

UPDATED
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Church

FUNDING GUIDE 2026

A practical resource for churches in Northern Ireland seeking grants and support.

CARLA LOCKHART MP

Standing Up, Speaking out and Delivering For You



Dear Church Leader,

As your MP, I am pleased to share with you this updated funding guide, designed to highlight opportunities that can support the invaluable work of local churches and faith groups.

In my visits across Upper Bann, I continue to be encouraged by the dedication and service of churches within our community. While the central calling of any fellowship is to share the Gospel, it is equally inspiring to witness the practical outworking of that message through community outreach, care, and support.

We know that such activities often bring financial challenges. While we hold fast to the promise that the Lord will provide, we also recognise the importance of seeking out resources that enable His work to flourish. This booklet is intended as a practical tool – a signpost to funding streams and support that are open to faith groups like yours.

Please know that I remain available to offer advice, encouragement, and support as you explore these opportunities. Do not hesitate to get in touch if I can be of assistance in any way.

Yours sincerely,



Carla Lockhart MP

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Introduction

This updated guide brings together the main sources of funding available to churches in Northern Ireland as of January 2026. It refreshes the original 2020 booklet with current information, updated grant sizes, eligibility, and application details. While comprehensive, always check each funder's website for the most up-to-date deadlines and criteria. The available grants are correct at the time of printing.

The aim is to support churches as they repair, develop, and use their buildings and ministries to serve both their congregations and the wider community.

Before you apply

Before beginning any application, ensure you have:

- ✓ A clear project idea agreed by your church leadership.
- ✓ Up-to-date accounts and safeguarding policies.
- ✓ Match funding identified (if required).
- ✓ Permissions and consents (e.g. planning, listed building).
- ✓ Evidence of community need (letters of support, surveys, statistics).
- ✓ Accurate costings and quotes.

Building & Repair Funds

NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST (INCLUDING WOLFSON FABRIC REPAIR GRANTS)

The UK's leading independent charity supporting church buildings. They champion the preservation of historic and community churches, ensuring they remain open and welcoming places of worship and service..

Grant size:	£500–£10,000+.
Eligibility:	Christian places of worship in the UK.
Exclusions:	General maintenance, new build, non-Christian faith buildings.
How to apply:	Online, 2–3 rounds per year.
Decision timeframe:	3 months.
Contact:	www.nationalchurchestrust.org

GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION

One of the UK's oldest family-run charitable foundations. It funds thousands of charities each year and has a long history of supporting churches, particularly those that strengthen local communities or preserve heritage.

Grant size:	£1,000 – £3m (most church grants £5,000–£100,000). Up to £100k with no deadline.
Eligibility:	UK registered charities including churches.
Exclusions:	Salaries, running costs, debt.
How to apply:	Online, rolling.
Decision timeframe:	4 months.
Contact:	www.garfieldweston.org

CONGREGATIONAL & GENERAL CHARITABLE TRUST

A long-established Christian trust dedicated to helping churches improve their buildings so they remain safe, welcoming, and fit for mission.

Grant size:	£1,000–£25,000 (max 25% of cost).
Eligibility:	Christian churches in the UK.
Exclusions:	Salaries, running costs.
How to apply:	Online application form.
Decision timeframe:	3–6 months.
Contact:	www.candgtrust.org.uk

LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP (VAT) REFUND SCHEME

A government scheme that helps listed churches reclaim the VAT on repairs and maintenance, saving congregations thousands of pounds each year.

Grant size:	Refund VAT up to £25,000 per building.
Eligibility:	Listed places of worship in the UK.
Exclusions:	Non-listed buildings, running costs.
How to apply:	Online claim with invoices.
Decision timeframe:	6–8 weeks.
Contact:	www.lpwscheme.org.uk

LAING FAMILY TRUSTS

A group of Christian grant-making trusts funded by the Laing family, with a strong focus on advancing the Christian faith and strengthening communities.

Grant size:	£2,000–£20,000 typical.
Eligibility:	UK Christian charities and churches.
Exclusions:	Core costs, salaries.
How to apply:	Apply through the Laing Family Trusts website.
Decision timeframe:	3–6 months.
Contact:	www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk

JILL FRANKLIN TRUST

A small but effective family trust that gives priority to heritage, mental health, and community causes. Churches with listed buildings have often benefited from their modest but timely contributions.

