

# Diocese of Leicester

## Job Description

### Historic Churches Support Officer

Full-Time, fixed term post 3 years

This post forms part of the Church Buildings Team. The primary aim is to encourage and develop the capacity of communities to actively participate in improving the condition and long-term sustainability of historic church buildings in the Diocese of Leicester, connecting people with places of worship, and thereby contributing to making places thrive.

#### Key objectives:

The key objectives of the role are:

- Improve public access to, understanding of, and engagement with historic church buildings in Leicestershire
- Build capacity within local communities to plan and undertake repair and development projects in historic churches
- Help parishes identify sources of funding for buildings projects and provide support for applying for grants
- Signpost good practice procedures for maintenance, conservation, accessibility and environmental sustainability
- Support a reduction in the levels of risk to historic church buildings
- Support parishes to recover from the impacts of Covid-19 (including fundraising, maintenance and outreach to community)
- Support parishes to seek partnerships in the community and complementary community uses for places of worship to increase their long-term sustainability
- Encourage parishes to actively work in partnership with their local communities to widen active support for and participation in the care of historic churches
- Contribute to the work supporting parishes to reduce their carbon footprint and work towards Net Carbon Zero

It is recognized that the role is wide ranging and it is unlikely to be possible to undertake all of the responsibilities at any one time. The postholder will therefore be steered to particular areas as need and opportunities arise.

## **1. The condition of historic church buildings & funding available for maintenance & repairs**

The HCSO will:

- Use the QI data held to maintain an overview of the condition of church buildings in the Diocese and produce an annual Church Buildings Condition Audit to be shared strategically with a variety of audiences (local, diocesan, national).
- To work with the Buildings Development Enabler and DAC Secretary and other colleagues in reviewing the Quinquennial Inspection Reports, to help identify buildings that would benefit from further support and prioritize intervention
- Liaise with Historic England to identify cases for listing amendments and/or inclusion on the Heritage at Risk Register and maintain up to date data on churches in the Heritage at Risk register. (latest report run 28 August 2023)
- To work with Historic England and others to develop a strategy to prevent historic churches becoming 'at risk' and to reduce the number at risk.
- To keep a register of metal thefts from church roofs in the diocese, work with parishes to provide solutions after metal thefts, enable parishes to be more resilient to metal thefts and to contribute to wider discussion on the risk posed by metal thefts

The HCSO will work with congregations in identified joint priority buildings to:

- Help PCCs to understand their QI in terms of planning a work schedule
- Build congregations' capacity to project-manage repair and development projects, managing the flow of finances and VAT reclaiming
- Develop local competence in dealing with contractors
- Encourage or facilitate effective maintenance and routine repairs
- Help develop and implement routine maintenance plans
- To support parishes after metal theft from church roofs and/or rainwater goods, particularly with raising funding for replacement roofs.

Funding- The HCSO will

- To help to identify sources of funding for repairs and to help apply for grants whilst offering expertise to parishes before and during the grant application process
- To work with Historic England and other partners and to inform thinking on national strategies and grant funding priorities
- Provide targeted support to enable parishes to secure grants from short-term funding opportunities when they are released; for example, the administration of the 'Buildings for Mission' Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant

## **2. Valuing people who care for church buildings and encouraging more people to care for church buildings**

The HCSO will:

- Work with local communities to encourage and enable a wider range of volunteers to participate in caring for their local historic church and share good practice
- be a visible presence demonstrating HE support that 'sits alongside' volunteers as they struggle with their building challenges

- Encourage PCCs to give serious consideration to how to make their buildings more accessible to all, and signpost the diocesan disability advisor and the resources available
- train volunteers able to offer future support to sustain church buildings as an asset within the local community.
- Identify problematic themes that churches have in common and work to offer support in these areas, through webinars or workshops, and to highlight success stories through case studies on the diocesan website
- To develop other web-based resources for volunteers relating to church buildings

### **3. Diocesan change programme**

The HCSO will:

- Provide summary reports on the condition of the church buildings within each Minster Community
- Work with the Buildings Development Enabler to develop an over-arching strategy for historic places of worship which integrates historic environment priorities within the diocesan vision & strategy 'Shaped by God Together'
- To undertake a pilot to provide targeted support within 2 Minster Communities in different parts of Leicestershire: one that has a high number of highly listed rural historic churches and which may provide the only community space in that place and one which includes places that are economically/socially deprived and are therefore at risk of being left behind. Furthermore, as construction materials vary across the diocese, this provide an opportunity to work with groups of churches that have similar construction materials within a Minster Community but also with different construction materials between the two areas. The learning will be shared with various target audiences at local, regional and national level.

