

A Quick Guide to Applying to the National Lottery Heritage Fund



First, consider which level of grant is best for your project and your organisation.

- A grant between £10,000 and £250,000 requires just one application. There are more upfront costs, but decisions take about 8 weeks and projects can start almost immediately.
- A grant over £250,000 consists of a two-stage application process. Projects generally take at least 5 years to complete, with repairs starting about 18 months after the first grant application has been submitted.

There is no limit to how many times you can apply to the Heritage Fund, so for a large project costing over £250,000 a phased approach might be more appropriate and manageable. It very much depends upon the type of work needed, the urgency and the capacity of the PCC.

The key to success with the NLHF is addressing the four Investment Principles:

- saving heritage
- protecting the environment
- inclusion, access and participation
- organisational sustainability

These will guide the decision-making on grants. Applications for funding must take all four principles into account, but the strength of focus, and emphasis on each principle, is for you to decide and demonstrate. For guidance, please refer to *A Guide to Achieving the NLHF Investment Principles*.

The following is a basic overview of the key steps involved in planning a project and applying to the Heritage Fund. For more detailed information and support please contact the Diocese of Ely's Historic Church Buildings Support Officer.

For more information about Project Management, see also the [Crossing the Threshold Toolkit](#) produced by the Diocese of Hereford.

GRANTS UNDER £250,000

Task	Approximate Timescale
Assemble Project Team	Varies
Appoint Architect	3 months
Quinquennial Inspection	2-4 months
Additional Surveys	Varies
Develop Basic Project Idea	1-2 months
Submit a Project Enquiry	10 days to receive feedback
Develop the Project	6-18 months
Submit Grant Application	8-week decision period
Permission to Start	A few weeks
Project Delivery	Up to 5 years

Assemble a Project Team

At the very least you should have a team of 3 people, with the following roles covered:

- Project Lead
- Bid Writer
- Treasurer

Appoint an Architect

Procurement Rules for all goods, works or services (including professional fees):

- worth more than **£10,000** (excluding VAT), you must get at least three competitive tenders/quotes.
- worth more than **£50,000** (excluding VAT), you must provide proof of competitive tendering procedures in the form of a report on the tenders received, together with your decision on which to accept. When you don't select the lowest tender, you will need to give full reasons.

This also applies to the architect/lead consultant for your project. If the fee will be over £10,000, the architect/lead consultant must have been appointed within the last 5 years following the procurement rules above, and you must be able to provide evidence of this. You can use your existing church architect provided they were appointed following the procurement rules for the project work, not just to carry out QIs.

The fee threshold applies to the fees on the whole project; you cannot split it into separate stages with discrete contracts as a 'work around' i.e. initial planning and development; specification and tender; construction.

Allow approximately 3 months to advertise, sift responses, interview and appoint.

It is important to get clarity on the fee structure, particularly the % split between pre-contract and post-contract work.

Pre-contract: all work up to and including RIBA stage 4 (specification and tender). Ideally the NLHF would prefer the project to be at this stage before you apply for a grant, but this means the PCC will have to cover all the associated costs – you cannot claim these costs back from the NLHF. If this is a problem for the PCC, please contact the Diocese's Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, or the regional NLHF team.

Post-contract: administration and oversight of the building contract, including site works. This will be covered by the grant.

Quinquennial Inspection (QI)

Is the QI in date? If not, you should instruct your architect to complete a survey as soon as possible. The Diocese will cover the cost of this inspection and the report, up to a maximum amount.

Inspections generally take 1-2 days; reports should then be produced within a month.

Additional Surveys

The QI gives a basic overview of the condition of a church, but often, additional surveys are required to inform the urgency and scope of repairs and highlight any other factors. These can include structural, ecology (bats), asbestos, timber, drainage etc.

