



Funding for access improvements

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Introduction

Finding funding for access improvements can be a challenge. You will most probably have to find funding from several sources and demonstrate a commitment to the project by providing a proportion of the cost from PCC funds or local fundraising carried out by the church. See 'Fundraising By Churches — For Community Projects' at the end of this guidance.

Where to find additional advice

- You can get advice and support with fundraising and grant applications through your area finance advisor visit: <https://www.london.anglican.org/support/finance/finance-contacts>
- Help and support for funding community projects can be provided by Compassionate Communities. Visit <https://www.compassionatecommunitieslondon.org.uk>
- ‘GrantFinder’ is a directory of grant making trusts and charities in the UK. You can search by your area of work and need. You can get access to GrantFinder through your area finance advisor and through Compassionate Communities.

Access audits

Many of the larger project funders require access to be a feature of restoration and re-ordering projects, so making sure you have included a professional access audit and plan within the overall planning is essential. Access audits are offered by a range of providers. Your architect may advise about this. You could explore ‘The Centre for Accessible Environments’ (<https://cae.org.uk>) and ‘City Bridge Trust’ who offer funding for access audits.

[The 360 Access Audit Tool](#), downloadable from the London diocese website, is a self-audit tool designed specifically for churches and will help you think through the physical and sensory environment, the language you use and the way you communicate, how inclusive your spirituality and theology really are, and how you can make specific provisions for some people. The ‘[Quick Wins](#)’ information and guidance, also downloadable, gives a wide range of pointers to adjustments and changes you can make that can be achieved more quickly and easily.

Local funding for smaller projects

Smaller projects (building ramps etc) are more likely to be locally funded so you will need to research local sources that might be available to you. It is always good to contact your local council and talk to their access officer. Contact your local councillors as well as they will have locality funding that can be allocated to projects that improve opportunity for local people. You are more likely to be successful with this if your building is used for community groups but if the benefit will be solely for your congregation it is still worth pursuing this.

VAT

Work to church buildings to provide access for people with disabilities (e.g. ramps, accessible WC or widening doors) is zero-rated for VAT. An appropriate certificate needs to be given to the contractor to enable them to obtain zero-rating on supplies, as well as labour. Make sure all aspects of your



project that are creating or improving access are clearly identified and ask your architect to provide a certificate for these before the work begins.

Further information of VAT relief can be found on [the government website](#).

Grant making trusts and charities

This list is by no means exhaustive. There will be other funders within your locality some of which can provide substantial funding. National funders are always encouraged when locally sourced funding demonstrates that your project is recognised as locally important and valuable.

City Bridge Trust

We provide grants and use our resources to help communities foster connections, become more resilient and build a more equal London. CBT offer funding of up to £5,000 for access audits and up to £150,000 for capital works to improve or create access. Churches can be eligible for funding if the building is used for the benefit of the wider community.

More details at:

<https://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/grant-making/what-we-fund/connecting-the-capital/access-audits/>

City Bridge Trust
City of London, PO Box 270,
Guildhall, London EC1P 2EJ

citybridgetrust@cityoflondon.gov.uk

National Churches Trust

The National Churches Trust supports a variety of churches, chapels and meeting houses across the United Kingdom with its grants programmes.

Grants are available to any Christian place of worship in the UK that is open for regular worship. They help keep church buildings in good repair, open for worship and community activities, and allow them to continue to serve people, communities and visitors in all sorts of ways.

Whether you are looking to repair your roof, install a kitchen or accessible toilets, clear asbestos or simply need help undertaking regular essential maintenance to your building, there is a range of grants to suit the size and needs of your project.

[Visit the National Churches Trust website](#)

The National Churches Trust
7 Tufton Street
London



SW1P 3QB

Telephone: 0207 222 0605

Email: info@nationalchurchestrust.org

Benefact Trust

Benefact Trust exists to make a positive difference to people's lives by funding, guiding and celebrating the work of churches and Christian charities; empowering the most vulnerable and giving people, communities and places a renewed opportunity to flourish.

Building Improvement Grants: Benefact Trust's Building Improvement Grants programme provides essential support to protect and enhance churches and Christian charity buildings, ensuring their continued use, viability, and the safeguarding of their heritage.

This category also includes: 'Minor capital works or equipment purchases to meet operational or accessibility requirements (e.g. essential operational equipment, AV equipment, hearing loops, ramps, etc)'

Community Impact Grants: Benefact Trust's Community Impact Grants Programme supports projects that will make a positive and transformative impact on lives and communities. One of the programme areas is 'Enabling wider community use of church buildings' and covers 'work which includes the provision of disabled access, facilities, or equipment' for projects resulting in a clear increase in the use of church buildings by the wider community.

