioceses; for example, where most dioceses will have a clocks, bells and organs advisor, technical expertise may be lacking in areas such as stained glass. Philosophical differences were also described in terms of how conservation is approached, which is of particular relevance to certain objects (for example stained glass). ChurchCare has acted as an interface between the technicalities of heritage issues and understanding on the one hand, and the day to day operation of churches and understanding of parishioners on the other.
- 4.35 The vast majority of respondents to the online surveys stated that the conservation report grant was the first they had received in relation to their project, with nearly three-quarters also stating that this had encouraged them to apply for other funding. Comments from survey respondents related to difficulties in finding alternative funding sources for relatively specialised projects (one example given for the funding of conservation of magnesian limestone architectural structures). Other comments showed the value of a conservation report in identifying a whole package of issues and needs and thereby providing the church with a framework for which to seek funding for. Finally, comments related to the conservation report grant promoting wider awareness of other ChurchCare grant schemes to applicants.

Transparent Decision-Making

- 4.36 Conservation grant applications are assessed by one of six conservation committees (Bells, Clocks, Organs, Paintings and Wallpaintings, Sculpture and Furnishings, and Stained Glass). Committees comprise a membership of between six and seven individuals selected for their specialist knowledge, in addition to a Chair; an exception is the Sculpture and Furnishings Committee which has a current membership of twelve in addition to the Chair (this is reflective of the breadth of heritage covered at this committee, including books, church plate, monuments, textiles, churchyard structures, monumental brasses and woodwork / wooden objects). Committee members sign up for one five year term (the current term is 2016-2021, although this has been extended to 2022 due to Covid-19) and can serve a maximum of two terms. Each Committee Chair is also a member of the Church Buildings Council. The Council meets seven times a year.
- 4.37 The Church Buildings Council has long established relationships with its funding partners. Discussions with funding partners have suggested that ongoing annual grants are provided with relatively little basis / justification, primarily due to the quality of specialist advice available, and that this is a privileged position to be in. Partners have equally suggested improvements to some aspects, for example the clarity of financial reporting.

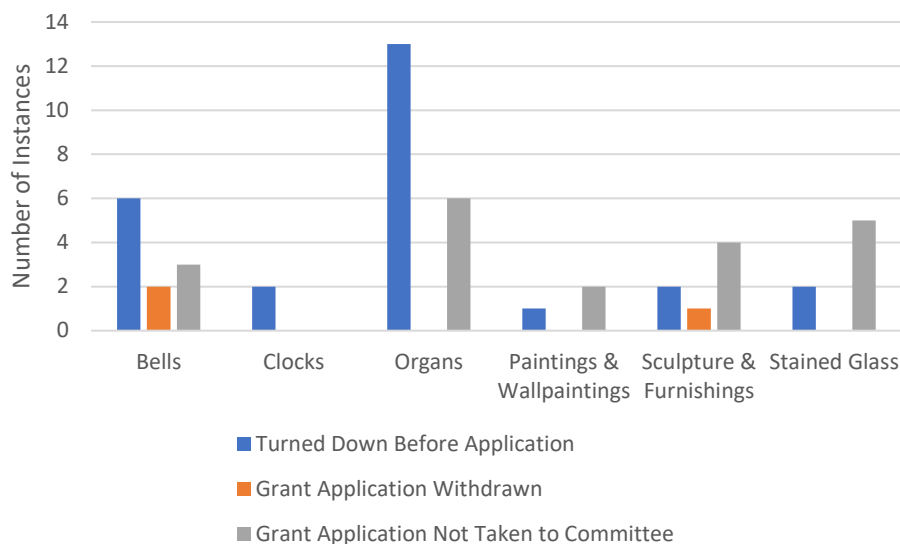
Applications Rejected Prior to Committee

Since 2018, data has been collected in relation to the number of grants either turned down prior to an application being made, withdrawn following an application being made, or for which an application had been made but which had subsequently not been taken to the respective committee for approval. The findings for 2018 are shown in

- 4.38 Figure 34. The highest instances of grants being withdrawn or turned down prior to Committee related to the Organs and Bells Committees (19 and 11 instances respectively). This is not surprising given that, generally, more applications are made in relation to organs and bells as they tend to be more obvious heritage artefacts within a church; evidence from stakeholder discussions also suggests that organs and bells potentially offer the widest scope for non-conservation treatments not eligible for funding under the Conservation Grants Programme. The Clocks Committee and Paintings and Wallpaintings Committee record the fewest instances of grants being withdrawn or turned down prior

to committee within this year (two and three instances respectively). Reasons for this relate to fewer applications being received in these areas.

Figure 34 Review of Applications Rejected or Withdrawn Prior to Committee (2018 only)



Application Success Rate

- 4.39 Figure 35 shows the success rate for grant applications by committee over the period 2015-2019 (where there were two committees per year, an average across the two rounds has been taken). The figure shows that the average annual success rate by committee was relatively stable during the evaluation period for all committees. Exceptions include the Paintings and Wallpaintings Committee, which showed considerable variation between 2015 / 2016 and the remainder of the evaluation period, and also increases in the success rates at both the Sculpture and Furnishings and Organs Committees. These changes can be attributed to the change in approach arising from the new committee membership from 2016 onwards in addition to factors including improved processes (better weeding out of poor or ineligible applications) and the provision of advice to parishes in order to strengthen eligible applications. The majority of the period of grant giving under evaluation has been consistent in terms of committee members and decision-making.
- 4.40 Figure 36 then shows average success rate by committee across the five years; rates ranged from 87% for the Clocks Committee down to 47% for the Organs Committee. It is interesting to compare success rates of the Conservation Grant Programme with those of other funding organisations; the NCT for example has an application success rate of around 25% for its Cornerstone grant programme, which is significantly lower.

Figure 35 Average Success Rate by Grant Committee 2015-2019

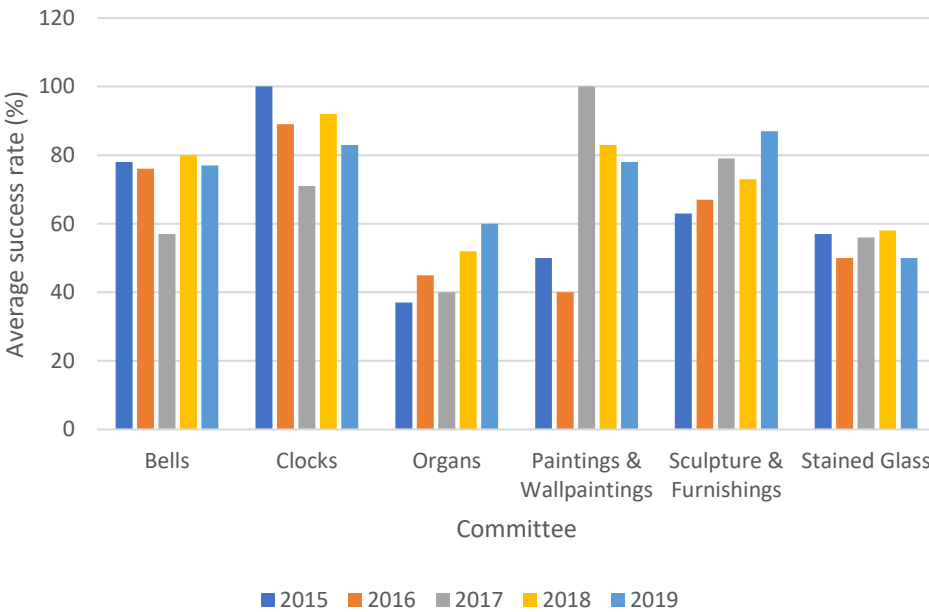
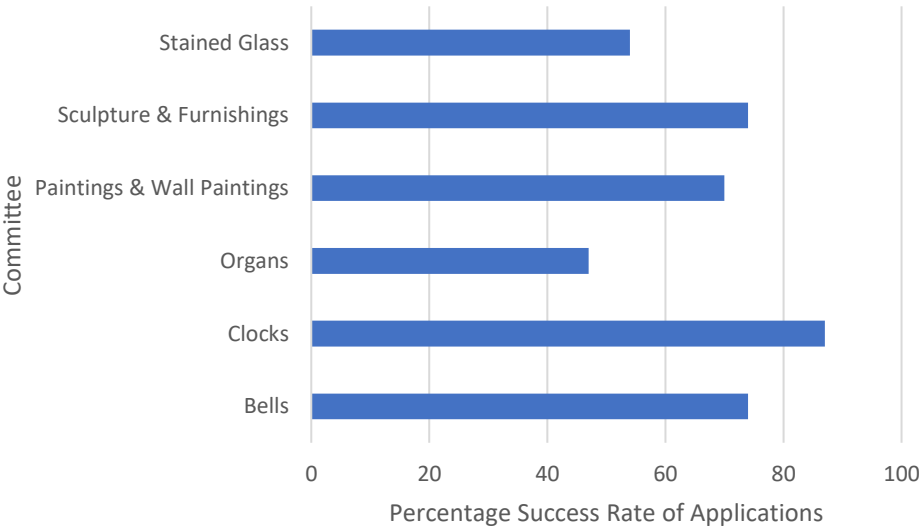


Figure 36 Average Success Rate by Committee 2015-2019



A review of applications rejected at committee has been undertaken for 2019. The findings are summarised in

4.41 Table 5.

Table 5 Analysis of Applications Rejected at Committee During 2019

Committee	Total No. Applications Considered	No. Applications Rejected	Reasons for Rejection
Bells	13	3	Bells not of sufficient significance for scheme (2) Proposals considered maintenance rather than restoration (1)
Organs	9	4	Committee not confident that the work would be appropriate or completed to an appropriate standard (3) Organ not of sufficient significance for scheme (1) Adequacy of Conservation Report (1)
Clocks	24	4	Clock not of sufficient significance (1) Report from DAC Clocks Adviser not submitted (2) Works to clock movement considered routine maintenance (1) Funding not requested for clock movement (1)
Paintings & Wallpaintings	8	2	Conservation work was considered to be relatively minor (1) Further information required to support a new application (1) Committee not confident that work would be undertaken to an appropriate standard (1)
Sculpture & Furnishings	19	4	Follow-up discussions and site visit required / revised proposals necessary (2) Scale of project and likely impact of grant (1)
Stained Glass	10	4 (plus a further application to be reconsidered following receipt of more information)	Second application for one project. The requirements from the original application have still not been met (1) Window of insufficient significance (1) Committee not confident that work would be undertaken to an appropriate standard (1) Quality of accompanying report / proposed methods (1) Conservation need relatively low (1)

- 4.42 Analysis of the minutes of committee meetings held during the evaluation period highlights that consideration of individual grant applications was to a significant level of detail. As such, there were instances at the majority of committees where proposals were deemed worthy but were lacking in information or where further discussion / investigation was considered necessary. Re-applications therefore have been a feature of the Conservation Grants Programme, where applications initially rejected were reconsidered at subsequent committees – an example of the Organs Committee in December 2019 included two re-applications amongst the nine under consideration, both of which were awarded a grant at this time.
- 4.43 Evidence from stakeholder discussions suggest this approach has ensured proposals are well-conceived and to a high conservation specification; however, evidence from grant recipients (from both online surveys and from grant recipient interviews) suggests that parishes do not always understand the reasoning behind the need for a specific conservation approach to be taken. The awareness or otherwise of individual parishes as to heritage significance, the need for specific conservation approaches, or the importance of using accredited conservators varies tremendously;

factors that may influence this level of awareness include the relationship between parishes and church architects. Awareness raising amongst applicants and potential applicants can be achieved through improved dissemination and understanding of case study projects, good practice utilised and successful outcomes.

- 4.44 Interviews with Committee Chairs have revealed the value they place on the secretariat support within Church House, including dialogue between meetings as well as the report at each meeting as to what has been awarded and what funds drawn down. Chairs gave a clear message that the secretariat support is regarded as essential to the continued efficient operation of the grant scheme.
- 4.45 Few site visits were conducted as part of the assessment and decision-making process during the evaluation period (generally, the amount of grant awarded does not justify a site visit). Some use has been made of the Committee Chair's powers to make recommendations to CBC about grants between meetings so as to avoid unduly long delays in determining applications. For example, instances have been described where the committee was in favour of awarding a grant, subject to receipt of one particular piece of information or clarification, which was then dealt with between meetings.
- 4.46 One Committee Chair stressed that their committee was particularly concerned to ensure that any recommendations made to CBC in relation to a grant application did not conflict with DACs by questioning works that had received (or were about to receive) a faculty. Receipt of faculty is judged as sufficient indication of the suitability of the works; if those works had also met funding eligibility criteria then a grant was awarded.

The Conservation Committee System

- 4.47 The committee system has been the subject of discussions with various stakeholders during the evaluation, and there is clearly a range of perspectives on its effective operation. On the one hand, stakeholder interviews have described the *'added value provided by expert advisers'* on individual committees, that *'the expertise of conservation staff is a strength of the Conservation Grants programme'* and that *'over time, the committees have had a valuable input into conservation proposals and the decision-making process'*. Equally, other interviewees have been concerned that *'the committee system itself can be viewed as bureaucratic and lengthy'*, and that *'the amount of information that needs to be generated for committee meetings is quite significant for what (in reality, for the majority of grants awarded) is a small amount of money'*. There was, however, a general consensus that *'whilst the committee system is time intensive (and probably costly), there would not want to be any loss of credibility'*.
- 4.48 It should be emphasised that committees have *three* main roles – providing advice to CBC and CFCE on technical aspects of parish and cathedral proposals; helping the Division with the formulation of advice (including the formulation of policies from precedents that are recorded and reviewed over time); and grant work. How committees operate therefore needs to be appropriate to facilitate *all three* roles, and not just be focused on the grant element.
- 4.49 Interviews with Committee Chairs highlighted the primary expertise evident within committee members, who are renowned specialists within their areas. The make-up of all committees include members appointed either at, or prior to 2011 as well as members appointed in 2016, thereby giving stability and consistency of approach over time. Committee Chairs view their own purpose as being to ensure good governance and adherence to eligibility criteria, hearing the expert opinion and steering committee discussions towards a consensus and an appropriate decision. Many committee members are nationally or internationally renowned experts. Committee Chairs strongly felt that expert time should be retained and fostered. Members generously give their time voluntarily and so it was emphasised that serving on the committees needs to be a rewarding experience.
- 4.50 The membership that is drawn upon to make conservation grant decisions was considered by Committee Chairs to fit well with the ethos of particular funding partners, specifically the Pilgrim Trust, in terms of providing reassurance that their funding is distributed on the back of the highest level of expertise. Chairs consider that the professionalism and expertise of committee membership is particularly important at the current time when elsewhere these appear to be at risk of being marginalised. Such expertise was considered to have the potential to catalyse other, larger, grants.