Develop a Basic Project Idea

Before you start to get into the detailed planning of your project, it is a good idea to submit a Project Enquiry. Whilst this isn't a mandatory requirement, it is strongly recommended as you will receive valuable feedback from the Heritage Fund. For this you need to know:

- The basic scope of works with rough costings
- Estimated start and end dates. Consider if your project will be restricted to certain times of the year due, for instance, to the nature of the work or the presence of bats or if you have to factor in key events or existing bookings.
- How you will address the 4 Investment Principles, with rough costings where appropriate
- What funds you already have or could raise before you apply - PCC funds, local fundraising and donations, VAT reclaim or other grant applications.

Don't forget to allow for fees, contingency, inflation, VAT, and project staff including professional evaluation of the project.

Submit a Project Enquiry

This is an online form, but the questions are available to view in advance.

Develop the Project

This stage includes several elements such as:

- Capital Works (*see note under Appoint an Architect, Pre-contract*)
 - Specification of works
 - Consent: List B or Faculty, other relevant permissions
 - Tender work
- Detail on how you will address the 4 Investment Principles
- *Raise funds and apply for other grants if appropriate*
- Write an Evaluation Plan and/or brief for an evaluator
- Complete the Project Plan and Risk Register
- Draft the application, give careful consideration to cashflow, project management structure and project evaluation.
- Ask a few people to read the draft through and check all the figures
- Supporting Documents
 - Accounts
 - Job Descriptions and Briefs
 - Images
 - Letters of Support
 - Evidence of other funding

Submit Application

This is an online form. Ensure all the required supporting information has been uploaded before you submit.

Permission to Start

This usually only takes a few weeks at most, unless there are minor items which the Heritage Fund needs clarification or confirmation of first.

Project Delivery

You have up to 5 years to deliver the Approved Purposes as identified in the grant offer.

You will also be expected to attend regular meetings with staff from the NLHF and complete progress reports, in order to monitor progress and authorise grant payments.

GRANTS OVER £250,000

Task	Approximate Timescale
Assemble Project Team	Varies
Appoint Architect	3 months
Quinquennial Inspection	1-4 months
Additional Surveys	Varies
Develop Basic Project Idea	1-2 months
Submit an Expression of Interest	20 days to receive feedback
Develop the Project	6-18 months
Submit the Stage One Grant Application	Quarterly deadlines: decision takes up to 4 months
Permission to Start Development Stage	A few weeks
Development Stage	Up to 2 years
Submit the Stage Two Grant Application	Quarterly deadlines: decision takes up to 4 months
Permission to Start Delivery Stage	A few weeks
Delivery Stage	Up to 5 years

Assemble a Project Team

At the very least you should have a team of 3 people, with the following roles covered:

- Project Lead
- Bid Writer
- Treasurer

Appoint an Architect

Procurement Rules for all goods, works or services (including professional fees):

- worth more than **£10,000** (excluding VAT), you must get at least three competitive tenders/quotes.
- worth more than **£50,000** (excluding VAT), you must provide proof of competitive tendering procedures in the form of a report on the tenders received, together with your decision on which to accept. When you don't select the lowest tender, you will need to give full reasons.

This also applies to the architect/lead consultant for your project. If the fee will be over £10,000, the architect/lead consultant must have been appointed within the last 5 years following the procurement rules above, and you must be able to provide evidence of this. You can use your existing church architect provided they were appointed following the procurement rules for the project work, not just to carry out QIs.

The fee threshold applies to the fees on the whole project; you cannot split it into separate stages with discrete contracts as a 'work around' i.e. initial planning and development; specification and tender; construction.

Allow approximately 3 months to advertise, sift responses, interview and appoint.

It is important to get clarity on the fee structure, particularly the % split between pre-contract and post-contract work

Pre-contract: all work up to and including the faculty / List B approval stage. Most of these costs **can be included** in the development stage of your grant application, but there will still be some upfront costs the PCC will have to cover relating to architect and QS fees in order to plan the project in sufficient detail. You cannot claim these costs back from the NLHF. If this is a problem for the PCC, please contact the Diocese's Historic Church Buildings Support Officer.