Grant size:	£500–£1,000.
Eligibility:	Grade I or II* listed churches.
Exclusions:	Facilities, salaries.
How to apply:	By letter; deadline December/January.
Decision timeframe:	Early in the new year.
Contact:	www.jill-franklin-trust.org.uk

Community & Outreach Funds

BENEFACT TRUST (FORMERLY ALLCHURCHES TRUST)

One of the UK and Ireland's largest Christian grant-makers, funded by the Benefact Group (owners of Ecclesiastical Insurance). Their mission is to equip churches to grow, serve, and care for their communities.

Grant size:	£750–£150,000+.
Eligibility:	Churches & Christian charities in the UK/Ireland.
Funds:	Building Improvement, Community Impact, Methodist, Roof Protection.
Exclusions:	Core worship costs, debt, overseas projects.
How to apply:	Online, rolling.
Decision timeframe:	3 months.
Contact:	www.benefacttrust.co.uk

HALIFAX FOUNDATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

A foundation with a strong local focus, funded by Halifax/Bank of Scotland. It supports small-to-medium charities working to address disadvantage and strengthen communities across Northern Ireland.

Grant size:	£2,500–£15,000 per year (2 years).
Eligibility:	NI registered charities with income under £1m. Churches eligible if community benefit is clear.
Exclusions:	Worship-only projects.
How to apply:	Online windows.
Decision timeframe:	3–4 months.
Contact:	www.halifaxfoundationni.org

TRUSTHOUSE OR FORTE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

A UK-wide independent trust with a special concern for rural areas and deprived urban communities. They are keen to support churches offering facilities or services that meet real local need.

Grant size:	£2,000–£10,000 (Small Grants); up to £100,000 (Major Grants).
Eligibility:	Charities in deprived or remote areas.
Exclusions:	Worship-only costs.
How to apply:	Online, rolling.
Decision timeframe:	2–4 months.
Contact:	www.trusthousecharitablefoundation.org.uk

JOSEPH RANK TRUST

A Christian charitable trust with a clear focus on mission and outreach. It has long supported evangelical church projects, training, and community engagement that strengthen the witness of the Church in the UK.

Grant size:	£5,000–£25,000 typical.
Eligibility:	Christian charities and churches in the UK.
Exclusions:	Overseas work, debt relief.
How to apply:	By postal form.
Update:	Paused until October 2025 (except Methodist projects).
Decision timeframe:	3–6 months.
Contact:	www.ranktrust.org

CHILD'S CHARITABLE TRUST

A trust with a heart for evangelism, education, and equipping the church. They fund a wide range of Christian projects, from mission training to resources for outreach.

Grant size:	£1,000–£30,000 (average ~£10,000).
Eligibility:	UK Christian charities and churches.
Exclusions:	Large building projects.
How to apply:	Online, quarterly reviews.
Decision timeframe:	1–3 months.
Contact:	www.childscharitabletrust.org

BLACK SANTA APPEAL (BELFAST CATHEDRAL)

A well-loved Northern Irish tradition run by Belfast Cathedral each Christmas. The appeal distributes donations from the public to local charities and community projects, including those led by churches.

Grant size:	£500–£5,000.
Eligibility:	Charities in NI, including church-based projects.
How to apply:	Online form (open autumn).
Decision timeframe:	February.
Contact:	www.belfastcathedral.org

CHURCH OF IRELAND – PRIORITIES FUND

An internal Church of Ireland fund, raised through annual giving, that supports mission, outreach, education, and training within the denomination.

Grant size:	£2,000–£15,000 typical.
Eligibility:	Parishes and dioceses within the Church of Ireland.
Funds:	Training, education, outreach.
Deadline:	31 October annually.
Decision timeframe:	Early the following year.
Contact:	www.priorities.ireland.anglican.org

NIE NETWORKS – COMMUNITY FUND

A corporate social responsibility initiative from Northern Ireland Electricity Networks. It supports small community projects that strengthen local wellbeing and resilience.