- 4.51 Variations in committee size relates to factors such as range of subject matter that can come before them (for example the Sculpture and Furnishings Committee has a large membership compared to other committees); variations in number of committee meetings held per annum can relate to the volume of applications.
- 4.52 Potential improvements or alterations to the committee system have been discussed, with suggestions put forward by various stakeholders including:
- whether greater use of email correspondence between committees or holding virtual committees may be more efficient. Committee meetings over the evaluation period were generally held in London (proximity to Church House for secretariat being an important feature). During 2020, all committees have moved to online meetings using virtual technology such as Zoom. Although more use could be made of this to facilitate a greater number of shorter meetings, Committee Chairs have felt that virtual committees have not been so satisfactory in stimulating good debate and achieving consensus; from an administrative perspective, however, virtual meetings have been found to be a useful way of gathering information. Going forward, it may be appropriate to have one face to face meeting and one virtual meeting each year; despite the value for committee members of face to face meetings it may be too costly to increase the number.
 - reducing the administrative burden on ChurchCare through having either fewer committees, smaller committees or alternatively introducing some form of rolling committee membership. In relation to fewer committees, one suggestion related to having a single committee every year which deals with all specialisms. Advantages of this approach (in addition to administrative advantages) were cited as enabling funding to be better targeted (i.e. at 'the best projects' regardless of type of heritage). Expertise could still be drawn on and debate would still be stimulated. Other perspectives on a single 'conservation committee' were that it could be unwieldy or meaningless, as any specialist would need another one in the same discipline as a balance. Committee Chairs particularly felt that decisions could be devalued if there were fewer committees. The range of subject matter that applications can cover means the existing number of committees is needed to have the necessary expertise to give the right advice. A potential solution (but administratively more complex) could be for there to be separate access to 'specialist advisers' to support it.
 - the purpose of the committee system is not just about decision-making for grant applications but is also concerned with best practice. With smaller or fewer committees, there is a danger that voices might not be heard, or that particular types of heritage could become overlooked.
 - most committees experience no difficulty in recruiting new members when needed. Only one Committee Chair suggested there may have been difficulty in sourcing new members who have the right level of expertise and without conflicts of interest. The lack of diversity amongst committee members arose in several discussions with Committee Chairs as an area that should be reviewed / addressed (and indeed is being done so as part of the approach to seek new membership for the next period).
 - it was suggested by Committee Chairs that perhaps there should be a new committee specifically for churchyard structures (listed or otherwise), responsibility for which is currently held by the existing sculpture and furnishings committee. This potential gap was also highlighted in discussions with funding partners with reasons given as to why funding such structures was a struggle being that it is perhaps not seen as a high priority for churches themselves.
 - as part of succession planning, perhaps students or emerging young professionals could become involved with committees as part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), with a link to mentoring.

Fund Processes and Delivery

- 4.53 The objectives of the evaluation as they relate to fund processes and delivery include learning about what has worked well / less well; where improvements to delivery and fund processes could be made in the future (including for example robustness and proportionality of the application process, eligibility criteria, grant management, monitoring and evaluation); developing an understanding of funding

profiles (for example what other sources of funding have been obtained); and understanding the extent to which a ChurchCare grant has helped to attract additional funding for projects.

Grant Applications

Conservation Grants

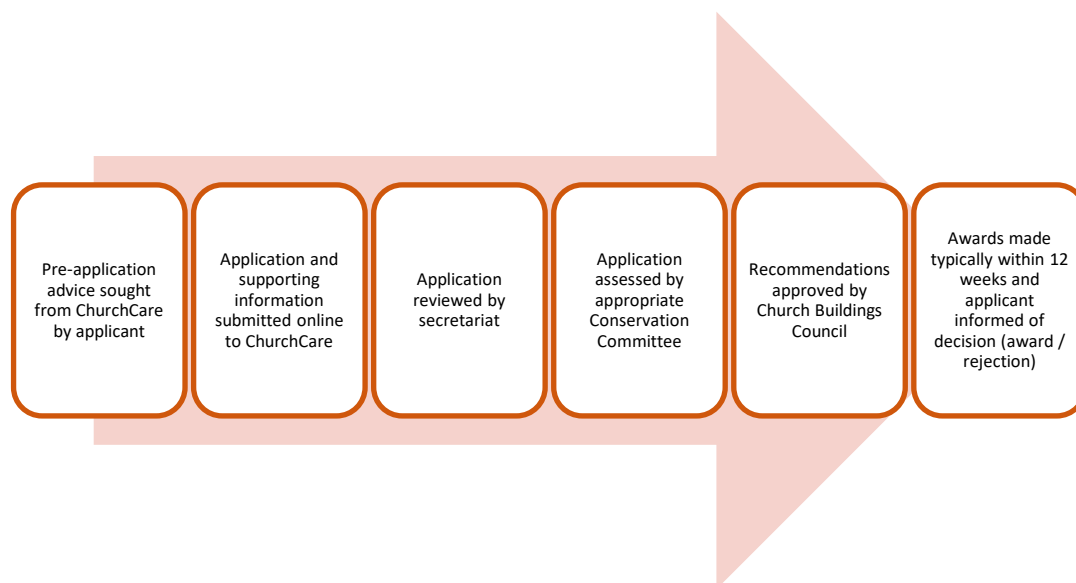
- 4.54 The current annual financial contribution to grants is provided by the Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust, the Oswald Allen Bequest, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the Gunnis Fund, the APCF and the Founders' Fund. A summary by type of heritage covered by the conservation grants is provided in Table 6. Up to £10k of funding is available per grant.

Table 6 Summary of Conservation Grant by Type of Heritage

Type of Heritage	Current Funding Partner/s	Number of Application Rounds per Year
Bells and bell frames	Pilgrim Trust / APCF	One
Church plate	Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths	One
Clocks	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust / APCF	One
Monuments	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust / Gunnis Fund	Two
Paintings & wallpaintings	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust	One
Textiles	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust	Two
Books and manuscripts	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust / Oswald Allen Bequest	Two
Churchyard structures	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust	Two
Monumental brasses	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust	Two
Organs	Pilgrim Trust	Two
Stained glass	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust	One
Woodwork & wooden objects	Pilgrim Trust / Radcliffe Trust	Two

- 4.55 A summary of the application process is illustrated in Figure 42. Applications are occasionally considered outside of the committee cycle (for example for emergency conservation work). An estimated three to four applications per year were considered in this way during the evaluation period, with the grant assessment process in this case necessitating papers being circulated to all Committee members, requesting written responses, following which a recommendation is made to CBC by the Committee Chair.

Figure 37 Conservation Grant Application Process Summary



4.56 Application requirements during the evaluation period were broadly the same across all types of heritage, with the following information required to support an online application form:

- A Conservation Report (prepared in accordance with ChurchCare guidelines)
- Images of the object
- Advice from the DAC (in the case of applications relating to organs, bells and clocks, this should include advice from the relevant DAC Adviser)
- Statements of significance and need (including a description of the object's significance)
- Latest quinquennial inspection report
- A statement of the most recent annual audited accounts for the church
- A letter from the Archdeacon in support of the project (the primary purpose of the letter is to verify that the church is not due for closure; in the instance of a church closing within five years of a grant award, the grant would need to be returned (although it is understood that this clause has never been effected)).

Pre-Application Advice

Potential applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice to confirm eligibility and requirements of the application process. ChurchCare staff provide pre-application advice for prospective and actual applicants, also assisting with re-applications and with providing general advice about projects. Over 65% of respondents to the online surveys stated that they had sought help or advice from ChurchCare prior to or during the application process for a Conservation Grant. Respondents were asked to provide information on what areas of the application or grant process help was required for; findings are summarised in

4.57 Table 7. **All** respondents stated that the advice they were given was helpful.

Table 7 Areas of the Application Process for which Help was Sought from ChurchCare by Conservation Grant Applicants

Issue	Number of Responses
Minor clarifications regarding process / general procedures (e.g. uploading)	4
Queries around the nature of works proposed (e.g. timing / eligibility)	22
Supporting information required (e.g. accounts)	11
General help and encouragement	15
Changes to the level of grant sought / other funds available	1
Heritage advice (e.g. where to find suitable conservators, quality of conservation reports)	5
Information required once work was completed	1

- 4.58 Comments made in relation to the help received were positive, with words such as 'efficient', 'prompt', 'willing' and 'helpful' used regularly. A selection of comments is provided below:

'we needed help to ensure we stood a good chance of financial backing ... as (ChurchCare) was the only body willing to consider helping us'

'I always found the officers dealing with the process efficient and prompt in their replies'

'we were reminded that we had not completed the acceptance and given help to ensure that this did not delay the grant application'

'always available and spared no time or effort in helping us to compile the reports/application in the most appropriate way'

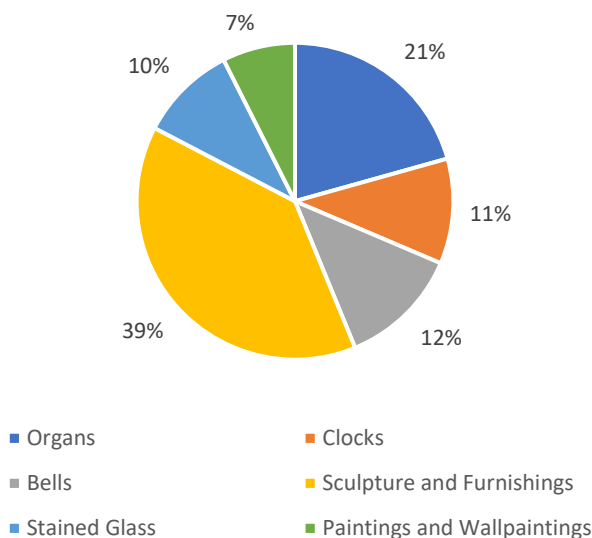
- 4.59 Telephone interviews with unsuccessful conservation grant applicants have provided an interesting perspective on the pre-application advice provided by ChurchCare. Where advice was sought prior to an application being made, this often highlighted potential issues with the prospective application – for example one prospective applicant was informed that their wall paintings 'were not overly significant' and may only therefore be successful for funding if fewer overall applications were taken to committee. A further interviewee highlighted that *'more guidance would be beneficial about how much to apply for'*.

- 4.60 Discussions with ChurchCare officers have identified where more could be achieved in terms of pre-assessment advice and helping potential applicants understand what they need to include in their grant applications. This includes helping get the message across to applicants about what the requirements are – for example typically about 10% of applications for funding for organs did not include basic information required such as the specification of the organ). For other areas, such as stained glass, applicants have struggled with identifying relevant information at the pre-application stage (for example finding appropriate art historical information in relation to Victorian stained glass).

The Application Process

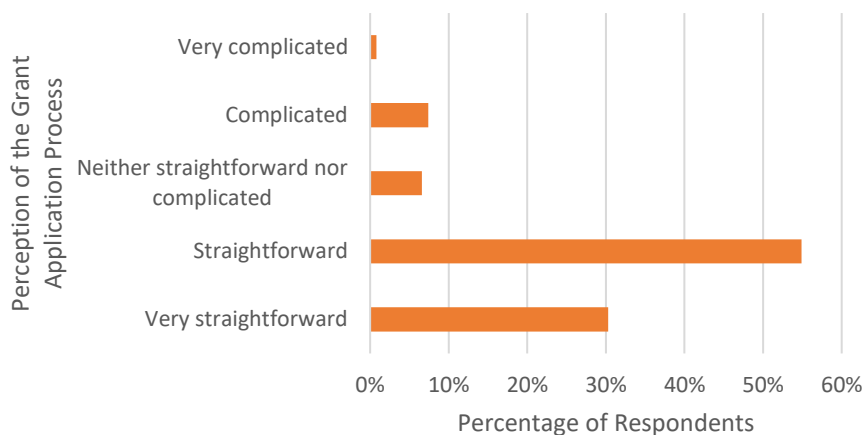
- 4.61 The online surveys asked grant recipients a number of questions in relation to the application process. Figure 38 classifies responses received according to area of conservation work. The majority of respondents (39%) fall into the 'sculpture and furnishings' category which includes a relatively wide selection of heritage and artefacts including memorials, tombs, monuments, reredos and rood screens for example.

Figure 38 Responses by Heritage Category



4.62 As was the case for fabric repair grant applicants, the majority of respondents found the conservation grant application process to be similarly straightforward, with over 85% of respondents to Survey 1 stating they found it to be either straightforward or very straightforward (as shown in Figure 39). The responses were slightly different for Survey 2, with 69% of respondents stating they found it to be either straightforward or very straightforward. Approximately 8% of respondents to both online surveys stated they found the process to be complicated or very complicated.

