

## A Guide to Achieving the NLHF Investment Principles

The NLHF's new strategy centres around 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. The focus is no longer on what the Heritage Fund wants, it is now on **what each individual applicant needs**.

For most church projects the focus will be on repairs, which will strongly address **saving heritage**, but will also touch upon **protecting the environment** and **organisational sustainability**. Projects will then very likely focus some activities around **Inclusion, Access, and Participation** such as school visits, heritage fairs, new interpretation, trails, churchyard activities, a new website etc. These activities often also meet the other investment principles.

The NLHF now has more of a focus on you doing less but doing it really well. On a project totalling £250,000 you'd be looking at a budget of no less than £20,000 for anything that wasn't related to repairs and conservation works; this can include project staff costs. Do think carefully if you need to employ any staff to help deliver your project, whether this is an administrative assistant, an activity leader or a project manager.

Remember to deliver a project that you want, not one you think will just make the NLHF happy - identify what will benefit your church and wider community; look for existing opportunities and groups to work with; take advantage of opportunities for training and volunteer recruitment; and consider things that could have a lasting impact beyond the project.

### IP1: Saving Heritage

What this might include:

- Repair of a historic building, such as to masonry, rainwater goods systems or roofs, enabling the building to be taken off the Heritage at Risk Register
- Conservation or restoration of a monument / bells
- Conserving the biodiversity of external spaces including graveyards and cemeteries
- Digitising archive records (preserving against loss or damage)

- Work experience / apprenticeships in heritage skills sector
- Collecting oral histories (preserving against loss)
- Community events to involve people in recording the removal, repair and reinstallation of bells, organs, hatchments and benefactor boards, alongside the repairs

## **IP2: Protecting the Environment**

What this might include:

- Creating new areas for wildlife and plant life to grow (wild gardens)
- Nature trails, nature projects, wildlife and plant life audits and surveys
- Discovery and learning about the creatures that live in the building, such as bats or birds of prey
- Educating the community about how they can reduce negative environmental impacts
- Implementing changes to reduce negative environmental impacts, this can include installing measures to move towards net zero carbon
- Use of locally sourced materials and local contractors
- Recycling of materials (including building materials)

## **IP3: Inclusion, Access, and Participation**

What this might include:

- Exploring the building and bringing it to life through new interpretation
- Running heritage learning activities and community events, and creating space for them by carrying out minor alterations to the fabric
- Providing better access to heritage using digital technology (website, app, InfoPoint, QR codes, films)
- Opportunities for people to learn about the art in places of worship, alongside a programme of conservation, such as stained glass, memorials and monuments, wall paintings, statues, historic fixtures or graffiti
- Volunteer / staff training
- Work experience / apprenticeships in heritage skills
- Joint projects with partner groups e.g. historical societies, healthcare providers (social prescribing), other charities supporting specific groups of people
- Resources and materials tailored to minority groups / people with additional needs
- Involving young people in creating materials / delivering events
- Social heritage / oral histories
- Installing facilities such as toilets or improving heating which can be shown to enable more inclusive use of the building in future

## **IP4: Organisational Sustainability**

By addressing urgent repairs, a building will be easier to manage, both practically and financially, in terms of ongoing maintenance and the minor repairs needed to keep it in a good condition. The organisation will also be able to focus resources on other areas to serve the wider community, which, along with a building that is a more welcoming space due to repairs and improvements, will improve local relationships and lead to more people using and supporting the church.

Other activities you can include to help meet this IP are:

- Activities to help your group manage heritage more effectively, such as researching existing and new audiences, or trying new approaches to fundraising or income generation
- New staff / professionals to lead or support your project
- New volunteers
- Feasibility studies
- Upskilling of staff / volunteers
- Establishing a Friends or Action Group

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/>