



Sustainable Development Fund Guidance Note Places of Worship

Places of worship have a long-term presence at the heart of villages and towns. Important community buildings with green burial ground spaces, they are loved, valued and of significance for believers and non-believers alike. Used for regular worship and religious events, they are a key part of local (and sometimes national) heritage and history. Where communities have no other communal spaces, places of worship can also host wider social events, activities, and services.

Although the Sustainable Development Fund can't support projects that are exclusively religious, applications *may* be considered for projects which:

- a. enable faith buildings to host or deliver wider community benefits or services. This may involve essential conservation or maintenance work to buildings themselves, so that they can be used and enjoyed by the wider community, helping to safeguard heritage assets for the future.
- b. celebrate, conserve, or enhance significant heritage assets and support activities that connect people with heritage.
- c. help to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and improve energy efficiency – as part of a wider plan to increase building use.
- d. help to create and conserve habitats for plants and animals – in both the buildings themselves and any surrounding burial grounds.

Establishing a church 'Friends Group' may be a useful first step – the Church in Wales has a useful guidance note about this - [Forming a Church Friends Group \(contentfiles.net\)](http://contentfiles.net)

In addition to meeting [general Sustainable Development Fund requirements](#), proposals need to show:

- *That the group and building welcomes anyone and everyone who wants to visit or take part in activities run or services provided. This should be made clear in an equal opportunities policy and any other key governance documents.*
- *How the faith building is used and the role it currently plays in the community – how it links with other local community spaces.*
- *That plans are in place for future use and development – particularly if numbers attending regular worship are reducing.*
- *That there are partnerships with other local organisations (particularly non-faith groups) to help build capacity and ensure that projects are embedded in the local community, with potential to deliver long-term impacts.*

- That where required, permissions such as a Church in Wales Faculty, Planning Consent / Listed Building Consent are in place.
- What difference the funded work would make – e.g., attracting new users / groups; improving accessibility; providing essential services locally; improving energy efficiency.
- That match funds / resources are in place or will be secured.
- How funds will be generated to cover essential running and maintenance costs.
- That any materials used are environmentally friendly and locally sourced where possible.
- That local contractors will be used to carry out the work where possible.

Potential Sources of Funding and Support

Suggestions and options to explore – not an exhaustive guide:

- Representative Body of the Church in Wales – Grants for the Repair, Extension or Provision of Places of Worship – maximum grant £3,000
- Senedd Research: Community buildings, places of worship and faith groups (May 2021) community-buildings-english.pdf (senedd.wales)
- National Churches Trust: grants, maintenance advice and more - National Churches Trust
- Architectural Heritage Fund - Wales | The Architectural Heritage Fund (ahfund.org.uk)
- National Lottery Heritage Fund - National Lottery Grants for Heritage – £3,000 to £10,000 | The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Powys Welsh Church Act Fund (closed until 2023) is managed by the Community Foundation Wales - Powys Welsh Church Act Fund - Community Foundation Wales
- Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund - Welsh Church Fund - Monmouthshire
- Carmarthenshire Welsh Church Fund - Carmarthenshire Welsh Church Fund (gov.wales)
- Finding the Best Funders for Churches – a subscription database - Finding the best funders for churches | Church Grants
- The Church in Wales offers guidance notes on a wide range of topics - see its Church Property website pages here Church property - The Church in Wales

Green Spaces and Graveyards

- Caring for God's Acre - Caring For God's Acre – Protecting Wildlife, Preserving Heritage, Involving People (caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

- Eco Church Award Scheme - Eco Church - An A Rocha UK Project