Figure 39 Perception of the Grant Application Process (Conservation Grant)



4.63 A fifth of respondents (20%) stated that they had found aspects of the application process to be challenging. A total of 29 respondents across both online surveys specified which aspect of the application they found difficult or challenging, with ten respondents (34%) citing use of the online application form and 19 respondents (66%) highlighting difficulties in finding supporting documentation. Other comments received related to:

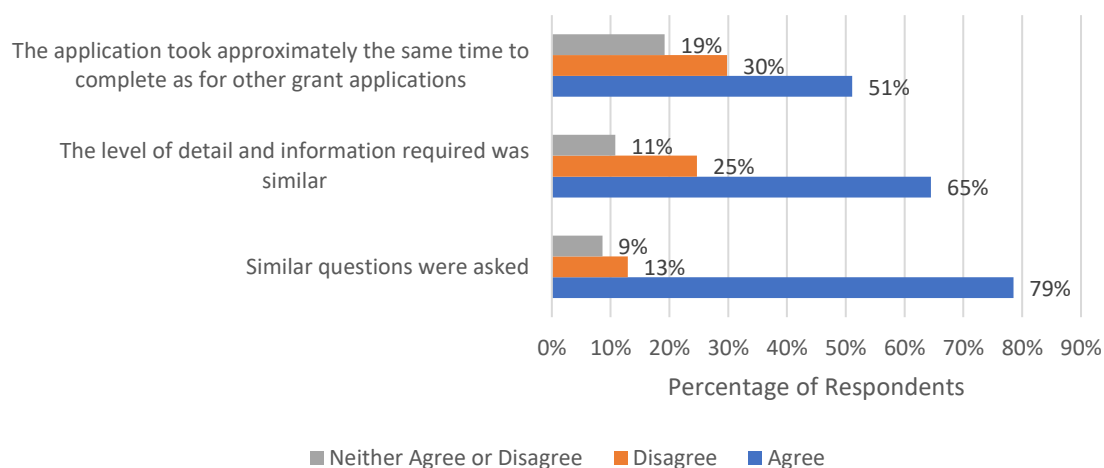
- Uploading of documentation (three respondents)
- Level of detail required and length of time this took to compile (two respondents)

4.64 Respondents to both surveys were asked whether the information requested as part of the application was proportionate to the level of funding applied for. Some 86% of respondents to Survey 1 and 75% of respondents to Survey 2 found the information requested to be proportionate. No respondents to

Survey 1 answered negatively to this question, with the remainder of respondents stating they were 'unsure'. Only five respondents to Survey 2 stated that they did not feel information requested was proportionate to the level of funding applied for; one respondent stated that *'it does seem that ChurchCare asks for the most detail and fullest range of proofs, and yet makes the lowest level of grants....the information we provided in 6-7 pages of specially written Significance and Need statements to ChurchCare was covered by shorter answer questions within the main application form of other trusts.'*

- 4.65 Telephone interviews with grant recipients further affirmed some of the issues experienced in relation to grant applications generally, with two interviewees stating that (grant applications) were *'easier after you've done an HLF application'*. There was a general sentiment that ChurchCare grants were much more straightforward and manageable by comparison.
- 4.66 Discussions with Committee Chairs highlighted the need to find a balance between being prescriptive in terms of the information required to apply for grants and to support projects and being overly prescriptive such that it becomes off-putting / disproportionate to the level of grant received. There is equally a danger of over-simplification. Committee Chairs felt they had worked hard to make new and better decisions around caseload and capacity, ensuring that processes were streamlined where possible; there is scope to continue to review what is asked for as part of grant applications and projects and not to simply create administration for the sake of it – the main requirement is simply to have enough information to enable decision-makers to build a picture.
- 4.67 Over three-quarters of respondents to the online surveys had applied for grants from other funding organisations for their project. Figure 40 shows where respondents felt the grant application process to be similar, with the majority of respondents agreeing with each of the statements.

Figure 40 Similarity of the Grant Application Process with other Grant Schemes



- 4.68 Comments were made by respondents with differing views – those feeling that more questions were asked and more detail required for a conservation grant than for other types of funding (for example those that may have just required an A4 sheet to be completed) and those who have found the ChurchCare process to be *'sensible and straightforward'*. There was acknowledgement from a number of respondents that some of the perception of ease or difficulty depended very much on what applications (if any) had already been completed. For example, respondents who had completed an NLHF application found ChurchCare to be straightforward, whereas applicants whose experience had been restricted to applications with smaller funders may have found ChurchCare requirements to be more complex.
- 4.69 Interviews with Committee Chairs raised queries that perhaps parishes think the decisions made are *'too purist from a conservation perspective'* and/or whether high standards put off parishes from applying for grant funding. This perspective has been revealed in a minority of responses to the online surveys and from grant recipient interviews. However, it is balanced against the fact that wider

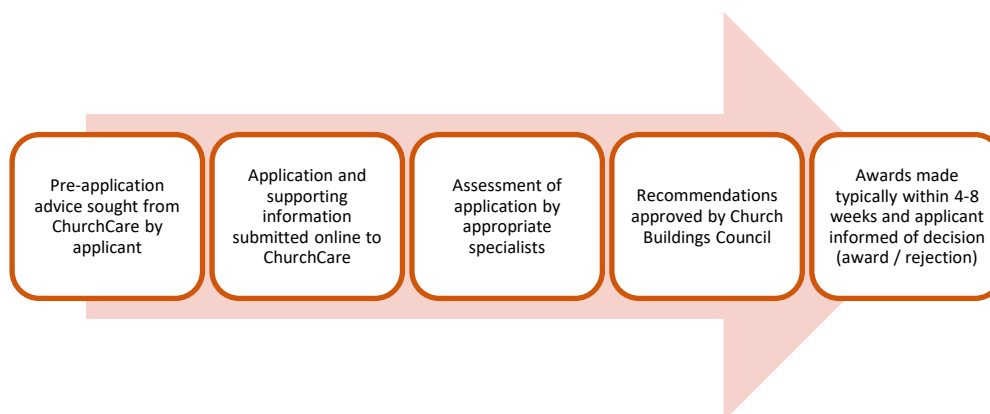
benefits associated with the Conservation Grant Programme include value for parishes in the fundraising process itself – potentially leading to individual or collective capacity building.

- 4.70 Difficulties highlighted in relation to the conservation grant application process included requirements for written approval by the Archdeacon and issues around timescales. For example, one respondent noted that *‘when the Archdeacon was finally free to write the letter he was happy to be guided by the church on its general content, which though helpful at that precise moment in time did rather seem to undermine the point of having the letter. I think these extra bona fides are probably things to be asked for in the case of larger grants only.’* Other points noted include that although similar information tends to be required across funding organisations, there are always differences (for example including or excluding VAT, or including or excluding professional fees). Comments relating to the proportionality of the conservation grant included that *‘(the grant awarded) was only in relation to one bell. Whilst one can accept that people have to be careful awarding money, the amount of information required was perhaps excessive’*.
- 4.71 Respondents to Survey 2 were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with the statement that having a grant from ChurchCare gave them the confidence to apply for another one; a total of 35 respondents who had been in receipt of a conservation grant (78%) stated that they agreed with the statement. Respondents to the multiple grant survey were also asked whether they had found making second and subsequent applications to ChurchCare more straightforward because they knew more about the process and work involved; a total of 33 respondents in receipt of a conservation grant agreed this was the case (73%).

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.72 Applications for funding towards conservation reports are accepted all year round. A summary of the application process is provided in Figure 41. Potential applicants are invited to first discuss eligibility of their project with a member of ChurchCare staff via email or telephone. As with conservation grants, applications are assessed according to the significance of the object or proposal, perceived conservation need and urgency and the appropriateness of the report proposal. Routine maintenance reports are not funded. Conditions of award include that an applicant must not have started the work before being notified of ChurchCare’s decision and that the grant must be claimed within six months of the award.
- 4.73 Requirements of the application process include:
- Images of the object
 - Statements of significance and needs (including the object’s significance)
 - Any advice obtained from the DAC / other sources of advice
 - A written estimate on the cost of the report or survey.

Figure 41 Application Process (Conservation Reports)



- 4.74 As with both fabric repair and conservation grants, the majority of respondents (85%) found the application process to have been either straightforward or very straightforward. Of the very small sample of respondents who found a particular challenge with the process (four respondents), both the application process itself and difficulties with finding supporting information were identified. Comments related to the process being ‘time consuming’. However, a separate respondent noted that *‘the requirement for a Statement of Reasons [sic] and Significance.... was also needed for the faculty and another project so would have been needed in any event’*.
- 4.75 Nearly 90% of conservation report grant recipients who responded to Survey 1 felt that the information requested as part of the application was proportionate to the level of funding applied for. Comments made acknowledge the substantial amount of work / detail required; one respondent highlighted difficulties gathering this type of information presents for smaller churches in particular who may not have the manpower or resources which larger churches may be perceived to have.
- 4.76 Under half of respondents (46%) had applied for grants from other funding organisations for their project. The greatest similarities with other grant processes appear to have been between the type of questions being asked and the amount and level of supporting information required. Comments made in relation to similarities of grant application process focused around the different formats required to present similar information according to funder (i.e. different wordcounts, or character counts), necessitating a rewriting and tailoring of the information on each occasion. A further comment related to ChurchCare being quite prescriptive in terms of the information sought and whether this was ‘out of proportion’ to the level of grant applied for in this instance.
- 4.77 Around 54% of applicants to Survey 1 sought help or advice from ChurchCare during the grant application process. Respondents were asked to provide information on what areas of the application or grant process help was required for; findings are summarised in Table 8 **Error! Reference source not found.. Virtually all respondents (95%) stated that the advice they were given was helpful.**

Table 8 Areas of the Application Process for which Help was Sought from ChurchCare by Conservation Report Grant Applicants

Issue	Number of Responses
Minor clarifications regarding process / general procedures	3
Queries around the nature of works proposed (e.g. timing / eligibility)	7
Supporting information required	4
General help and encouragement	7
Availability of other funding	2
Timescales	3

- 4.78 Comments made in relation to the help received include:
- *‘ChurchCare very helpful and granted a second sum in 2020 for conservation of wallpaintings. Gave advice on other possible donors, which helped in securing two further grants’*
 - *‘Swift responses, informative and reassuring, knowledgeable. It gave me confidence that we were on the right track. Your ‘template’ for the Statement of Needs was exceptionally helpful’*
- 4.79 Findings from telephone interviews further emphasised the value attributed to advice provided by ChurchCare either prior to an application being made or at any point throughout the application process. Comments include that *‘the ChurchCare team has been outstanding’*, and that they are *‘always at the end of the phone.... giving sound common sense’*. Areas of added value mentioned

have included suggesting alternative / additional potential funding sources that parishes could apply to for more funding.

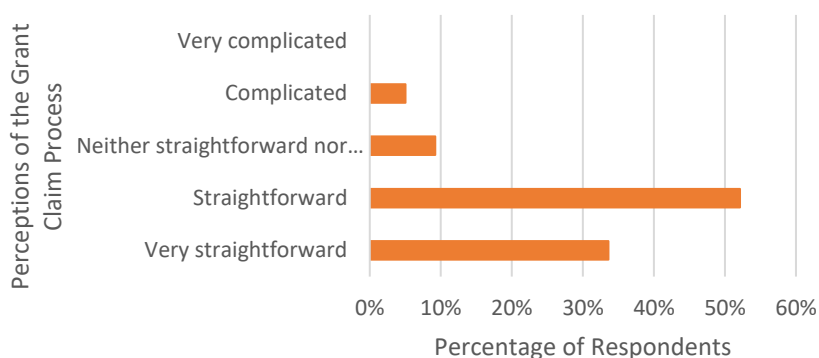
Grant Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.80 This section relates to management and delivery processes beyond the awarding of a grant to a parish, covering the grant claim process and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Conservation Grants

- 4.81 The online surveys asked respondents how they perceived the grant claim process. Figure 42 shows how respondents to Survey 1 perceived the grant claim process, with the majority of respondents considering it to be either straightforward or very straightforward (86%). The response was slightly lower for respondents to Survey 2, where 69% of respondents considered the grant claim process to be either straightforward or very straightforward. Only eight respondents across both online surveys stated that they had found the grant claim process to be complicated.

Figure 42 Perceptions of the Grant Claim Process (Conservation Grant)



- 4.82 Respondents to both online surveys were provided with the opportunity to describe any particular thoughts or issues in relation to the grant claim process. Comments included:
- *'the process was complicated because so many revisions were required; however, this was justified by the outcome.'*
 - *'it took some time to obtain the conservation report from the contractors in the specified format.'*
 - *'as there are only specific windows for the application, and a period for evaluation, this took a little longer than other grant bodies I applied to. A rolling small grants process might be helpful.'*
 - *'notification of the award takes a long time (6 months) - understandable but perhaps an early indication of likelihood might be possible.'*
- 4.83 Telephone interviews with grant recipients further explored the grant claim process. One interviewee identified that completion of the works was required before the grant could be paid out, which had created cashflow problems for them. Potential solutions identified included whether it might be possible to explore part or early payment as part of the claim process for parishes where there is likely to be a problem. Although this can happen for larger grants, or where there are delays completing a project, it has to be balanced with the administrative time and costs associated with part payments.
- 4.84 Grant awards are often subject to conditions; they are also subject to a need for completed post-conservation reports. Nearly 60% of respondents across both online surveys stated that their grant was subject to conditions. Of these, 89% of respondents felt that the conditions were proportionate to the application, with the remainder (bar a single respondent) stating that they were partially proportionate. Of respondents whose grants were subject to conditions, 84% of respondents across both online surveys reported that these had been straightforward to fulfil. Only four respondents stated

that they had been difficult to fulfil, with comments relating to time restrictions, liaison required with conservators / appropriate experts and difficulties in completing the post conservation report.

