

from **The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance**
an independently-funded group within The Heritage Alliance

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

The Heritage Alliance

Baroness Scott of Bybrook, OBE
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Dear Lady Scott

LOCAL COUNCIL'S FUNDING FOR CHURCH PROPERTY

Re: amendments 163 and 485 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB)

Desire of advisory bodies to see change to the 1894 Local Government act

I have previously written to you on the problems caused by an interpretation of the law which, on the basis of the 1894 Local Government Act, deems it illegal in England and Wales for a local council to give a grant towards church property for community benefit.

We have pointed out that this increasingly common view of the law is being promulgated by the authoritative National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in England and the equivalent body in Wales, One Voice Wales.

Since then we have contacted another influential body, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). They have similarly told us 'we do consider that the legislation is insufficiently clear and we generally advise [our members] that grants for church buildings are not permitted under the law as it stands'.

As you know, NALC wishes to see the law clarified to allow such grants (LURB amendment 163). This to letter is to let you know that in recent correspondence, One Voice Wales has confirmed it takes the same view as NALC on this matter, and the SLCC says it 'welcomes the opportunity [given by LURB] for the law to be clarified to enable grants to be made in respect of buildings owned by Church authorities'.

We therefore hope the Government will support the intent behind amendments 163 and 485. As you have pointed out, the only other way to clarify the law is through the Courts.

With all good wishes.

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