



...hes has cleared its final hurdle in the House of Lords

Legislation clarifying that parish and town councils can provide support to churches for repairs and improvements has cleared its final stages in the House of Lords.

A Government amendment to the Bill makes it clear that local authorities can provide grants for parish churches or places of worship, following many years of legal uncertainty.

The amendment was introduced after the Bishop of Bristol, Viv Faull (pictured) highlighted the need for clarification of the law during the Bill's Committee Stage in the House of Lords.

Bishop Viv, who is the Church of England's joint lead bishop on church buildings, said: "This amendment brings clarity to the law which will give local authorities confidence to award grants to local church buildings to enable them to serve their communities better.

"I have long been in conversation with Government about bringing in this change and have been contacted by both local authorities and church councils who are anticipating this change with enthusiasm and gratitude."

Speaking on behalf of the Bishop of Bristol in the House of Lords today, the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, thanked Baroness Scott of Bybrook, the Heritage Minister who brought the amendment.

"We would like to record our thanks to Baroness Scott of Bybrook for the constructive work that is represented in this Bill," he said.

"There is a widespread welcome for clarification of the question of local authorities being permitted to offer financial support to church buildings including parish churches."

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill received its Third Reading in the House of Lords today. It will now go to the House of Commons for final consideration ahead of Royal Assent.

The clarification comes after the Taylor Review of the Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals, published in 2017, proposed a clarification through guidance or a change in the law.

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