- 4.85 Discussions with ChurchCare officers identified instances during the evaluation period where applicants had turned down funding because of perceived onerous conditions. The consistent approach to grant administration and stability in staff within ChurchCare since 2016 has meant the organisation has retained corporate memory over this period, of significant benefit in terms of knowledge and understanding of grant giving and of what works well (for example understanding how parishes may respond to levels of grant awarded and to the conditions that may be attached).
- 4.86 In addition to their grant decision-making role, the conservation committees also have a role monitoring conditions attached to grants awarded where there may be ambiguity. Discussions with Committee Chairs considered whether this was a necessary activity for committees, or whether this was an activity that could be undertaken by the officers in order to make processes more efficient. Clear breaches of conditions are dealt with by ChurchCare staff, although this has happened relatively infrequently during the evaluation period.
- 4.87 All recipients of conservation grants must provide a post-conservation report, which describes in detail what work has been carried out, and by whom. Experienced conservators will usually submit separate quotes for undertaking a post-conservation report. Although the guidelines prepared by ChurchCare specify what should be included within a post-conservation report, with the expectation that the report should be prepared by the conservator-restorer who has carried out the work, this does not always appear to be the case. Four respondents to the online surveys identified difficulties with the post-conservation report element, including:

'the need for a post conservation report is more onerous than other funders'

'the post conservation report was initially classed as inadequate and the funding was not initially given....after much discussion a reduced grant was allowed'

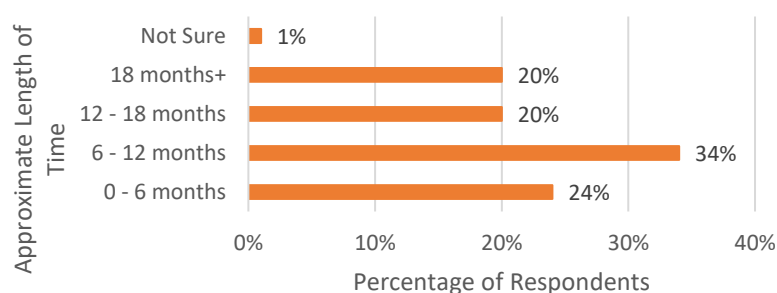
'it was difficult to see exactly what information was required in the post conservation report. We thought we had supplied the correct information but it was not, initially, satisfactory'

'conditions were easy to fulfil except for the post conservation report where we struggled. We prepared the post conservation report at the time, it was not sufficient, much time had elapsed, the architect who had prepared the original report had left and it was difficult getting the information'

'it took some time to obtain the conservation report from the contractors in the specified format.... too complex'

- 4.88 Completion rates for projects in receipt of a conservation grant during the evaluation period is very high, at approaching 95%. Timescales for completion do, however, vary. Respondents to Survey 1 were asked to specify approximate timescales for completion of projects; Figure 43 shows that just over half of projects (58%) were completed in less than a year. Around a fifth of projects took more than 18 months to complete.

Figure 43 Timescales for Completion of Project (Conservation Grant)



- 4.89 Discussions with funding partners have highlighted that further streamlining of processes could be a benefit. Comparative grant administering organisations highlighted include the Association of Independent Museums, which provides conservation grants of up to £10k for collection care. For a similar type of grant process, the AIM does not seem to have the lagtime between grant award and projects commencing seen with conservation grants, because projects are generally smaller and can go ahead more quickly. While other funders (for example the NCT) insist that 50% of funding is raised upfront, this approach does not necessarily fit with the ChurchCare ethos to be able to influence a project.

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.90 Key findings for conservation report grant projects from the online surveys and other interviews revealed:

- the vast majority had a short timescale, being completed in less than a year.
- the grant claim process was considered to be straightforward. Areas of challenge noted by respondents related to the time taken and the amount of information required. One respondent stated that their *'lack of experience of conservation grant applications meant that I found it difficult to understand what I was expected to do. I found that Churchcare's website was not as clear as I would have wished. Once I had understood more about the process by contacting (ChurchCare) then the application proceeded fairly smoothly'*.
- evidence from Committee Chairs revealed that more projects relating to paintings, sculptures and furnishings and stained glass were likely to have applied for a conservation report grant / had advice or even a site visit, than was the case for projects relating to organs, clocks and bells. There may be a difference in attitude / perception in relation to different types of objects – for example organs, bells and clocks are typically viewed as functional elements of the church rather than something necessarily to be conserved. By contrast conservators of objects such as paintings are likely to understand better the conservation role and also to have been trained in report writing skills. However, many experienced conservators were described as *'going into conservation because of the practical requirements rather than necessarily the need or ability to write technical reports'*. Adequacy of reports continues to be an issue for applications for both conservation grants and conservation report grants.

Funding Profiles

- 4.91 Objectives of the evaluation include to gain greater understanding of the funding profiles of projects, together with an assessment of the extent to which receiving a ChurchCare grant might attract additional funding. The evidence contained within this section is primarily drawn from the responses to the online surveys together with the detailed telephone interviews with grant recipients.

Conservation Grants

- 4.92 Figure 44 shows the proportion of total project costs funded by a conservation grant (using data from responses to both online surveys). For the majority of projects (68%), the grant comprised up to 25% of total project cost, although for a very small minority of respondents (2%), the grant clearly played a much more significant role in funding over three-quarters of the total project.

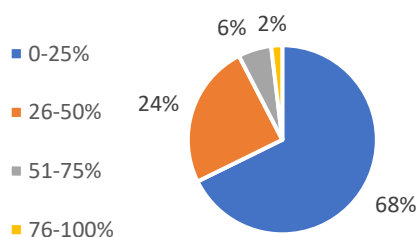


Figure 44 Proportion of Total Project Cost Funded by a Conservation Grant

- 4.93 Findings from the online surveys show that the majority of respondents (81%) had received funding from at least one other organisation in relation to their project. The survey responses showed that 35%

of respondents had received one other grant for their project, 27% had received grants from two other organisations, and a further 43% of respondents stated they had received funding from at least three other sources. Nearly a fifth of respondents to this question (17%) stated that they had received no other grants or that no other funding was available. The remainder of respondents comprised various responses including that they had already raised the rest of the money, funding was received as a result of community donations or legacies, or where the question was not considered to be applicable. Figure 45 shows the variety of funding organisations that have contributed to projects in receipt of a conservation grant. As was the case with the fabric repair grant responses, the 'other trusts and charities' category included nearly forty different organisations. These are broken down into various categories in Table 9.

Figure 45 Funding Received from Other Organisations

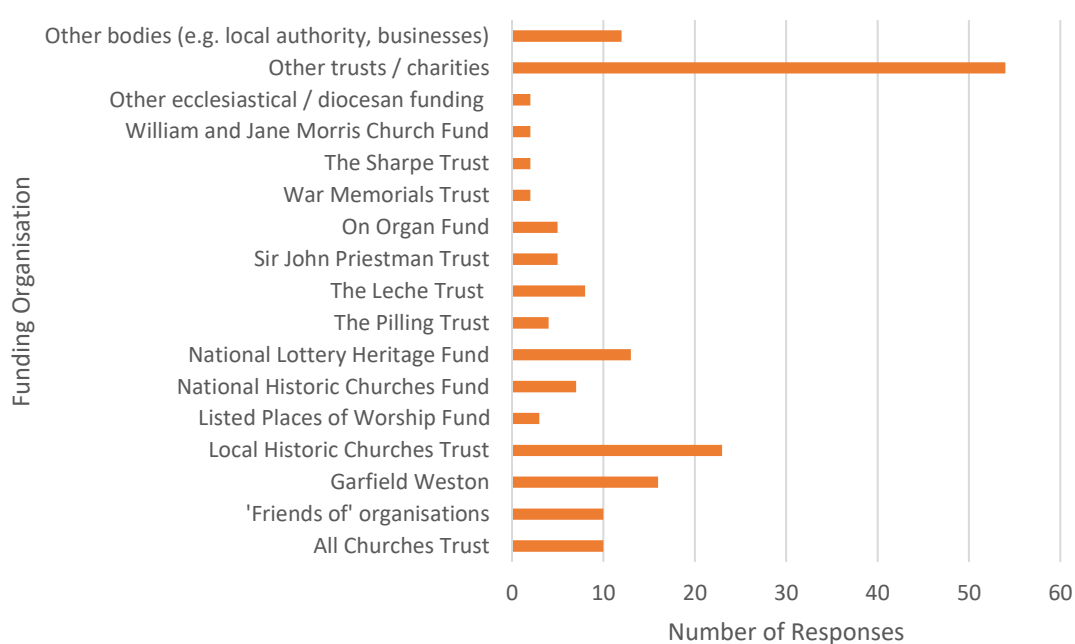


Table 9 Breakdown of 'Other Trusts and Charities' Funding Projects Awarded a Conservation Grant

Category	Number of Trusts / Charities	Examples
Local trusts / charities	14	Cecil Adams Organ Trust, Greenham Trust, Ibstock Enover Trust
Regional trusts / charities	10	Alfred Williams Charitable Trust, Benham Charitable Settlement, Hawthorn Trust
National trusts / charities	12	Payne-Gallwey Charitable Trust, Idlewild Trust, James Reckitt Charity
Religious activities / aspects of church heritage	14	Cloudesley Charity, Jack Patston Charitable Trust, Gladiator Trust
Conservation / heritage	11	St Andrew's Conservation Trust, Neville Abraham Foundation, Millichope Foundation
Community	11	Bernard Sunley Charitable Grant, Rugby Benevolent Fund, Birmingham Airport Community Trust

4.94 Figure 46 shows the value of other grants received by respondents to the online surveys; the majority (43%) were between £0-£2,500 in value. Figure 47 then shows the approximate percentage of total project value attributed to other grants received – three-quarters of other grants received comprised up to a quarter of overall project value.

Figure 46 Value of Other Grants Received

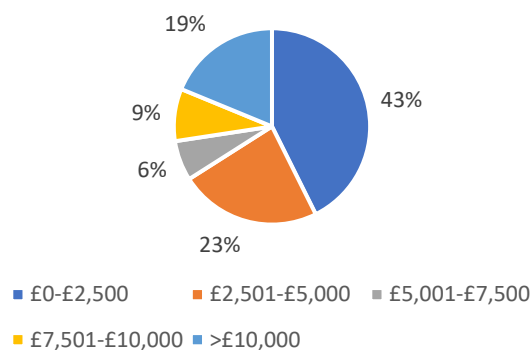
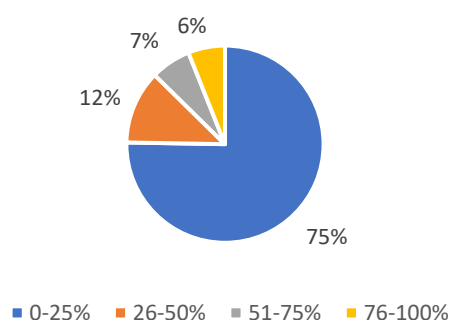


Figure 47 Approximate Percentage of Project Total



4.95 Just over half of respondents to Survey 1 who were in receipt of a conservation grant (55%) stated that this was the first grant that they had received for their project. Respondents were asked whether the award of a conservation grant from ChurchCare encouraged them to apply for other grant schemes – either for their current project or for other projects. Responses were divided evenly here between respondents who answered ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Comments received in relation to this point related to:

- the endorsement that a conservation grant was felt to have provided to a project in terms of the quality of restoration undertaken.
- whilst several respondents stated that the conservation grant was the *last* grant they had applied for, others responded positively with regard to the confidence the grant award had given them in making other applications / undertaking fundraising in relation to other projects.
- issues highlighted related to eligibility criteria (the fact that ‘*grants are for very specific things*’, with an example provided of organ conservation not organ repair).
- the lead in time between the application and decision not helping with project timing (as a decision was needed in order to apply for other funding).

4.96 Respondents to Survey 2 were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with the statement that having a grant from ChurchCare gave them the confidence to apply for grants from other organisations. A total of 27 respondents who had been in receipt of a conservation grant (60%) stated that they agreed with the statement. Only five respondents (11% of respondents) stated that they disagreed.

- 4.97 Telephone interviews with grant recipients revealed the challenges experienced by parishes in finding and securing grant funding for projects. One interviewee stated that *'if it had not been for ChurchCare the process would have been much more difficult'*.

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.98 **Error! Reference source not found.** lists the variety of funding organisations identified during the online surveys that had contributed to projects in receipt of a conservation report grant. None of the funders listed had awarded grants to more than two conservation report projects.