Grant size:	£200–£1,500.
Eligibility:	Community groups, including churches.
Exclusions:	Salaries, building maintenance.
How to apply:	Online form; quarterly deadlines.
Decision timeframe:	2 months.
Contact:	www.nienetworks.co.uk

VICTORIA HOMES TRUST

A small Northern Ireland-based charitable trust with a particular interest in improving the lives of young people under 21. They have supported faith-based youth projects and activities.

Grant size:	£500–£2,500.
Eligibility:	NI projects for children and young people.
Deadlines:	2 January & 30 April each year.
Decision timeframe:	3 months.
Contact:	www.victoriahomestrust.org

Youth, Arts & Heritage Funds

HOPE FOR YOUTH NI

A Northern Ireland charity dedicated to supporting cross-community youth projects. Their aim is to encourage reconciliation and relationship-building among young people from different traditions.

Grant size:	Up to £5,000.
Eligibility:	NI groups working with 11–18s, including church-led youth projects.
Exclusions:	Worship-only projects.
Deadline:	31 August annually.
Decision timeframe:	Autumn.
Contact:	www.hopeforyouthni.com

ESMÉ MITCHELL TRUST

Founded in memory of Esmé Mitchell, this NI-based charitable trust supports education, heritage, and community initiatives, with a particular concern for enriching cultural and social life.

Grant size:	£1,000–£10,000.
Eligibility:	NI heritage, arts, education, and community projects.
How to apply:	Through their solicitor CFR Law.
Decision timeframe:	3–6 months.
Contact:	trusts@cfrlaw.co.uk

JOHN JAMES CHARITABLE TRUST

A Christian trust with a strong evangelical focus, supporting training, discipleship, and mission. They have a special interest in young people and the development of Christian leaders.

Grant size:	£1,000–£20,000.
Eligibility:	Christian charities and churches in the UK.
Funds:	Education, training, mission, discipleship.
How to apply:	Online, rolling.
Decision timeframe:	2–4 months.
Contact:	www.sfct.org.uk

DORINDA LADY DUNLEATH CHARITABLE TRUST

An NI family trust supporting a broad range of charitable work. While not exclusively church-focused, it has funded heritage and community projects connected to faith groups.

Grant size:	£500–£5,000 typical.
Eligibility:	NI charities.
How to apply:	By writing to the trust administrator.
Decision timeframe:	Variable.
Contact:	Charity Commission NI

HUGH FRASER FOUNDATION

A Scottish charitable trust with a UK-wide remit. It funds arts, heritage, and community development projects, including some church-related initiatives.

Grant size:	£1,000–£5,000 typical.
Eligibility:	Mainly Scottish projects, but also wider UK.
Funds:	Arts, heritage, community.
How to apply:	Written application.
Decision timeframe:	Quarterly.
Contact:	www.sfct.org.uk

Discretionary & Loan Finance

ARDBARRON TRUST

A small Northern Ireland-based charitable trust. It distributes discretionary grants to a variety of local causes, including Christian and community projects.

Grant size:	£500–£5,000.
Eligibility:	NI charities and churches.
How to apply:	By letter to trustees.
Decision timeframe:	Variable.
Contact:	Charity Commission NI

BARLEYCORN TRUST

A modest Northern Irish trust which provides small discretionary grants. Its giving is broad and includes faith-based and community causes.

Grant size:	£500–£2,000 typical.
Eligibility:	NI charities, including churches.
How to apply:	Postal application only.
Decision timeframe:	Once or twice per year.
Contact:	Charity Commission NI

TBF & KL THOMPSON TRUST

A long-standing Northern Irish charitable trust. It funds a wide range of local causes, with a preference for Christian work and projects that benefit local communities.

Grant size:	£1,000–£10,000 typical.
Eligibility:	NI charities and churches.
How to apply:	By writing to the trust.
Decision timeframe:	Dependent on trustee meetings.
Contact:	Charity Commission NI

COMMUNITY FINANCE IRELAND (FORMERLY UCIT)

The leading social finance provider for NI and ROI. Unlike a grant-maker, they provide flexible loans to charities, churches, and community groups who need working capital or investment support.

Loan size:	£10,000–£600,000.
Eligibility:	Community and faith groups in NI/ROI.
Funds:	Bridging loans, capital loans.
How to apply:	Online enquiry form.
Decision timeframe:	Fast once paperwork ready.
Contact:	www.communityfinanceireland.com

Local & Government Schemes

DAERA – RURAL MICRO CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME

Run by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, this scheme helps rural groups buy small items that make a big difference.