### **4. Climate action:**

The HCSO will:

- In response to the wider needs to address climate change and the pressing needs of increasing fuel costs, have an awareness of the opportunities that become available and how churches may benefit
- support PCCs, incumbents and churchwardens with understanding and applying net zero carbon guidance and requirements, and ensure all advice given and actions taken align with this
- support the delivery of the milestones for church buildings set within the Church of England's Route map to Net Zero Carbon, including providing targeted support to the top 20% of energy-consuming churches in the diocese

### **5. Wider engagement**

The HCSO will

- act as an advocate for the diocese's built heritage within Historic England
- build partnerships with other organisations and the wider community
- offer guidance and facilitate training among congregations, deaneries or Minister Communities in all aspects of managing a historic place of worship and helping to identify other sources of information and advice
- work in partnership with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and other Diocesan bodies/individuals

### **Management & relationships:**

The Historic Churches Support Officer Post is part of the Church Buildings Team, which also includes the Buildings Development Enabler and the DAC Secretary. The Buildings Development Enabler provides strategic leadership to the Church Buildings Team.

The Historic Churches Support Officer will also need to liaise closely with the Archdeacons, and other diocesan officers, as appropriate for the needs and objectives of a given project.

The Historic Churches Support Officer will be expected to develop working relationships with external stakeholders such as local authorities, funders and community organisations.

The substantial part of the Historic Churches Support Officer role will require developing working relationships outside of the office, on-site at various churches. As such, there will be frequent contact with clergy, churchwardens and members of the PCC and congregation with responsibility for church buildings.

In addition, the Historic Churches Support Officer will need to liaise regularly with Historic England's regional team.

### **General information**

Job title:	Historic Churches Support Officer
Post:	Full-time, fixed term 3 years
Reporting to:	Buildings Development Enabler
Accountable to:	Steering Group for the post, comprising the Buildings Development Enabler, Archdeacon of Leicester and Principal Inspectors/Advisers of Historic England; ultimate responsibility is to the Diocesan Secretary
Place of work:	Hybrid working with an office at St Martins House, Leicester & fieldwork
Terms of Employment:	To work in accordance with the policies of Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance, as set out in the staff handbook

# Diocese of Leicester

## Person Specification

### Historic Churches Support Officer

#### Essential

- A relevant degree or equivalent qualifications/experience
- Understanding of maintenance needs of historic churches and what is required to ensure a successful repair project on a historic church
- Knowledge of built heritage and community funding resources, and how to access them and experience of successful grant applications for major funding
- Experience of developing training and support for volunteers to care for listed and/or complex buildings
- Ability to devise a plan for addressing the priorities identified by architects and surveyors
- Ability to work independently and also as part of a team
- Ability to identify appropriate advice and information
- Ability to priorities effectively and work to deadlines
- Ability to analyse data and solve problems
- Project management skills including monitoring and evaluation
- Good administrative skills
- Good IT skills, particularly Microsoft Office applications
- Excellent interpersonal and negotiating skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to deal with a wide range of volunteers of different capacity and ability
- Self-confidence and enthusiasm
- A self-starter who can make a difference
- In sympathy with the ethos of the Diocese of Leicester and the Church of England

- Ability to arrange own transport in the Diocese of Leicester and beyond
- Ability to work flexibly including occasional evenings and weekends

**Desirable**

- Membership of a relevant professional body
- Sound understanding of the Care of Churches Measure 1991, its related instruments and Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 and 2015
- An understanding of the workings, services and requirements of the Church Buildings Council Historic England and the Amenity Societies

**Additional Information**

Historic England and the Diocese of Leicester will work with the post holder to encourage a programme of appropriate Continuing Professional Development

Hybrid working with an office based in St Martins House, Leicester, the post holder will work and travel extensively throughout the Diocese.