Table 10 Funding Received from Other Organisations

Other Funding Sources

All Churches Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, National Lottery Heritage Fund, The Leche Trust, local Historic Churches Trusts, Listed Places of Worship Fund, Quenington Society, Glaziers Trust, Girdlers Worshipful Company, Benham Charitable Trust, Constance Travis Charitable Trust, St Andrews Conservation Trust, Barbara Whatmore Trust, Beatrice Laing Trust, William & Jane Morris Fund, local archaeological and historical societies, 'Friends of' organisations, local businesses, local authorities, ecclesiastical / diocesan funding

- 4.99 Findings from both the online surveys and from telephone interviews with grant recipients have highlighted some of the issues associated with the next steps following completion of a conservation report. Inevitably, the reports produced have identified a schedule of costed works required to undertake the conservation and restoration activities themselves. Interrogation of grant data between 2015 and 2019 has determined the extent to which the conservation report grant led to a second application to ChurchCare for a conservation grant in order to implement the works. Over the course of the evaluation period, a total of 28 instances were identified where a conservation report grant was followed by a successful application for a conservation grant for the *same project*.
- 4.100 However, findings from the online surveys identified a related problem – that the conservation reports identified a significant (and therefore costly) level of work was required. Comments included:
- 'We now have a very detailed and specialist report which identifies £60,000 of work that needs to be done. So whilst we have made another step on the journey – there is much more to do – not least raising the funds to undertake the work to the Box Pews. Because of other pressing matters, we have not made progress on this front since obtaining the report.'*
- 'The condition survey of the extensive medieval glass revealed that the cost of conservation was approximately £2M plus the cost of scaffolding, fees and the cost of repairing surrounding stonework. The PCC is currently wrestling with the problem of how to raise this money'*
- 'We now know the scale of the....funding challenge – which is larger than we had hoped for – so more money to find.'*
- 4.101 Other respondents stated that the conservation report had enabled them to establish priorities and a framework for projects, with the result that they could now *'apply for grants to restore as many of these monuments as possible'*. A similar issue was raised during the course of the telephone interviews with grant recipients. One interviewee stated that *'the original estimate for work was in excess of £30k...it would be a nice thing to do but it didn't enhance the main function of the church, which meant that the PCC was not keen to fund it.'* Another interviewee stated that, after the Conservation Report had been prepared, they were *'quite shocked at the amount of money the works would cost'*.
- 4.102 Over 80% of respondents to Survey 1 stated that the award of a conservation report grant from ChurchCare would encourage them to apply for other grant schemes. One respondent stated that this was *'because we had confidence that our project had 'legs' and was deemed worthwhile by a respected grant-making body'*. Respondents to Survey 2 who had been in receipt of multiple grant awards were asked which of the grants they had received they considered to have had the greatest impact on church heritage; five respondents stated they felt the conservation report grant had had the greatest impact and a further eight (for whom a conservation report grant had been one of the grants

they received) stated they felt there had been an equal level of impact. One respondent stated in relation to the conservation report grant that *'being the 1st grants to be received told us we had a good conservation/heritage project that would hopefully receive as good a hearing from other grant funders'*.

Outcomes and Impacts

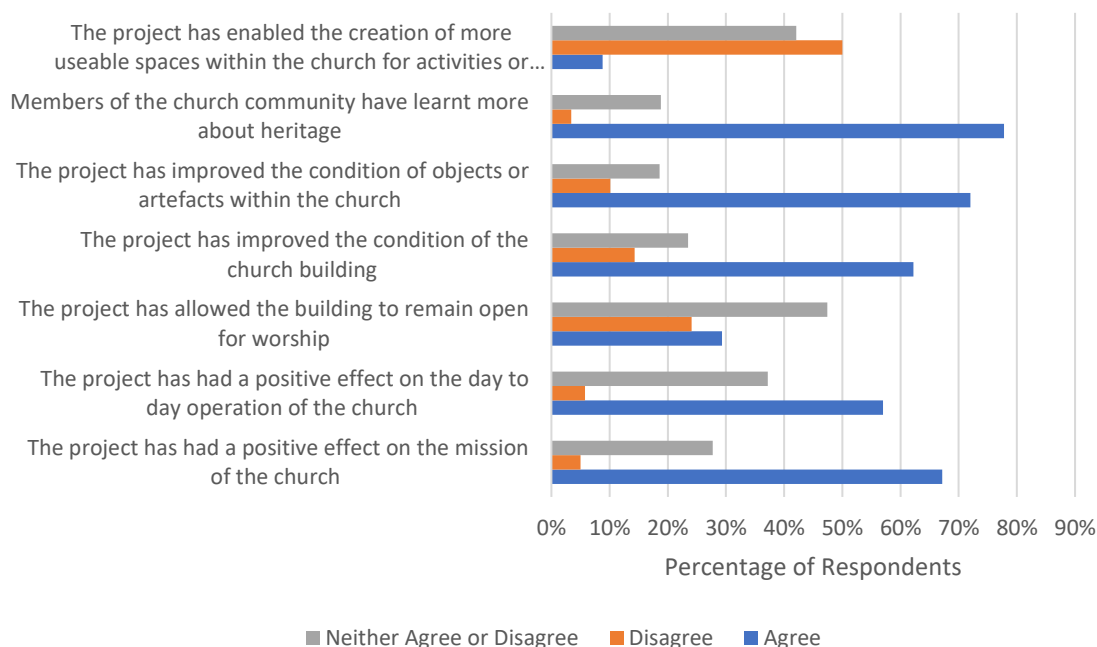
- 4.103 The evaluation has sought to assess the outcomes and impacts arising from the Conservation Grant Programme, considering the extent to which impacts are a direct result of the grant award, whether wider impacts can be evidenced, and an assessment of what might have happened in the absence of the grant programme. The assessment of impacts is largely evidenced from the online surveys of grant recipients together with findings from telephone interviews both with grant recipients and with unsuccessful grant applicants.

Direct and Wider Impacts

Conservation Grants

- 4.104 Respondents to the online surveys were asked about the impact that they perceived their project to have had in terms of the mission of the church, day-to-day operation, the heritage / condition of the church, and people's understanding of heritage.
- 4.105 Figure 48 provides a summary of the findings for respondents to the online surveys, showing that recipients of the conservation grant were generally very positive about impacts. The statements that 'members of the church community have learnt more about heritage' and that 'the project has improved the condition of objects or artefacts within the church' experienced the strongest degree of support. The third most supported statement was that 'the project has had a positive effect on the mission of the church'. Projects supported by a conservation grant had had least impact on the creation of more useable spaces within the church for activities or events (this is understandable given that grants are more likely to be related to specific objects or artefacts).

Figure 48 Impacts of the Conservation Grant



- 4.106 Box 2 overleaf contains a flavour of the many comments made by respondents to both online surveys in relation to impacts of the grant funding on the condition of the building, the heritage, church activities and the community. Common themes related to the legacy impacts of the grant in restoring artefacts for future generations to enjoy; to the fact that conservation work has either revealed more historically important detail or alternatively revealed the need for further conservation; to the benefits

that restoration of artefacts such as church organs have had on worship and particularly the ability to then hold a greater variety of events and activities within the church, from weddings to concerts; and to the wider community role that bells and clocks have as a part of community infrastructure.

Box 2 Comments Made In Relation to Impacts of the Conservation Grant

'The tower clock is an important feature of the church's interaction with everyone in the village, whether regular members of the congregation or not. It's visual impact and the sound of the bell chiming on the hour connects everyone to a much-loved building'

'The project created a lot of interest within the congregation and wider population, many people came to view the bells whilst they were on the ground'

'(the grant) encouraged us to have the bell restored and put back into its proper place rather than becoming a locked-up museum piece'

'Restoration of the organ (has been) vital for improving worship in church'

'Fundraising has enabled an emotional contact to be made with non-churchgoing people'

'The poor condition of the roof and increasing number of leaks was causing damage to the building, contents and historic artefacts within the church, raising concern over maintenance and detracting from the day to day operation and mission of the church. The repairs and slate renewal has lifted this burden'

'There is a renewed pride in the building both as a heritage site and as a centre from which we base our mission to the community'

'The alabaster reredos was being damaged by the ingress of water through the east wall of the church. The project enabled the conservation and restoration of an important historic monument'

'Greater involvement with the local church school as the children are able to ring the bells'

'When the bells rang out for the first time, the PCC had a great response from the people of the village which made it worth all the hard work'

'The listing of the organ provoked other discoveries in the church. (The church) now has a chancel covered by medieval floor tiles revealed when ancient carpets and coverings were ripped away. The floor was restored by local labour....photographs have been sent to include these tiles in the national archive compiled by the British Museum'

'The church clock is the heartbeat of our village. Getting it working again was vital to the morale of the village. Such a centrepiece cannot be neglected and we have a dedicated team of winders to keep it showing the time and striking on the hour'

'We are now seeking funds to build a small extension to make better use of the church – we would not be moving forward in this manner had we not gained confidence by the successful restoration of the windows'.

'The conservation grant for the monuments has impacted on the visitor economy as some folk have travelled some distances to look at them and a second phase was carried out in 2020.'

'(the grant) has helped the church community to better understand the value of its heritage and being to think about how to use heritage to engage with the wider world'.

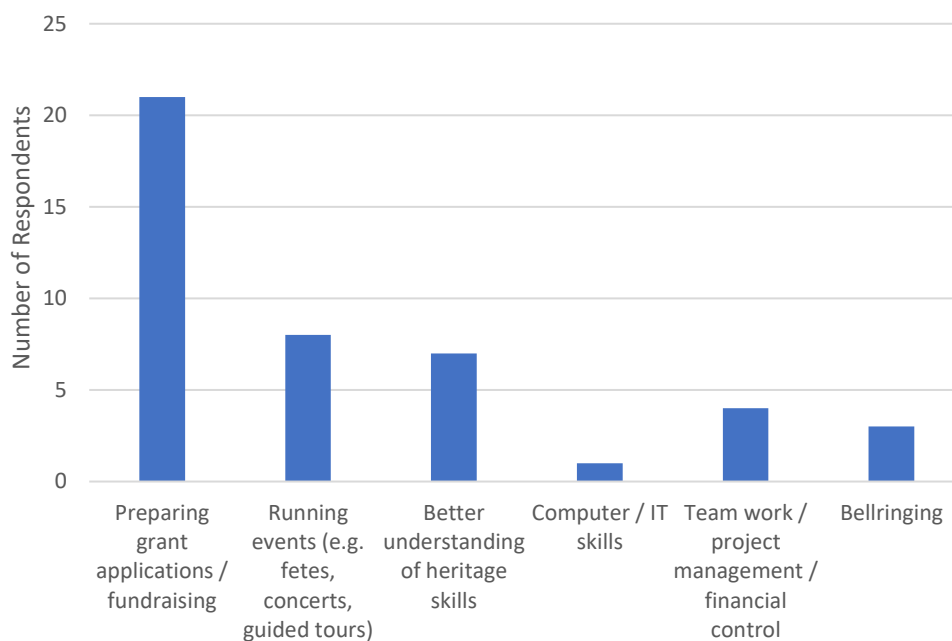
'It feels like a real village now..we don't look at clocks for the time now, we listen for the clock bell striking.'

Just under half of respondents to Survey 1 (45%) felt that their project had enabled members of the church community to develop new skills.

- 4.107 Figure 49 summarises the main types of skill which respondents felt they had acquired – the majority relate to confidence in aspects of grant applications and fundraising. Two respondents highlighted specific skills in relation to understanding crowdfunding and making links with local community organisations (for example the local history group).

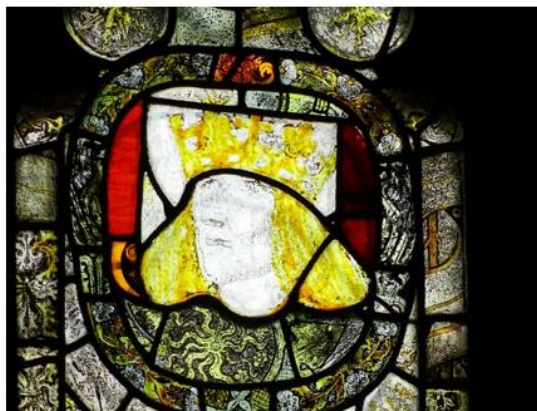
Figure 49

New Skills Acquired



Case Study: St Leonard's Church, Tortworth (Gloucester diocese)

St Leonard's Church in Tortworth is Grade II* listed. The Parish was awarded a conservation grant in 2016 of £4,000 for the restoration of damaged stained glass in one of the east windows. The window retains fine fragments of late 15th century glass including the crowned head of King Edward IV. Other funders for the project included the Gloucester Historic Churches Trust and the Glaziers Trust. The impact on the heritage from the project is clear as important medieval glass has been preserved for future generations. The close survey of the medieval window revealed hidden craftwork; the quality of the other Victorian stained glass, which was cleaned as part of the whole project, was also brought to our attention, and much more information is now available to visitors. The Parish is quite dispersed so the impact on the community is harder to evaluate, however the church has had more visits from a variety of groups interested in the heritage. The ChurchCare grant was 'crucial to the successful completion of the work'.



- 4.108 Findings from the telephone interviews with grant recipients enabled a more in depth understanding of some of the impacts people felt had resulted from the grant. One interviewee described how they *'would simply not have been able to repair the bells without the ChurchCare grant'*. It allowed people to be trained in bell repairs, raised awareness in the village and the ringing of the bells *'once more called people to church'*. A second interviewee described *'a definite wow factor in the before and after appearance of the tapestry'* stating also that the church received more visitors and had lots of good local press including a live broadcast by Historic England. The project to rebuild the organ was described by a third interviewee as having *'put the organ on the map'* and resulted in the creation of connections from as far away as Australia. The heritage values of the organ were felt to be better understood as a result of the project – the village was previously unaware that it had such a fine organ. A fourth interviewee stated that *'whilst there had been a definite impact on the heritage, any impact on the wider community was less easy to determine as it is rather dispersed.'* Interviewees variously described the funding as resulting in *'a positive outcome for the church'* and expressed feelings of *'just gratitude'* to ChurchCare. The tapestry restoration funded by one grant was described as *'inspirational'*.
- 4.109 Interviewees described the development of new partnerships and links as a result of the project, including with local schools (for example the Whitechapel Bell Foundry visited a local school and took the bells to show the children during the course of one project; during another a link was made with the Organ Festival at a nearby school and the children were involved in an educational programme involving watching the organ being dismantled and learning about repairs). Other new partnerships / links included with local foundations and friends groups; and with U3A and Bristol University.

Conservation Report Grant

- 4.110 The principal areas of impact for recipients of conservation report grants as evidenced by the online surveys, were in relation to members of the church community learning more about heritage, and on the mission of the church. Box 3 contains a flavour of comments made in the online surveys in relation to impacts of a conservation report grant on the condition of the building, the heritage, church activities and the community. Common themes related to identifying funding sources and opportunities to undertake the actual work highlighted within the conservation report; issues around obtaining a Faculty for undertaking work recommended in the conservation report (and the implications associated with a Faculty not being obtained); and the beneficial impacts in relation to understanding and enjoyment of important heritage artefacts that the conservation work has enabled.