Post-contract: administration and oversight of the building contract, including site works. These costs will be included in the delivery stage of your grant application.

Quinquennial Inspection (QI)

Is the QI in date? If not, you should instruct your architect to complete a survey as soon as possible. The Diocese will cover the cost of this inspection and the report, up to a maximum amount.

Inspections generally take 1-2 days; reports should then be produced within a month.

Additional Surveys

The QI gives a basic overview of the condition of a church, this is often enough to inform the basic scope of works which a QS can then use to cost the project. There can, however, be elements with too many unknowns which make it hard to assess what is needed and thus assign a cost, for instance, the state of the timbers under a leaking roof, the cause of damp or structural movement, the extent to which underground drainage has failed etc. It is important to discuss with your architect whether any additional surveys are needed to gather the information needed at this stage.

Develop a Basic Project Idea

It is a mandatory requirement to submit an Expression of Interest. For this you need to know:

- The basic scope of works with rough costings

- Estimated start and end dates. Consider if your project will be restricted to certain times of the year due, for instance, to the nature of the work or the presence of bats or if you have to factor in key events or existing bookings.
- How you will address the 4 Investment Principles, with rough costings where appropriate
- What size of grant you will need for the full project. Consider what funds you already have and what could be raised before you apply for each stage, e.g. PCC funds, local fundraising and donations, VAT reclaim or other grant applications.

Don't forget to allow for fees, contingency, inflation, VAT, and project staff including professional evaluation of the project.

Submit an Expression of Interest

This is mandatory. You will receive feedback on your idea.

If invited to apply you will have 12 months in which to do so.

Develop the Project

This stage involves several elements including:

- Scope of Works
- QS Costings
- Early steer from DAC
- Detailed Plan for the Development Stage
- Outline Plan for the Delivery Stage
- Budget and Cashflow Management
- Project Management Structure
- Project Timeline
- Job Description and Contractor Briefs for the Development Stage
- Project Plan
- Risk Register
- Business Plan
- Letters of support
- Evidence of any partner funding for the development stage

Submit the Stage One Application

This is an online form. Ensure all the required supporting information has been uploaded before you submit. You are advised to submit a few days before the deadline, where possible, in case of any technical difficulties. Decisions take up to 4 months.

Permission to Start

This usually only takes a few weeks at most, unless there are minor items which the Heritage Fund needs clarification or confirmation of first.

Development Stage

You will have up to 2 years to deliver the Approved Purposes and develop the stage two grant application. This stage will involve several elements, including:

- Surveys and investigations
- Specification of works
- Consent– List B or Faculty, other relevant permissions
- Tender work
- Community consultation and pilot activities
- Gather baseline data for project evaluation
- Review Governance, Business Plan and Maintenance Plan
- Apply for any additional funding needed
- Detailed plan for the delivery stage
- Letters of Support
- Job Briefs including evaluator
- Budget Cashflow Management
- Project Management Structure
- Project Plan
- Risk Register

You will also be expected to attend regular meetings with staff from the NLHF and complete progress reports, in order to monitor progress and authorise grant payments.

Submit the Stage Two Application

This is an online form. Ensure all the required supporting information has been uploaded before you submit. You are advised to submit a few days before the deadline, where possible, in case of any technical difficulties. Decisions take up to 4 months.

Permission to Start

This usually only takes a few weeks at most, unless there are minor items which the Heritage Fund needs clarification or confirmation of first.

Project Delivery

You have up to 5 years to deliver the Approved Purposes as identified in the grant offer.

You will also be expected to attend regular meetings with staff from the NLHF and complete progress reports, in order to monitor progress and authorise grant payments.

This guidance has been provided in good faith but is for general information only.
Reasonable efforts will be made to update the information on this note, but we recommend that you check the details on the National Lottery Heritage Fund's website before submitting an application.

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>