

Changes to National Lottery funding for places of worship

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is changing the way it funds historic places of worship. Groups looking to secure National Lottery funding for projects that undertake repairs to places of worship should now apply through HLF's *Our Heritage* or *Heritage Grants* programmes.

Here is some information we think will help explain the changes.

Are places of worship still important to HLF?

Absolutely! HLF is committed to supporting good projects that help to ensure the long term sustainability of places of worship. Places of worship include some of the UK's most significant buildings and we have a part to play to ensure that these buildings are safeguarded so that future generations can also enjoy their rich heritage.

Is HLF reducing its financial support for places of worship?

Over the next two years HLF has guaranteed to maintain its proportional investment in historic places of worship across the UK. This means allocating at least £20million in 2017-18 and the same proportion of HLF's overall grants budget in 2018-19.

However, the total figure is likely to be far more than this. If places of worship continue to apply for National Lottery funding at similar levels to previous years we fully expect to spend equivalent amounts in subsequent years, in proportion to our total grants budget. We also hope that congregations will take advantage of the more flexible nature of our open programmes to access larger pots of money than previously available through the previous *Grants for Places of Worship* programme, where awards were capped at £250,000.

Why is HLF changing its approach to how it supports places of worship?

Our policy decisions are driven by the need to deliver value for National Lottery players and to ensure that National Lottery funding delivers tangible benefits for people and communities, as well as making heritage fit for the future. By reducing complexity we will make our portfolio easier for applicants to understand and navigate. And we believe that the new arrangements offer greater flexibility for congregations to put in place measures that will help them to become truly sustainable. Channeling the smaller scale capital projects through *Our Heritage* will also simplify the approach for applicants, making it easier for those with limited capacity to apply for HLF funding.

Why are you making this change now?

We constantly look at how we support heritage projects and how we design our programmes to be accessible, flexible and easy to understand. We know that sometimes people applying for funding for their place of worship can find the application process onerous – something the sector has raised with us. By making this change now, before we move into the delivery of HLF's next strategic framework in 2019, we can ensure that we have sufficient resources to provide congregations with the support that they will need during the transition period as the GPOW programme comes to an end.

Will the partnership working between HLF and Historic Environment Scotland on funding for places of worship in Scotland continue?

Yes. People caring for places of worship in Scotland will still be able to access funding from both organisations through a single application form and process: either through *Our Heritage* or *Heritage Grants* depending on the scale of grant request.

What can I include in my *Our Heritage* or *Heritage Grant* application?

Our open programmes are genuinely open – applicants can ask for whatever they feel that they most need to deliver an effective and engaging project that meets their needs. We recognise that for many applicants

the focus of the project will still be addressing significant fabric repair needs but there are many other elements that can be included. From our experience of previous successful Our Heritage and Heritage Grant projects we would suggest that applicants might wish to consider including some of the following items in their project, bearing in mind that this list is neither exclusive nor mandatory!

- Capital repair works – conservation, planned repairs, urgent repairs
- New facilities – WCs, serveries and repairs / upgrades to services (heating, lighting and electrics)
- Activities to increase engagement
- Capacity building – increasing the skills within the congregation e.g. leadership, governance, community engagement, marketing & tourism, managing on-going maintenance etc.
- Professional support – business & financial management, project management, fundraising, engagement & education etc.

Are the amounts that can be spent on capital repair works and activities fixed in the open programmes?

No. In our GPOW programme guidance we stated that any new works should cost no more than 15% of the total overall project costs. This restriction does not apply to Our Heritage or Heritage Grants applications. We always encourage applicants to apply for what they need whether this is capital works to tackle much needed fabric repairs or work to support learning and outreach activities. The 'help notes' in the application guidance (Our Heritage and Heritage Grants) give further detail on the things that we can fund.

Is there a requirement to use accredited conservation professionals to lead projects that will be delivered through Our Heritage and Heritage Grants?

No. Under our open programmes we do not require projects to be led by a professional adviser with conservation accreditation from a recognised body. However we have always made clear our expectation that applicants should appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced professional team with the necessary conservation skills. We recognise that accreditation is a useful way to identify suitable professionals as part of the procurement process and will continue to encourage applicants to consider this when they appoint their team.

Interestingly, in many cases applicants do choose to employ accredited professionals to help them deliver their Our Heritage and Heritage Grants project; our analysis of the Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund also showed that the majority of the repair projects were undertaken by accredited professionals although this was not a requirement of the scheme.

What support is HLF providing knowing that many applicants are volunteers and have limited capacity to deliver projects?

Our new approach provides an opportunity to rethink how we present our guidance and we are working hard to find appropriate ways to help support applicants during the transition period. The following list summarises some of measures we are taking but we would very much welcome your ideas about other resources that we could provide or other measures that we could take.

- Development Teams continue to provide pre-application advice to people who are considering applying to the Our Heritage and Heritage Grants programmes.
- We are producing a collection of 'good practice' resources for applicants, which will include case studies, links to existing successful projects and detailed application 'help notes'.
- We are using our Online Community to provide additional support and are actively signposting other helpful resources and sources of good advice. [We are aware that resources need to also be accessible for those who are less comfortable with IT or have a lack of online access.]
- We are working with denominational bodies and national groups, such as ChurchCare, the National Churches Trust and the Places of Worship Support Officers, to make sure that all applicants can access the information and resources they need.
- We are ensuring that applicants to the Our Heritage programme are aware of the opportunity to make use of a mentor, paid for through their project grant.

- We are talking to denominational bodies and other sector groups about the potential of developing HLF-funded projects to build capacity in their own members through our Resilient Heritage programme.
- We are developing and delivering tailored training sessions for denominational bodies and applicants at national and regional levels to ensure that everyone understands the opportunities offered through our open programmes and is empowered to develop strong applications for funding.

More information can be found at www.hlf.org.uk