Box 3 Comments Made In Relation to Impacts of the Conservation Report Grant

'Church monuments can be taken for granted, but they are objects of great historical and artistic value, and their promotion is a useful means of heightening interest in the church as a building and place of worship, and the relevant families and communities'

'Local people have become more proud of the heritage of our church'

'Sadly due to a lack of support from other than ChurchCare, the project has not yet started'

'The Conservation Report was the first step before commencing on the main project, being the repair and restoration of a monumental tomb and its chantry chapel. The main project is still ongoing, with costs of over £100k. Once completed, we will regain use of the whole church'

'The report grant project has transformed our confidence in dealing with other grantors, the conservation team, staff and property management committee as well as the general visiting public. It has greatly improved the repertoire and knowledge transfer skills of the stewards and visitor guides....It has been transforming. We now have a route map for conservation of all the 80 or so mediaeval paintings in our collection'

- 4.111 Findings from the online survey showed that 32% of respondents felt that their project had enabled members of the church community to develop new skills. The main types of skill which respondents felt they had acquired related to confidence in aspects of grant applications and fundraising (62% of

respondents who responded positively), better understanding of heritage skills and conservation work (23%) and computer/IT skills (15%). One respondent also referred to a greater understanding of the need for community engagement as part of grant applications. Comments included:

'members of the parochial church council have a greater awareness of how archaeological assets can be preserved and the roles of different individuals and organisations at diocesan and national levels'

'my IT skills have improved; and I have more confidence in making applications for funding and being clear about what we are trying to achieve and why'.

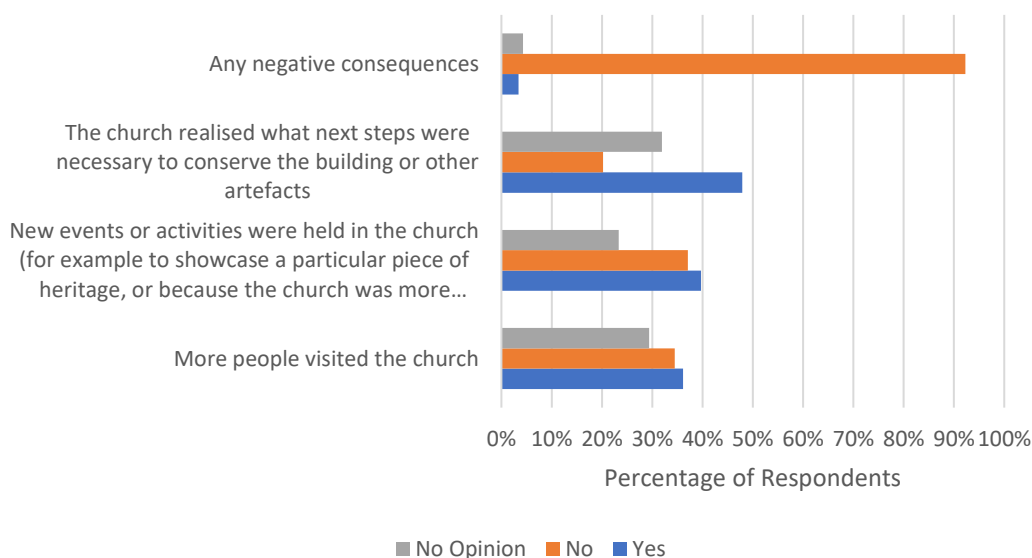
- 4.112 Findings from the detailed telephone interviews with grant recipients generally supported the comments made in the online surveys. Comments included that ChurchCare funding was *'crucial for the continuance'* of projects relating to church heritage. One of the interviewees related to a project which has been in receipt of a grant for a Conservation Report followed by a Conservation Grant award to undertake the work recommended; the interviewee described the process as being *'an incredibly positive experience'* and that since work started it had *'woken up the community'*. In relation to the mission of the church, the interviewee stated that the project had been *'God working quietly...a gentle way of bringing people back into the church'* as people *'felt safer relating to a person, image or artwork, rather than being spiritual directly'*.

Unintended Consequences

Conservation Grants

- 4.113 Respondents to the online survey were asked whether there had been any unintended consequences as a result of their project. Figure 50 shows that there were generally no negative consequences; principally, unintended consequences related to identification of further conservation work needed within the church or in relation to specific artefacts.

Figure 50 Unintended Consequences



- 4.114 Further detail around unintended consequences reveal they have included the removal of the church from the Heritage at Risk Register; strengthening of connections – with local families, with experts, and with other organisations. Practical unintended consequences have included being able to deal with other fabric or conservation issues at the same time as contractors were on site. A snapshot of some of the comments made is provided below:

- *'Fresh enthusiasm to seek grants for our other conservation projects'*
- *'Prior to beginning the restoration project we were ignorant of the importance of our organ, which due to its unrestored state was deemed a fine early example of TC Lewis' work'*

- *'More detail of a later text was exposed by the conservator. More people visited the Church to see the Doom Painting. The PCC Fabric Committee learnt a great deal from running the project'*
- *'An opportunity is created for the historic prayer board hidden behind the organ to be retrieved and renovated'*
- *'It helped the PCC realise a grant was available for this type of work'*
- *'stronger links were formed with local schools, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Girl Guides, Ibstock Historical Society. Events were held in the church and visits arranged to view the bells'*
- *'new heritage programme was started which brought more visitors to the church and they had a chance to learn about the history of the building and local area'*

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.115 The principal unintended consequence for conservation report grants related to the identification of further conservation work needed within the church or in relation to specific artefacts. Comments received in relation to unintended consequences include:

'By coincidence our church hosted an art installation during 2020, which was inspired by the wall paintings'

'What we hoped would be a straightforward project to restore a monument has now led to requests for further professional investigations as to underlying causes of dampness in the church before the restoration can commence'

'Until we read the report, we were unaware of its national significance as a monument'

'We could finally get back in the church so all events became possible. We had a choir service which was new. We now have a clearer idea of what we need to do to complete the full ceiling renovation work'

- 4.116 A further unintended consequence which has been raised in both the online surveys and during telephone interviews has related to differences in perception or approach taken by the various stakeholders involved with a project – whether this be the conservator, specialist advisers with ChurchCare or members of the DACs. The potential outcomes associated with different approaches can be demonstrated by the following quote:

'The conservation report's proposal for a trial removal of one pane of glass was rejected, throwing the project into disarray....no-one was prepared to take on the complex co-ordination and grant finding role. Morale was eroded and momentum lost'

- 4.117 This type of issue, although rare, can leave parishioners feeling confused. A similar issue was highlighted during one of the interviews with grant applicants who had been unsuccessful in their application to ChurchCare, with the interviewee stating they *'didn't know where to go – who was right?'*

Case Study: St Margaret's, Alderton (Peterborough diocese)

St Margaret's is a Grade II* listed church. The church contains a 14th century wooden effigy of a knight, the condition of which had deteriorated over time. Two grants were successfully applied for from ChurchCare – a Conservation Report grant to the value of £2,500 was received in 2017 and a further Conservation Grant of £4,000 was awarded in 2019 towards the conservation works themselves. Other funding was received from the Leche Trust. The Conservation Report highlighted two stages of conservation works were required, an emergency stage followed by more detailed works and cleaning. The whole process of applying for and receiving funding was described as being 'an incredible positive experience'. The works have inspired church members to find out more about the knight, who had *'lost his identity'*. Through additional research and effort, the knight has been identified either as one of Edward I's knights or one of Edward I's most successful wool merchants, and further work to try and confirm the identity is ongoing. The grants are perceived to have been the starting point of *'the most amazing journey'*, one which has *'woken up the community'* and *'made the whole place come alive'*.



Photographs of the effigy before and after restoration

Exploring the Counterfactual

- 4.118 Exploring what might have happened in the absence of grant funding – the counterfactual – has been informed by a series of telephone interviews with parish representatives whose applications to the Conservation Grants Programme were unsuccessful. Interviews were undertaken in relation to rejected applications for funding projects relating to clocks, paintings and wallpaintings, organs, bells and stained glass.
- 4.119 Interviewees stated that, in the majority of cases, projects had been completed. Funding sources included:
- Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund provided grant funding for two of the projects.
 - The project ended up being funded as part of a wider project (for example a clock project rejected due to the dials not being of sufficient interest ended up being funded as part of a wider project to refurbish the church tower).
 - Approximately half of the interviewees stated that they had to take money out of their reserves to pay for the project, or in one instance the church used their Fabric Fund (from a legacy).
 - Funding packages were put together from alternative sources (for example the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Arts Council, All Churches Trust, the Pilling Trust, the ON Organ Fund, the Alan Evans Memorial Trust, local historic churches trusts and other trusts and charities) as well as local fundraising.
- 4.120 Interviewees had similarly experienced a mixture of successful and unsuccessful applications and in common with successful ChurchCare grant recipients, interviewees described the difficulties associated with finding alternative funding sources for church projects. Trying to tailor a project to a particular grant requirement was a common frustration, primarily around trying to show 'community benefit' in a small rural parish, or for a church with a small congregation, with feedback from potential funders including they were 'not satisfied with the extent of non-liturgical use' of the heritage artefact

(in this case the church organ) as a reason for rejection. There was a concern that other potential funders may be prejudiced against the project due to the rejection from ChurchCare.

- 4.121 For projects which had not been able to find funding, it did not appear that the condition of the heritage was worsening – for example, the church had used funding from their own reserves to halt the cause of the problem (water ingress associated with guttering problems), such that there was no further deterioration of the wallpaintings (in that case). One interviewee stated that, *‘for churches without masses of trusts, endowments or reserves, ongoing maintenance and conservation work would continue to be problematic’*.

- 4.122 Relevant comments made by interviewees include:

‘if the works are not absolutely critical...it is a poor funding proposition’

‘we are trying to keep the church alive and going and (the organ) is an important cultural aspect of this Grade I listed building’

‘it will only take one major maintenance problem to potentially need to close the building’

‘clock grants are not exactly thick on the ground’

‘you get better at sniffing out funding criteria and how to write funding applications...a lot of it is about confidence’

‘big projects stand out...it is the smaller project that therefore needs the support’

‘there are a lot of things that are not terribly exciting and not worthy of a lot of grant programmes’

‘importance of being ‘in the know’ and how to ‘play the system’ – for example in terms of asking for underspend’.

Communicating the Value of the Programme

- 4.123 Communicating the value of the Conservation Grant Programme internally within the Church of England, to funding partners, to other funding organisations and more widely to other heritage organisations and parishes, is of critical importance. It raises awareness of the work ChurchCare does and describes the direct and wider impacts of projects funded by the grant programme. Key elements of communicating value include capturing feedback from stakeholders / parishes and highlighting impact case studies.

Capturing Feedback and Case Studies

- 4.124 The position relating to annual reports prepared by ChurchCare was described in the previous chapter of this report. It is possible that, with the administrative changes to the Fabric Repair Grant Programme, capacity and resource could be freed up within ChurchCare to enable greater emphasis on capturing feedback and presenting case studies from the Conservation Grant Programme, for example in the preparation of an annual report for wider circulation. Discussions with funding partners have highlighted that it would be helpful to seek more feedback from parishes on the outcomes of projects, although it is noted that this could involve additional work for ChurchCare staff; doing this however would help demonstrate the value / impact of conservation grant and conservation report funding and be a useful tool in evidencing sustainability. Importantly, capturing the value of conservation reports as a ‘first step’ on the path to a project is important, and communicating instances where this first step has been followed up with a successful conservation or restoration project with funding from either other ChurchCare or alternative grant sources, would be beneficial.
- 4.125 Discussions have also highlighted that ChurchCare is only a small part of the overall funding jigsaw. Comparisons have been made between the approach taken by ChurchCare and other grant administering organisations such as the NCT in relation to how other organisations report on grant awards, impacts and financial reporting. In terms of impacts, there could be clearer articulation around what the public benefit of grants awarded might be / what the added value provided by ChurchCare might be. The time spent by ChurchCare in building relationships with parishes and grant recipients is valued by funding partners – it is questioned whether this is clearly articulated enough and what additional work could be done to make it clearer.

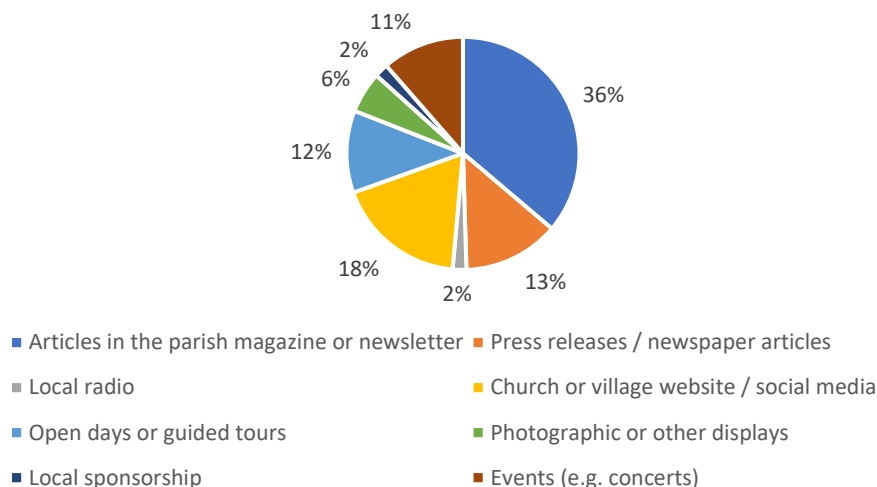
- 4.126 Funding partners have highlighted the importance of putting conservation grants into the wider context of overall work that is being done; the grant enables issues to be flagged up that might not otherwise have come to attention. Communicating the value of this is an area of interest going forward. Opportunity areas include greater co-ordination between funding organisations to better support the sector, raising profiles, and staying close to the Institute of Conservation ('stronger together'). Another area could relate to developing better partnerships and collaborative working practices with other funding organisations. The portfolio of ChurchCare as a grant-awarding body has been relatively low during the evaluation period, given the portfolio of live grantees and resources necessary for maintaining this portfolio. ChurchCare has been described by one funding partner as *'such a small drop in such a big machine'*.
- 4.127 In communicating value, stakeholder discussions have highlighted that better communication channels are needed with a variety of audiences – for example it would be useful for there to be more training of DACs in conservation matters. ChurchCare is currently working with ICON around areas such as report writing and communication.
- 4.128 The benefits associated with the time spent by ChurchCare in building relationships with parishes and grant recipients has been shown to be valued by funding partners and parishes alike; better articulation of this benefit would be welcomed.

