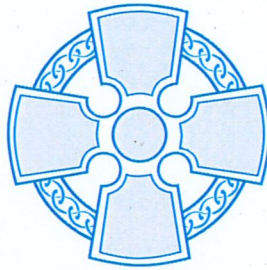


Y R E G L W Y S  
Y N G N G H Y M R U



THE CHURCH  
IN WALES

Trevor Cooper  
The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance  
c/o The Heritage Alliance  
St Martin within Ludgate  
40 Ludgate Hill  
London, EC4M 7DE

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

Dear Trevor,

### **The Church in Wales – Funding from local councils**

The Church in Wales is a Province of the Anglican communion and operates 1232 open churches across its six dioceses. In addition, we operate over 400 church halls and 1210 burial grounds.

The uncertainty in the law over whether local councils can give discretionary grants to church buildings and other church property for community benefit is a serious concern to the Church in Wales.

It is clear that our churches, church halls, churchyards and other property provide vital services to local communities in a number of different ways. Aside from use for worship, marriages and funeral services, our churches and church halls play host to a variety of community activities including food banks, nursery groups, dementia support and even local broadband services. Our church property is managed and funded by the local congregation through its Ministry Area Council. All the activities of the local church are organised by local volunteer effort supported by our clergy.

Raising funds for these essential activities is challenging and largely relies on the local good will of residents and church attenders. There are many opportunities for the local church and the wider community to work together but the current law makes it challenging and uncertain for local councils to offer financial support to such projects. As such, we believe opportunities are being missed for creative community partnerships. In many communities, the place of worship is the only remaining open public building in that community.

In Wales, we have a particular challenge over our churchyards. The Welsh Church (Burial Grounds Act) 1945 places an obligation on the church to permit interments without discrimination. This means our churchyards are public cemeteries (and often the only burial place in the community) but the obligations for maintenance fall on the

church. Unlike the Church of England, there is no legal right to transfer closed churchyards to the care of Local Authorities on the closure of the burial ground. The ability for a local council to give a grant to help maintain the churchyard can be transformative and ensure the burial ground remains in good order for the whole community. This is a clear example where local council funding to the church would benefit the whole community in sustaining an asset for the whole community.

It is worth saying that the Church in Wales is not the established church in Wales – there is no established church in Wales. All denominations in Wales would have the same challenges with regard to funding and would equally benefit from clarity of the law to enable local councils to financially support community projects run by the religious denomination.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A P Glanville', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Mr A P Glanville BSc (Hons) FRICS**  
Head of Property Services