[Visit the Benefact Trust website](#)

Benefact Trust

Benefact House, 2000 Pioneer Avenue,
Gloucester Business Park, Brockworth,
Gloucester, GL3 4AW

Tel: 01452 873189

Email: info@benefacttrust.co.uk

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The Heritage Fund has a variety of programmes which might suit your project if it has a heritage and community angle. You can contact their local fund office for more information:

[Follow this link to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in your area website](#)

Or see [Follow this link to the National Lottery Heritage Fund places of worship website](#)

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship.



The Government has confirmed funding is available for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme until 31st March 2025.

If you have any queries regarding the application process or the scheme itself, contact the helpline on 0800 500 3009.

[Visit the listed places of worship grant scheme website](#)

Topmark (LPOW)
Davies Group, 2nd Floor,
The Forsyth Building,
5 Renfield Street,
Glasgow, G2 5EZ,
Tel: 0800 500 3009
Tel: 0845 013 6601
Email: dcms.cm@davies-group.com

Garfield Weston Foundation

Supports a wide range of charities that make a positive difference, working in different sectors in the UK. These include welfare, youth, community, environment, education, health, arts, heritage and faith.

“We know that often somewhere physical to meet up plays a huge part in building ‘community’. This is especially true for faith buildings. Each year, we support capital improvements to rural and urban faith buildings so that they are better equipped to welcome the local community. These projects include putting in toilets, kitchens, disabled access and improving the energy efficiency of faith buildings. Often these buildings are the only ones available for the local community to use.”

[Read an example of Garfield Weston's support from Grace Church Bolton.](#)

Garfield Weston Foundation
Weston Centre
10 Grosvenor Street
London
W1K 4QY
Tel: 020 7399 6565
Email: admin@garfieldweston.org



The Joseph Rank Trust

Funds the adaptation of Church properties with a view to providing improved facilities for use by the church and its work in the community in which it is based.

[Follow this link to the Rank Trust website](#)

The Joseph Rank Trust

Worth Corner

Turners Hill Road

CRAWLEY

RH10 7SL

Telephone : 01293 873947

Email: secretary@ranktrust.org

Other Contacts

NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations)

Practical tips and step-by-step guides on how to find the money you need for your community group, organisation or charity.

[Follow this link for the National Council for Voluntary Organisations website](#)

Directory Of Social Change

Directory of Social Change provides essential information and training to the voluntary sector to enable charities to achieve their mission. They run courses and publish a wide variety of resources for charities, including UK fundraising guides, directories, and funding websites.

[Follow this link to the Directory of Social Change website](#)

GrantFinder

GrantFinder is the leading funding database in the UK covering local, national, and international sources of funding.

[Follow this link to the GrantFinder Website](#)

Funding relating to community use

If your premises are used regularly for community work or non-church-based activities, there may be additional avenues for funding to make your premises accessible. For example, if your building is used for Age UK exercise classes or for lunch clubs, debt advice, etc, or any of the other many community groups that may use your building, there could be other sources of funding relating to



this community use that would not usually be available for funding churches. This very much depends upon the arrangements in place, but is worth looking into if you host these types of activities.

Below are some suggestions that may be helpful if your church is planning to start a community project.

Fundraising By Churches — For Community Projects

Funders give to organisations with community vision. A clear, creative vision will touch the secular world as well as those with a committed Christian faith. It is important to show that the church has a committed volunteer base, and that the church is prepared to give itself first e.g. match funding.

Churches wishing to get funding for community work need to show they have a good management structure, are good communicators and that their project is well thought through. They also need to meet the eligibility criteria for the funding bodies they apply to – so read all the guidance before putting in an application.

Successful applications for grants/funding usually need:

Proven research (the need, other possible providers, etc)

A business plan

A clear and detailed budget

A completed application form, specific to the funding body

Audited accounts

It is essential to start with vision and then go for the finance.

You need to develop a coherent business and action plan. Below is a list of items that may need to be included in your plan, but make sure you read and follow the requirements for specific funding bodies you apply to:

Charity number

Brief history of church

Membership & structure

Issue with existing church premises

Vision statement for the project

Aims and objectives for the project



Project summary: defined need, operational plans, budget, staffing & training, risk analysis, plans for long-term management and sustainability, review/evaluation plan

Funding will not normally all come from a single funding source. Make sure you wait till you have full funding before you start building work, as funders normally do not fund work that has already taken place.

There is lots of further advice available from the many organisations listed in the 'Where to Get Grants for Churches' section above. Read the latest guidance from bodies such as the National Churches Trust, and make use of the many useful resources available to churches for planning and fundraising.

Note: Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, we are unable to guarantee that it is correct at the time that you are accessing it.