Community Dissemination

Conservation Grants

- 4.129 The online surveys asked grant recipients whether the results of projects for which funding had been awarded had been shared with the local community. The vast majority of grant recipients stated that this dissemination and feedback process had taken place (84% of respondents to Survey 1 and 73% of respondents to Survey 2 who had been in recipient of a conservation grant). Where results had not been shared, this primarily related to more recent grant awards where this has not yet been possible. The principal methods used to share the project with the community are shown in Figure 51 **Error! Reference source not found..**

Figure 51 Sharing Project Results with the Wider Community



Case Study: St Michael and All Angels, Meeth (Exeter Diocese)

The Parish was awarded a Conservation Grant of £9,000 in 2015 for the restoration of four bells and the bell-frame in this Grade II* listed church. Two of the bells date back to the 15th century and the other two are dated to 1714. The specialist conservation work was carried out by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London and was made possible by grants from ChurchCare, the Heritage Lottery Fund (at that time) and others. The rehanging and ringing of the restored bells generated much interest within the Parish, drawing people to church and delivering additional benefit beyond the conservation of the heritage. The church sent out leaflets keeping local people up to date with the project and the local school was involved as the Foundry took the bells to the playground to explain their interest and the conservation that needed to be carried out.



4.130 Comments reflecting some of the methods used to share project results with the wider community include:

- 'The work of the project was published in our Parish & Community News which covers three villages in our Benefice'
- 'People have heard the bell ringing, in most cases for the first time ever'
- 'Villagers were invited to fund raise by 'sponsoring a pipe'. This proved a very popular way to engage local interest in the project. The village was invited to visit the church during the restoration process, dismantling and re-assembly, plus final inaugural concert'
- 'Flyers were distributed to all houses in the village to explain the work when it started. A slate sponsorship scheme was widely supported and there was a service to bless the slates when the work was near completion'
- 'the community has been astounded by what has been revealed, with still more to come. The children from (the) primary school have all watched the conservationists at work, and each stage has been explained in the Community News. It has been included on the Village and Deanery websites and on Twitter'
- 'there is an excitement about the result and not only funds but friendships have been formed through the project. We would not have achieved any of this without the 'starter' given by ChurchCare'
- 'I have traced living descendants of the grave occupants and as soon as we are allowed to, we will be having a re-dedication service. None of them was aware of their ancestor in this tomb'

- *'the survey has triggered academic research, reported in the prestigious local historian journal. The work has also been reported at an international conference by the conservators'*
- *'village residents came to watch the bells being taken out of the tower and then again when they were rehung. The project to improve the drainage generated less interest'*

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.131 Similar findings were revealed for conservation report grants, with 61% of respondents to the online surveys stating that project results had been shared with the local community. Comments made by grant recipients included:
- *'Most residents had no idea of the wonderful, rare books that were hidden away in our church. They have definitely been inspired to fundraise more for the church'*
 - *'People are inspired by such a beautiful piece of art'*
 - *'Fund-raising for the main project has been well responded to by the local community. Nearly as much funding has come locally as from other grants'*

Incentivising Good Practice

Conservation Grants

- 4.132 Evidence from stakeholder interviews suggested that a conservation grant from ChurchCare encourages others to fund, *'raises the bar'* and both stimulates and incentivises good practice. The conservation grant is a mechanism through which ChurchCare anticipate good practice is incentivised, through greater understanding of a historical artefact or object, of underlying causes of deterioration and of appropriate conservation / restoration works. The evidence from online surveys and interviews with grant recipients has revealed a mixed picture – on the one hand there has been greater understanding of the significance of objects; there has also been evidence to show the difficulty in reconciling the good practice works required with a potentially large financial cost. Equally, experiences from unsuccessful grant applicants highlighted how rejection advice from ChurchCare had resulted in a better project in terms of good conservation practice.

Conservation Report Grants

- 4.133 Again, the evidence from online surveys and interviews with grant recipients has revealed a mixed picture – on the one hand there has been greater understanding of the significance of objects; there has also been evidence to show the difficulty in reconciling the good practice works required with a hefty financial cost.

Recommendations

- 4.134 This chapter has set out the findings of the evaluation as they relate to the Conservation Grant Programme. Findings have emphasised the extent to which the grant programme has met programme aims and objectives, indicated the direction of travel for future aspects of the grant programme (e.g. size of grant awards) and strengths and weaknesses of the decision-making process.
- 4.135 A series of recommendations have been identified in relation to the Conservation Grant Programme, set out below. Recommendations are grouped according to priority (high / medium / low), with higher priority recommendations being those considered to have the greatest impact on improving grant aiding.

High Priority

Recommendation 1 – Establish annual programme of activity for communicating the value of the Conservation Grant Programme. Communicating the value of the programme both internally and externally is essential to increasing the reach and spread of grants. It is recommended that a programme of activities is developed for action on an annual basis – as a minimum including preparation of an Annual Report, identifying up to five case studies per annum for inclusion, and drawing out benefits and impacts. Such a programme could be used to help with targeting

'coldspots', could help potential applicants understand more about heritage significance, and could emphasise the importance of using accredited conservators.

Recommendation 2 – Target funding 'coldspots' through closer working with DACs. There would be benefits in convening closer working relationships with DACs across the country specifically in relation to funding opportunities and processes, for example through targeted efforts at local level with those DACs located in 'coldspots' across England and through clearer understanding by DACs of what works can and cannot be funded through the Conservation Grant programme. In developing closer working relationships, there may be benefits in terms of level of understanding and consistency of approach, together with encouraging DAC specialist advisers to input to grant applications.

Recommendation 3 – Reinstate an annual virtual meeting of Committee Chairs. Each of the Conservation Committees cover different aspects of heritage and have a different membership accordingly. Reinstating an annual meeting of Committee Chairs (this could be virtual to ensure cost efficiency) to discuss the approach taken by individual committees, could have benefits in terms of ensuring consistency in decision-making and thereby endeavouring to ensure that worthy conservation works are not excluded from grant funding.

Recommendation 4 – Encourage more diverse representation within the committee system. Improving the diversity and inclusion on committees is an issue which ChurchCare is aware of and keen to address. Ongoing discussions are being held with the NCI's Inclusion and Diversity team.

Recommendation 5 – Seek ways to incorporate succession planning into the committee system. Involving students and emerging young professionals in the committee system would have benefits both for promoting diversity and for succession planning through ongoing mentoring.

Medium Priority

Recommendation 6 – Strengthen guidance for applicants where relevant. Particular areas where guidance could be strengthened include identifying relevant sources of information which applicants could refer to; further emphasising basic information required; and providing broad guidance about amounts to apply for (the latter could potentially be achieved through inclusion of case study information).

Recommendation 7 – Include information about Heritage at Risk in grant monitoring. Outcomes of funding can importantly contribute to the removal of churches from the Heritage at Risk Register. Understanding at application stage whether or not the church is on the Register would be useful as part of ongoing monitoring of grant impacts.

Recommendation 8 – Review eligibility criteria to include churchyards. Churchyards are currently not covered by the Conservation Grant Programme, other than as separately listed structures. A review of eligibility criteria for this category would be beneficial as it could enable unlisted but significant monuments or structures which are integral to the historic setting of the church, to be included. Whilst the impact would likely be small in terms of *number* of grants awarded, in terms of meeting objectives to conserve heritage the impact would be greater.

Recommendation 9 – Seek continuous improvement in relation to guidance documents to support grant applications and supporting information. It is typically volunteers who are making the approach to ChurchCare and completing the application forms. All information produced by ChurchCare therefore needs to be as straightforward and simple in terms of language and terminology as possible. It is noted that ChurchCare reviewed, simplified and republished guidelines in 2020. This should lead to improvement, but there is still variation/inconsistency across and within disciplines.

Low Priority

Recommendation 10 – Widen funding scope to include conservation cleaning. The most common reason for applications being rejected was due to them being for cleaning or routine maintenance, activities not funded under the Conservation Grant Programme. The rationale is clear as to why routine maintenance should not be grant aided and should be carried out by any responsible parish, however it is less clear as to why *cleaning* is not eligible. Appropriate

conservation cleaning can be expensive and needs to be carried out by specialists and can also sometimes enable more to be learnt about the significance of the heritage asset in question.

Recommendation 11 – Work with specialist conservators to encourage wider accreditation. It is recognised that there are highly skilled conservators who have never sought accreditation. If the requirement for accreditation of conservators were to be formalised (noting that most other funders require specialists to be accredited), then work needs to be done to encourage more people to become accredited.

Recommendation 12 – Produce specific guidance for parishes in relation to the tendering process. Parishes should demonstrate a best practice approach when tendering works for projects funded by conservation grants. Consideration should be given to developing clear and simple guidance for parishes about the tendering process and who carries out grant-aided works.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 This evaluation has brought together a considerable array of information relating to the Fabric Repair Grant and Conservation Grants Programmes over the period from 2015 to 2019, including secondary data, findings from two comprehensive online surveys of grant recipients, detailed understanding derived from a selection of interviews both with grant recipients and unsuccessful applicants, together with context and analysis provided through interviews with ChurchCare staff, funding partners and decision-makers in the grant award process. This chapter sets out the main conclusions drawn from the evaluation in relation to each of the key areas considered, and reiterates the recommendations made in relation to each of the grant programmes.
- 5.2 Many of the key findings from the evaluation are not grant-scheme specific, but relate to the context and funding environment within which the ChurchCare grant programmes sit. The difficulties and challenges of funding projects relating to church heritage are well articulated elsewhere (for example in The Taylor Review (2017)⁴ which considered the challenges faced by listed Church of England places of worship specifically in relation to financial sustainability and fabric maintenance); the evaluation has highlighted many similar issues through the lens of fabric repair and focus on heritage conservation.

Programme Aims and Objectives

- 5.3 Finding the right balance between achieving a comprehensive reach and spread for grant programmes, whilst at the same time not spreading grants too thinly is clearly challenging. The consistent approach taken by ChurchCare over the evaluation period (with current administration and grant management staff being in place since 2016) has ensured the build-up of a body of knowledge and understanding relating to the levels of grant that may be viewed favourably by parishes when balanced against conditions and requirements. In an ideal world, parishes would understandably like to apply for and receive a single grant for their project; however the realities of the funding environment are well understood *'the fundraising from so many different providers in order to meet the budget is a nightmare. It would of course have been easier if larger sums were available but we are grateful to all of our donors'*.
- 5.4 Many parishes experience issues in terms of the capacity, volunteer time and skills needed to complete funding applications (and particularly for the majority of projects where a cocktail of funding applications may be necessary to meet project costs). Volunteers often have little or no funding or heritage knowledge or experience. Other factors at play at individual church level include levels of interest, relationships with the church architect, priorities of the PCC, and the level of financial reserves. With these factors in mind, providing support to as many parishes as possible, even if this does mean smaller grant awards, is helpful.
- 5.5 The evaluation has shown that the impacts of sourcing funding for conservation and fabric repair projects can be both dispiriting and yet also provide community value. Some of the evidence from both successful and unsuccessful grant recipients has shown how the process of raising funding has been a rewarding one for the parishes and a source of individual or collective capacity building. It has also been shown to be incredibly time consuming and complex for people who describe themselves as 'volunteers' and 'laymen'. The challenge of finding funding is such that successes, even small grant awards, can give communities an incredible boost. The evidence from the evaluation for both fabric repair and conservation grant / conservation report grant funding has shown that small grants can be effective in terms of the help and confidence they provide to parishes.
- 5.6 ChurchCare grants appear to have been a stepping stone for many grant recipients on their way to making larger and more significant grant applications (for example to organisations such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund). Recipients have talked about being *'geared up'* for making larger funding applications and *'understanding what is required'* following the award of a ChurchCare grant.

⁴ The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals (2017), Department for Culture, Media and Sport

- 5.7 Understanding the significance of heritage at parish level can be challenging. The evaluation has shown that parishes can have high expectations of the significance of heritage within their church and expect this to be borne out in accessing funding. Representatives from Grade I and II* listed churches have been concerned to find that funding for conservation or fabric repair works is more difficult to access than they had thought and the implications this has had for the vulnerability of their church buildings; similarly finding funding for things that are *'not terribly exciting'* remains a day to day challenge. Further work at DAC level to ensure funding coldspots can be targeted is also relevant to both grant programmes.

Fund Processes and Delivery

- 5.8 The evaluation has shown pre-application, application and grant management / delivery processes have been viewed by the majority as relatively straightforward across the grant programmes. As with every grant scheme, there are minor tweaks and improvements that could be made (ensuring that all information is easy to understand for example).
- 5.9 The added value provided by ChurchCare during pre-application, application and grant management stages has been widely acknowledged and respected. The level of care and detail which individual parishes have described has been an invaluable support both in terms of the project for which people have sought funding as well as more widely in terms of helping people identify alternative funding sources and approaches. The approach provided by ChurchCare has been described as *'supportive'* and *'hand holding'*, of benefit particularly for those who do not necessarily have heritage knowledge or experience (*'it can be dispiriting for people who might not know the right words'*).

