



specialist advice to parishes, it was announced today.

A total of £2.8 million has been allocated for 30 Church Buildings Support Officers across the country to give specialist advice on the management, conservation, repair and development of church buildings, including community use alongside worship.

A further £6.2 million has been allocated across 41 dioceses for making grants of up to £12,000 for repairs to churches. The grants will focus on small-scale but urgent works and 'stitch in time' projects that could save larger sums in the long term. The fund will also be able to help cover the cost of essential improvements for the mission and ministry of a church.

The grants come from the £11 million Buildings for Mission, funded by the Church Commissioners and administered by the Archbishops' Council over the period 2023 to 2025.

Emily Gee, Director for Cathedrals and Church Buildings for the Church of England, said: "Buildings for Mission will help to fund the repair and improvement of church buildings through the dioceses, as well as to boost professional advice and grant money for rural and urban church buildings most in need.

"Churches are wonderfully supported, year in year out, by volunteers who give their time and financial support so generously. This funding will help foster robust and flourishing congregations and release resources, energy and potential for mission and outreach."

The Bishop of Ramsbury, Andrew Rumsey, joint lead bishop for Church Buildings, said: "Our churches and cathedrals are invaluable signs of our Christian presence and heritage. It is essential that we protect and sustain them as centres for worship and community service.

"This programme aims to reduce the burden of buildings management on parishes and dioceses - through better support arrangements and technical systems, as well as providing funding for minor repairs and project development.

"With more church buildings officers in dioceses, I believe we can help parishes to apply for external funding, plan buildings projects and see more churches flourish as houses of hope and holiness."

More information

Grants for church buildings support officers have been awarded to 30 dioceses: Blackburn, Bristol and Salisbury (two shared posts), Canterbury, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Chichester, Coventry and Worcester (shared post), Derby, Durham, Ely, Exeter (two posts), Gloucester, Hereford, Liverpool, Leeds, Lichfield, Newcastle, Norwich, Portsmouth, Rochester, Sodor and Man, Southwark, Southwell and Nottingham, St Albans, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Truro, Winchester and York.

- Three of the grants involve posts shared across diocesan boundaries, maximising reach where local conditions suit co-delivery of services
- Six of the Church Buildings Support Officers will be recruited as apprentices and will take part in a two-year specialist course at Strode College in Somerset from the start of next year which will run alongside their employment. This will help build the skilled workforce of historic environment professionals with specialist knowledge of churches.
- The CBSOs will be employed by dioceses, and will complement existing staff and key partner bodies to give direct help to local churches with technical advice, grant applications and project planning.
- The Minor Repairs and Improvements (MR&I) Grant Fund, worth £6.2 million, will be administered in the form of small grants for urgent and necessary repair or improvement projects costing up to £12,000. Every mainland diocese plus Sodor and Man has been allocated a share of the Fund to distribute, thereby ensuring that all parts of the country will benefit. The main focus will be on urgent repairs, including 'stitch in time' projects which can save money in the long term. Small scale improvements which are essential to sustaining worship and mission are also eligible. The Fund is intended to target need and grants will be prioritised accordingly.
- Specialist support officers and grants for 'stitch in time' repairs were recommended as part of the [Taylor Review](#) on the sustainability of English churches and refined in pilot schemes which [tested the Review's findings](#) in 2018-20. St Paul's Church in Halliwell, Bolton, (pictured) received a grant during the Greater Manchester pilot for repairs to the roof and rainwater disposal system
- The remaining money from the Buildings for Mission fund is to be awarded to invest in digital provision and to provide seed corn funding for management partnerships to provide maintenance services and insurance for groups of churches. Details will be released later.

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