Heritage in Need: Places of Worship

27/05/2025

See all updates

We want to help places of worship across the UK tackle heritage challenges systemically, become more sustainable and welcome people from all backgrounds, including those who rarely visit.

We will invest a minimum of £15million in projects that have a strategic impact at a regional or national level for places of worship over the next three years.

Rich in culture and collections, places of worship tell the story of the religious, social and economic changes of the people of the UK. We recognise the scale of the challenges facing places of worship and those who care for them, and we are committed to supporting them through that change.

The needs and funding gaps we have identified and want to address through this initiative are:

- repair listed buildings, particularly those in more rural areas
- workforce and volunteer capability to manage heritage
- heritage in places of worship that is currently inaccessible, at risk or under used

Find out more about other ways we support places of worship.

Considerations for a Heritage in Need: Places of Worship application

Our aim is to support strategic projects in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that have the potential to make an impact at a regional or national sector level and will:

- proactively tackle long-standing heritage issues at a large scale
- enable a coordinated cross-territory approach that will strengthen delivery
- address gaps where proposals are not coming through our National Lottery Heritage Grants programme
- accelerate new ideas and interventions where a deliberate approach is needed

Our ambition for this strategic initiative is to address some of the identified aims and needs of places of worship by investing in work such as:

- strategic projects at scale that develop the processes, systems, guidance and infrastructure needed through a change in use, management or ownership?
- strategic projects at scale based on an understanding of the needs of heritage and owners of heritage schemes that build capacity among smaller denominations and faith groups to develop large projects
- strategic projects that establish the cultural and heritage significance of places of worship where that may be at risk of loss?
- capacity-building projects that can provide broader support, advice and guidance for owners and managers of historic religious buildings and sites across geographies and types such as funding for support officers?
- initiatives that bring together many organisations, faith groups and funders to collaborate and find solutions to issues facing places of worship and heritage?
- schemes that provide funding for exploring feasibility for more sustainable options for existing or new uses for places of worship
- developing schemes that share learning and support for volunteers managing and caring for heritage and to make that more accessible to wider audiences?
- strategic projects that trial different approaches to managing places of worship at an area scale
- projects that explore the heritage of places of worship to support and contribute to the local and visitor economy at a national or regional level?
- thematic projects that might use innovative technologies to open access to heritage and collections

Who can apply

Not-for-profit organisations and partnerships led by not-for-profit organisations from across the UK can apply.

Individual places of worship are not eligible for funding through this strategic initiative, nor single site applications for capital works-only projects. We will continue to award funding for these through our National Lottery Heritage Grants programme.

How to apply

If you have an idea for a Heritage in Need: Places of Worship project, start by contacting your local Heritage Fund office .

For grants up to £250,000, you can submit an optional?Project Enquiry?to get feedback?on your project idea.

For grants over £250,000 you must first submit an Expression of Interest?before applying. Start your project title with #PW.

Follow our?National Lottery Heritage Grants?guidance to prepare and submit your application for a grant of up to £10m.

How we make decisions

In addition to our processes under the National Lottery Heritage Grants programme, we will assess how your project addresses the needs and funding gaps identified, and the aims and ambitions of this strategic initiative. We may also consider other factors such as achieving a geographical spread of our funding.



An aerial view of St. Margaret's Church in Braemar. Credit: The St. Margaret's Trust.



cottish masterpiece



Welcoming visitors to St Tydecho Church in Gwynedd, Wales. Credit: National Churches Trust



s of worship

Established in 1069 as a Benedictine monastery and originally a wooden complex, Selby Abbey has been rebuilt and extended over the centuries.

The Yorkshire projects protecting historic buildings and bringing communities together