Grant size:	£500–£2,000 (15% match).
Eligibility:	Rural community groups in NI, including churches.
Funds:	Small capital items (IT, furniture, accessibility, refurbishments).
How to apply:	Via local councils.
Decision timeframe:	Weeks.
Contact:	www.daera-ni.gov.uk

DFC – SMALL CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

An NI Government programme designed to encourage partnership working. It funds small items that help groups collaborate and deliver community benefit.

Grant size:	£1,500 (2 orgs); £5,000 (3+ orgs).
Eligibility:	NI community groups, including churches, applying in partnership.
Funds:	Small capital items.
How to apply:	Via Co-operation Ireland.
Decision timeframe:	2–3 months.
Contact:	www.cooperationireland.org

ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE & CRAIGAVON (ABC) BOROUGH COUNCIL GRANTS

Local councils in NI operate a range of grant schemes. The ABC Borough Council provides funding to support community development, arts, heritage, and capital improvements.

Grant size:	£500–£10,000 typical (larger for capital).
Eligibility:	Community and voluntary groups in ABC Council area.
Funds:	Community Development, Arts, Events, Capital grants.
How to apply:	Online via ABC Council Funding Hub.
Decision timeframe:	2–3 months.
Contact:	www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

UK Grants for Church Repairs

ANCHOR FOUNDATION

Registered Christian charities who are working to address social exclusion with a particular interest in charities working within healing and the arts. Grants for capital projects and repairs, but rarely buildings. From £500 to £12,000. Applications are considered twice yearly.

Grant size:	£500-£12,000
Eligibility:	Registered Christian Charity for project in the UK and Oversea
Exclusions:	Repairs, Building work only in exceptional circumstances, Not for individuals or non registered charities
How to apply:	online or email to secretary@theanchorfoundation.org.uk
Decision timeframe:	End of January for April trustee meeting, end of July for October trustee meeting
Contact:	Email - secretary@theanchorfoundation.org.uk , online - www.theanchorfoundation.org.uk

NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST

Christian places of worship, of any denomination, can apply for a grant towards urgent structural repairs. Between £10,000 and £50,000 for projects costed at more than £100,000. Also considered are projects that introduce kitchens and accessible toilets to enable increased community use where the cost is more than £30,000. Up to a maximum of 50% of the project cost. Priority areas - NE England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Grant size:	Up to £50,000 for significant structural repairs with total costs of over £80,000 inc VAT and up to £10,000 for fabric/structural work with total costs between £20,000 - £80,000 inc VAT
Eligibility:	Christian places of worship across the UK, must be more than 6 services per year and must have 50% match funding in place
Exclusions:	must be the main church building, must have been originally built as a place of worship, projects must not yet have started
How to apply:	email - grants@nationalchurchestrust.org or online - www.nationalchurchestrust.benefactorcloud.co.uk
Decision timeframe:	committee meets three times per year in March, July and November
Contact:	Email - info@nationalchurchestrust.org , online - www.nationalchurchestrust.org

Charitable Grants For Churches - Funding For Building

BEATRICE LAING

One of 4 Laing Family Trusts. Christian emphasis - charitable funding for various areas including grants for church building and repairs, new church building, and extension or redevelopment projects. Grants typically range between £2,000 and £10,000.

Grant size:	£2,000 - £10,000
Eligibility:	UK registered charity or church with exempt status but no individuals. Extra focus on new buildings, extension or redevelopment
Exclusions:	Charities registered overseas, church renovation or repairs
How to apply:	Eligibility quiz and then postal applications only
Decision timeframe:	Usually 3-4 months
Contact:	0208 238 8890, www.laingfamilytrusts.org.uk or email info@laingfamilytrusts.org.uk

BOWLAND CHARITABLE TRUST

Individuals, charities and other charitable organisations, primarily by the provision of grants and gifting educational equipment. The majority of the support provided is to outdoor and character building activities by young people based in the North West of England, and educational, religious and cultural activities and institutions. Spend £5.1m pa.

