

Guidelines to NCT Partnership Grants

Which buildings are eligible?

Listed and unlisted churches, chapels and meeting houses of any age open for public worship.

In the case of buildings that have been closed to the public, the building will be eligible where a congregation exists and the building will re-open for public worship after the repairs.

Congregations must be of a denomination belonging to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. A full regularly updated list is available on their website at www.ctbi.org.uk. The Trust encourages engagement with a wide range of denominations and would like the grants awarded to reflect this commitment.

The NCT supports the carrying out of regular maintenance, and encourages congregations instituting annual maintenance plans and carrying out regular maintenance to the best of their ability and means. Participation in joint maintenance schemes, where available, is commendable. We endorse the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings maintenance initiatives. You can find more information at <http://www.spabfim.org.uk/>

Continuing the work of the Open Churches Trust, we encourage congregations to open their buildings regularly where possible. Preference should therefore go to congregations with active open door policies or that are planning a wider programme of community engagement within the scope of their circumstances. Under our own Grants policies we ask grant recipients to open for at least 40 days a year in addition to service times (1 day = 6 hours). This minimum is likely to increase soon.

Under its own programmes NCT tries to apply monies where the most need is demonstrated and where the project is achievable. This means that NCT has a preference for supporting more deprived areas and/or projects that cannot be achieved without grant aid.

Which kinds of projects are eligible for the Partnership Grant Programme?

Projects consisting of any necessary urgent repairs to the structure of the church, chapel or meeting house (roofs, walls, floors, windows, glass, doors, towers and spires, bell frames); re-plastering; redecoration as the result of repair work; urgent electrical rewiring. If the wider repair project contains minor elements that help the building to meet DDA requirements, e.g. installation of handrails or improvement to roof access, this is acceptable. Works to bells, clocks, pews, organs, fixtures and fittings, heating, lighting, churchyards or boundary walls are not eligible. Monuments will not normally be eligible, but individual circumstances may be taken into account if wider structural damage is occurring and will be dealt with as part of the project.

Projects where the total project, or project phase, cost is estimated at between £10,000 and £100,000 including VAT and fees, and where there is a demonstrable need for funding.

Projects where FKC believes that a grant of between £2,500 and £10,000 is appropriate and where the outcome of an English Heritage/Heritage Lottery Fund application, if the project is eligible, has been made, and the outcome is known.

Projects must be overseen by a qualified person. This will usually be an architect (AABC/RIBA/ARB) or Chartered Building Surveyor (RICS). Any projects that are not overseen by a qualified person are not eligible for consideration under this programme.

The works should appear to be achievable within 2 years of the grant being offered.

The application process

Complete the three page FKC application form and send to the Secretary. The Grants Committee will consider the application, make a recommendation to the FKC Executive Committee and then, if approved, make a recommendation to the NCT.

NCT will consider all recommendations received and award grants as far as allocated funds held or pledged allows.

Once NCT have awarded the grant, they will contact the places of worship directly with the grant offers, and send the FKC an update. The agreement sent out to places of worship will be between the place of worship and NCT. It will encourage the grantee to take part in the FKC Ride & Stride, join FKC display publicity materials. They will also ask them to promote and support NCT so that they can continue to help places of worship.

The agreement is necessary for NCT's audit trail and to maintain a relationship with grantees after an award is made to help them assess the impact of their funding and their donors' investment.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have any queries please contact alisonp@nationalchurchestrust.org

How much can they give to applicants?

Grants can be for any amount from £2,500 to £10,000.

What if the project costs more than £100,000?

The NCT have other grants. Their website www.nationalchurchestrust.org will always give the most current information on how to apply. The project may be divided into phases of work in which case one phase may be eligible if the total cost of that phase is under £100,000.

What if the estimated cost increases to more than £100,000?

Contact the NCT to discuss this.

What should we do if a project contains both eligible and ineligible items of work?

Please base your decision on the eligible portion of the work, with this portion of the project not exceeding £100,000. The inclusion of additional work does not make the application invalid for a Partnership Grant, but the congregation must demonstrate that they need funding for urgent, essential repairs and that any urgent repair work is of high priority to them.

What about work to improve access and provide facilities?

Your Partnership Grant is for structural repair projects, but if a project contains minor elements to improve access, e.g. roof access or handrails, the items will not be considered as ineligible.

What happens if the grant offers made are not claimed by the places of worship within 2 years?

Projects have two years from the offer date to claim payment. It must be feasible for the project to be sufficiently advanced to produce a certificate, to at least the value of the grant, within two years. This necessitates the works starting within two years. Partnership Grants can be recommended to meet any portion of the funding gap for a project, including completing the gap entirely. If the grant is not claimed within two years of the offer date, the offer to the place of worship will expire and the money will be reallocated elsewhere by NCT.

The National Churches Trust asks recipients of grants at places of worship to meet a set of conditions. Why is this necessary and who will administer them?

As the funding and financial management of the Partnership Grants Programme rests with NCT, they must be able to provide a clear audit trail and to demonstrate thorough procedures. NCT will administer any terms that it asks places of worship to meet. This will include any follow up to assess the impact of grants. Increasingly they are required to demonstrate clearly the effectiveness of our grants to funders, supporters and advocates.