

Deanery Synod Paper on National Financial Support for Church Buildings

Preamble:

The Church of England is privileged to be the custodian of a significant proportion of our nation's historic buildings – our Church buildings are often key landmarks and signifiers of local identity, irrespective of whether they are medieval buildings in villages and market towns or post-War architectural experiments on estates.

At their best our buildings are a great springboard for mission but too often making them fit for purpose to the needs and expectations of a 21st Century community, or simply their basic maintenance, overwhelms the time and energy of the PCC and all actively engaged in the Parish. The demands of the building squeeze out any outward facing mission.

The need to continually fundraise to keep a (literal) roof over our heads can also confirm an assumption that the Church is more interested in your wallet than your soul.

The buildings we as individual Parishes inherit mean this burden falls unevenly and therefore we believe there is a strong case for the Church nationally to lift this yoke off individual PCCs.

We are grateful that the Church Commissioners have acknowledged this and have made some limited funding (<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/church-england-announces-ps9-million-help-parishes-repairs-and-specialist>) available, which will fund some building officers would can help with grant applications.

However a common experience is that getting grants for a Church Hall that has multiple community users is fairly easy, while getting a grant for the Church building itself is really hard – especially if your building can not be easily pivoted towards multi-use.

The Commissioners have been bold in their willingness to fund mission – but we believe they could have a bigger national impact if they could help release PCCs from the burden of their buildings

The motion:

This Synod call of the Church Commissioners to release a meaningful part of the inherited wealth of the Church of England to ensure that the inherited buildings of the Church of England are maintained in good order as enablers of, rather than barriers to, mission.