Grant size:	£1,000 - £20,000
Eligibility:	Charitable organisations (inc churches) with an emphasis on NE England, but all UK.
Exclusions:	Core costs and salaries
How to apply:	in writing by post or email
Decision timeframe:	within 4 weeks of receipt
Contact:	01254 688051 or email - carole.fahy@cannco.co.uk

WILLIAM AND JANE MORRIS FUND

Charitable grants for churches, chapels and other places of worship built before 1896 for grants of between £500 and £5,000 to carry out small programmes of conservation work to decorative features and monuments. Deadlines 31 Mar and 31 Aug.

Grant size:	£500 - £5,000
Eligibility:	Any church in the UK can apply for decorative or non structural features inside the building
Exclusions:	UK only, structural repairs, electrical, plumbing, works already completed, objects created after 1896
How to apply:	Online application portal
Decision timeframe:	31st March and 31st August
Contact:	online - www.sal.org.uk/what-we-do/grants or 0207 479 7080

Charitable Grants for Churches - Project Funding

BEAVERBROOK FOUNDATION

UK registered charities. Variety of awards made, including health and old age, education, including the provision of scholarship awards, maintenance allowances or grants, and the Christian faith. Grants typically under £5,000 and can be made for building expenditure, revenue/running costs and special projects.

Grant size:	up to £5,000
Eligibility:	Must be a UK registered charity and for advancement of the Christian faith
Exclusions:	Costs already incurred, not promoting the Christian faith or not UK registered
How to apply:	through the Beaverbrook Foundation website
Decision timeframe:	No timeframes just as and when funds are available
Contact:	online - www.beaverbrookfoundation.org.uk or email - jane@beaverbrookfoundation.org

SAINSBURY FAMILY CHARTIABLE TRUST (SFCT)

17 different independent grant-making foundations, which fund registered charities or activities with a clearly defined charitable purpose, including Christian mission, education and evangelism and the restoration and repair of major churches and cathedrals. Also funds similar activities in the Middle East and Africa.

Grant size:	no set grant size
Eligibility:	registered charities or UK charitable organisations with focus on Christian orgs, evangelism or mission
Exclusions:	generally don't fund organs, bells or utility systems
How to apply:	for church heritage via The Headley Trust or for Christian mission, education or faith work via The Jerusalem Trust
Decision timeframe:	none given
Contact:	email - info@sfct.org.uk or online - www.sfct.org.uk

GC GIBSON CHARITABLE TRUST

UK registered charities. Core funding, but consideration is also given to capital or special projects. Funds wide range of activities, including faith organisations. Spend £680k pa

Grant size:	£1,000 - £10,000
Eligibility:	UK registered charity or non-profit organisations, less than £1 million income
Exclusions:	routine church repairs, over £1 million income
How to apply:	online at www.gcgct.org annually between 31st July - 31st August
Decision timeframe:	made within 12-14 weeks
Contact:	online - www.gcgct.org or email - gcgibsoncharity@gmail.com

W F SOUTHALL TRUST

Charities in the UK, including Quaker activities

Grant size:	£1,000 - £5,000
Eligibility:	UK registered charity, publicly available accounts less than 18 months old, assets and income under £1 million with 80% expenditure on charitable activities, significant focus on Quaker work or witness
Exclusions:	no projects outside the UK, retrospective costs, non registered charities
How to apply:	complete eligibility checker and upload application on online portal
Decision timeframe:	up to £5,000 - 4 months or larger amounts - up to 8 months
Contact:	online at www.southalltrust.org or phone 0300 111 1937

WESTHILL - FUNDER LIST

UK and International Funding Finder - Charitable Funders of Faith Motivated Projects

Grant size:	£500 - £20,000
Eligibility:	UK not for profit charities, religious education, primarily in the UK
Exclusions:	core costs like salaries, major repairs, activities that don't involve people, state or statutory work
How to apply:	online - www.westhillendowment.org
Decision timeframe:	every 3-4 months after Trustee meetings
Contact:	online - www.westhillendowment.org/funding or email - info@westhillendowment.org

Sign up to my funding e-bulletin

A range of other funders open calls for applications throughout the year, and could help your church or faith group in your work.

To keep up to date with these funds, please register for my funding e-bulletin – simply email **carla.lockhart.mp@parliament.uk** with your Name, organisation and email address for the subscription.

☎ 028 3831 0088 or 07833 198008

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