Outcomes and Impacts

- 5.10 The impacts of ChurchCare grants on heritage, on community (in terms of the skills and experience which people have developed in relation to funding, heritage and collectively) and on mission have been widely evidenced through this evaluation. Funding has not only improved the condition of heritage in terms of buildings, objects and artefacts, but it has improved understanding of heritage at a local level in many instances. Unintended consequences of funding have included positives such as improved community and social connections, but also challenges in terms of additional work required (with often significant costs attached).

Communicating the Value of the Programmes

- 5.11 The evaluation has considered the extent to which the value of the programmes have been effectively captured and communicated – both internally and externally, to stakeholders, funding partners and importantly to parishes (those in receipt of funding and those who may not have been aware of the grant programme), together with an assessment of the extent to which this has incentivised good practice. Communicating the value raises awareness of the work ChurchCare does and describes the direct and wider impacts of projects funded by the grant programmes.
- 5.12 ChurchCare has primarily directed resources towards taking a 'hands-on' approach to assisting prospective and current grant recipients, rather than on development of case study and related material for wider circulation. Communicating value at parish level has to an extent been undertaken by parishes themselves as part of wider dissemination activities through local press, community newsletters and so on in relation to specific projects. The portfolio of ChurchCare as a grant-awarding body has therefore been relatively low during the evaluation period; going forward, there should be clearer articulation around the public benefit of grants awarded and the added value clearly provided by ChurchCare as part of this process. This is also an opportunity for greater co-ordination between funding organisations to better support the sector (including developing better partnerships / collaborative working practices), raising profiles and staying close to the Institute of Conservation ('stronger together').

Recommendations

- 5.13 Recommendations for both the grant programmes are set out here. The administration of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme has now passed to the NCT, who over time will develop their own methods,

processes and priorities for funding. Recommendations arising from the evaluation may inform future thinking.

Fabric Repair Grant Programme

- 5.14 The administration of the Fabric Repair Grant Programme has now passed to the NCT, who over time will develop their own methods, processes and priorities for funding. Recommendations arising from the evaluation which may inform future thinking are as follows, in order of priority:

Recommendation 1 – Wider communication of the value of the programme. The evaluation has highlighted that although there has been dissemination of the direct and indirect impacts of grant awards at project level in many instances (much of which has proved effective in terms of raising awareness of funding and associated outcomes), wider communication of the value of the programme could be more effective. This should take place using a variety of means – annual reports, website content, use of social media – to ensure the benefits and value of the Fabric Repair programme are promoted. A selection of annual case studies could help support this information.

Recommendation 2 – Providing support for parishes in relation to fund-raising. All parishes in receipt of a Fabric Repair grant would have had the benefit of external advisers in relation to heritage / fabric repair aspects (for example architects, chartered building surveyors), but few parishes have been in receipt of professional assistance in relation to fund-raising. This is an area which so many parishes have highlighted as a struggle, for example due to time/capacity, skillsets and awareness. Further support could be provided for parishes in this area – a simple task could be the preparation of a guidance note identifying the breadth of other funding sources available and information around success rates / eligibility criteria (information gathered as part of this evaluation could help showcase the variety of potential funders available); a further option could be circulation of good practice case studies highlighting fund-raising ideas and good practice tips from other grant recipients; a more innovative option could be a funding support officer to directly assist parishes with funding applications and putting together the 'cocktail' of funding options for their project.

Recommendation 3 – Work with DACs to encourage applications. As part of a drive to promote awareness of grant-giving possibilities for fabric repair projects, ensure effective communication and close working with DACs continues to encourage applications where appropriate.

Recommendation 4 – Introduction of targets to improve geographical spread of grant awards. Evidence has shown that there have been clear clusters of grant awards across the country (partly due to the distribution of listed buildings within dioceses, but also due to the awareness, priorities and support offered by individual DACs to parishes). Target setting could help increase the number of grants awarded to churches within the most deprived areas of England (for example a goal to award a quarter of grants per year to churches within the 20% most deprived areas). This approach could galvanise a marketing campaign within highlighted coldspots, linked with wider communication (Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 5 – Working with parishes to help produce maintenance plans. Evidence from grant recipients revealed a very mixed approach to maintenance at parish level, for a variety of reasons including awareness, skillset, financial ability, priority, relationships with church architects and availability of appropriate contractors. Given that good and regular maintenance is of such importance to heritage buildings in terms of prevention and protection, further assistance at parish level (whether this is through funding, communication of effective approaches, dissemination of good practice via written guidance or face to face training workshops) to enable the preparation and implementation of effective maintenance plans would be beneficial.

Conservation Grant Programme

- 5.15 Recommendations identified in relation to the Conservation Grant Programme are set out here, grouped according to priority (high / medium / low), with higher priority recommendations being those considered to have the greatest impact on improving grant aiding.

High Priority

Recommendation 1 – Establish annual programme of activity for communicating the value of the Conservation Grant Programme. Communicating the value of the programme both internally

and externally is essential to increasing the reach and spread of grants. It is recommended that a programme of activities is developed for action on an annual basis – as a minimum including preparation of an Annual Report, identifying up to five case studies per annum for inclusion, and drawing out benefits and impacts. Such a programme could be used to help with targeting ‘coldspots’, could help potential applicants understand more about heritage significance, and could emphasise the importance of using accredited conservators.

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Recommendation 5 – Seek ways to incorporate succession planning into the committee system. Involving students and emerging young professionals in the committee system would have benefits both for promoting diversity and for succession planning through ongoing mentoring.

Medium Priority

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parish, however it is less clear as to why *cleaning* is not eligible. Appropriate conservation cleaning can be expensive and needs to be carried out by specialists and can also sometimes enable more to be learnt about the significance of the heritage asset in question.

Recommendation 11 – Work with specialist conservators to encourage wider accreditation.

There are highly skilled conservators who have never sought accreditation. If the requirement for accreditation of conservators were to be formalised (noting that most other funders require specialists to be accredited), then work needs to be done to encourage more people to become accredited.

Recommendation 12 – Produce specific guidance for parishes in relation to the tendering process.

Parishes should demonstrate a best practice approach when tendering works for projects funded by Conservation Grants. Consideration should be given to developing clear and simple guidance for parishes about the tendering process and who carries out grant-aided works.

APPENDIX A

Online Survey Questions

Online Survey 1:

1. Name of Church
2. Name of Diocese
3. Your church received funding from one of our grant schemes during the period 2015-2019 inclusive. From which grant scheme did you receive funding? (please select one of the options below). a) Fabric Repair Grant b) Conservation Grant c) Conservation Report Grant
For each of the three grants, the following questions were asked:
4. Please provide brief details below in relation to the grant your church received (year of grant and amount received).
5. Please describe briefly here what the grant was for.
6. Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very straightforward and 5 is very complicated, how did you find the overall grant application process? Select the response that best reflects your experience.
7. Were there any aspects of the application process that you found particularly challenging (for example the amount of time it took, or the content required)?
7a. If you answered yes to the previous question, which specific aspects of the application did you find difficult or challenging? - Use of the online application form - Finding supporting documentation to accompany the application - Other (please describe below)
8. Do you think that the amount of information requested as part of the application was proportionate to the level of funding being sought?
9. Did you apply for grants from other funding organisations in relation to your project?
10. Thinking about other grants you applied for in relation to your project, how similar was the application process? Please state whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: - Similar questions were asked - The level of detail and information required was similar - The application took approximately the same time to complete as for other grant applications - Please use the space below to make any further comments in relation to any of these areas.
11a. Did you ask for any help or advice from ChurchCare during the grant application process?
11b. What areas of the application or grant process did you seek help in relation to?
11c. Was this advice helpful to you?
11d. Please use the space below to provide any additional comments / information.
12a. How did you find the grant claim process? Select the response that best reflects your experience.
12b. Please describe any particular issues / thoughts you may have in relation to the grant claim process in the space below.
13a. Was your grant subject to any specific conditions?
13b. Do you consider that the conditions were proportionate to your application? (yes / partially / no)
13c. If you answered partially or no, please provide reasons in the space below.

14a. Did you find the conditions straightforward to fulfil? (yes / partially / no)
14b. If you answered partially or no, please provide reasons in the space below.
15. We would like to understand the timescales for completion of your project if possible – please state approximately how many months from the award of the grant to the completion of your project.
16. What proportion of your total project cost (approximately) was funded by our grant?
17. What other grants did you receive for your project (e.g National Lottery Heritage Fund)? Please list up to three other funding sources below (Grant 1 / Grant 2 / Grant 3 / No other grants received / Not applicable)
18. For each of these grants, are you able to tell us the approximate value and percentage of your project that they relate to?
19. Was the grant the first grant awarded for your project?
20. Did the award of the grant encourage you to apply for other grant schemes – either for this project or for other projects?
<p>21. What impacts has your project had? For each of the following statements, please state whether you agree or disagree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has had a positive effect on the mission of the church (Agree / Disagree / Neither Agree or Disagree) - The project has had a positive effect on the day to day operation of the church - The project has allowed the building to remain open for worship - The project has improved the condition of the church building - The project has improved the condition of objects or artefacts within the church - Members of the church community have learnt more about heritage - The project has enabled the creation of more useable spaces within the church for activities or events <p>Please use this space to provide any further details / thoughts about the impacts your project has had.</p>
22a. Has the project enabled members of the church community to develop new skills (e.g. fundraising) (Yes / No)
22b. If you answered 'yes' to this question, can you describe below what new skills have been learnt?
<p>23. Have there been any unintended consequences from your project? Some examples are provided below, or there may be specific examples you can provide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More people visited the church - New events or activities were held in the church (for example to showcase a particular piece of heritage, or because the church was more useable) - The church realised what next steps were necessary to conserve the building or other artefacts - Any negative consequences <p>If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, or if there were any other unintended consequences, please use the space below to provide brief details.</p>
24a. Have the results of the project been shared with people living in the nearby community? (Yes / no)
24b. If yes, how has this been done / what reactions have there been (please describe in the space below)?
25. We would like to prepare a number of detailed case studies illustrating the benefits and impacts of our grant programmes to churches and church communities around the country. We would also like further information about how our grant application processes can be improved. If you would be happy for one of our researchers to contact you in order to participate in a short telephone interview, please select 'yes' from the choices below. We would love to hear more detail about a range of projects from across the country.

Online Survey 2

1. Name of Church
2. Name of Diocese
3. Your church has received funding from more than one of our grant schemes during the period 2015-2019 inclusive. From which grant schemes have you received funding during this time? (please select all that apply from the options below).
4. Please provide brief details below in relation to the grants your church has received from each grant scheme (year of grant and amount received).
5. Have any of the ChurchCare grants you applied for related to the same project?
6. Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very straightforward and 5 is very complicated, how did you find the overall grant application process? Select the response that best reflects your experience.
7. Were there any aspects of the application process that you found particularly challenging (for example the amount of time it took, or the content required)?
8. Which specific aspects of the grant application process did you find difficult or challenging? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of the online application form - Finding supporting documentation to accompany the application - Other (please describe below)
9. Do you think generally that the amount of information requested as part of your grant applications was proportionate to the level of funding being sought?
10. Please use the space below to provide any thoughts you might have about this - for example, would your answer be different depending on which grant you applied for?
11. Did you apply / have you applied for grants from other funding organisations for your church?
12. For projects where you have received a Fabric Repairs Grant, what grants did you receive from other funding sources (e.g. National Lottery Heritage Fund)? Please list the main three other funding sources below.
13. For projects where you have received a Conservation Grant, what grants did you receive from other funding sources? Please list the main three other funding sources below.
14. For projects where you have received a Conservation Report Grant, what grants did you receive from other funding sources? Please list the main three other funding sources below.
15. For each project where you have received a Fabric Repairs Grant, Conservation Grant or Conservation Report Grant, what proportion of your total project cost (approximately) was funded by our grant?
16. How similar did you find the ChurchCare application process compared to other grant schemes? Please state whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar questions were asked - The level of detail and information required was similar - The application process took approximately the same time to complete as for other grant applications
17. Have you asked for help or advice from ChurchCare in relation to any of your grant applications?
18. What areas of the application or grant process did you seek help in relation to?
19. Was this advice helpful to you?
20. How have you found the grant claim process?
21. Were any of your grants subject to specific conditions?
22. Do you consider that, generally, the conditions were proportionate to your applications?
23. Did you find the conditions straightforward to fulfil? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving a grant from ChurchCare gave me the confidence to apply for another one - I found making second and subsequent applications to ChurchCare more straightforward because I knew more about the process and work involved - Having a grant from ChurchCare gave me the confidence to apply for grants from other organisations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On your skills and ability to apply for grants generally
<p>24. Use the space below to provide any further detail or thoughts about the impacts of your grants.</p>
<p>25. What impacts do you think our funding has had on your church? For each of the following statements, please state whether you agree or disagree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ChurchCare funding has had a positive effect on the mission of the church - ChurchCare funding has had a positive effect on the day to day operation of the church - ChurchCare funding has allowed the building to remain open for worship - ChurchCare funding has improved the condition of the church building - ChurchCare funding has improved the condition of objects or artefacts within the church - Members of the church community have learnt more about heritage - ChurchCare funding has enabled the creation of more useable spaces within the church for activities or events
<p>26. Have the results of projects funded by ChurchCare been shared with people living in the nearby community?</p>
<p>27. We would like to prepare a number of detailed case studies illustrating the benefits and impacts of our grant programmes to churches and church communities around the country. We would also like further information about how our grant application processes can be improved. If you would be happy for one of our researchers to contact you in order to participate in a short telephone interview, please select 'yes' from the choices below. We would love to hear more detail about a range of projects from across the country.</p>

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