

POW WOW

The Newsletter of the Places of Worship Project

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LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP GRANT SCHEME SURVIVES SPENDING REVIEW



Over the past year, POWAlliance has joined with a number of other organisations in the campaign to save the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which has contributed well over £100 million to the repair of historic faith buildings and their contents since its inception in 2002.

On the 20th October 2010, the DCMS announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, that the Scheme **will** survive beyond March 2011, albeit in the reduced form which was announced as an interim measure on the 7th of October. The Scheme's budget will be capped at a level 19% below what it has cost annually in recent years. This will erode its value as will the fact that VAT is going up to 20%.

This is not a complete victory, as certain items will no longer be eligible after the 4th January, it will be possible to claim up to 20% on those items which remain eligible after that date. Overall, this is good news at a time of such severe financial stringency. It is the result of long, effective and sustained campaigning by many individuals, denominations, groups and faiths who wrote letters to their MPs and others who directly took the case to DCMS. Thank you very much to all who contributed.

From the 4th January 2010, listed places of worship will **not** be able to recover VAT on professional fees for works and repair works to organs, bells, clocks, and pews, but they will still be able to claim for repairs to their buildings, up to a capped total of just over £12 million in 2011-12, rising to just over £13 million in 2014-15.

However, from the 4th January, the Scheme will match the full VAT paid out on those items which remain eligible including the increase to 20%.

This announcement also applies to the Memorials Grant Scheme, under which professional fees will no longer be eligible from 4 January 2011.

Reminder - don't forget the deadline.....

for recovering VAT on professional fees for works and repair works to organs, bells, clocks and pews under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. All claims MUST be in by 31st December 2010.

From the 4th January 2010, listed places of worship will **not** be able to recover VAT on the works detailed above **but** the Scheme will match the full VAT paid out on those items which remain eligible including the increase to 20%.

New European Forum for historic places of worship created



Last week representatives of twenty-four countries signed up to a new Forum as the culmination of a two day summit in Canterbury, UK. A Romanian village church with beautiful wall-paintings in immediate threat of collapse, a baroque Russian church re-found within a forest and the development of a redundant Anglican church in the UK as a community well-being centre were just a few of the topics discussed by over 50 representatives of European places of worship organisations last week.

Between 10 and 13 November 2010 representatives of organisations that care for historic places of worship in 24 different countries met for the first time to establish a new network. The venue was, most aptly, in the grounds of the beautiful and ancient Canterbury Cathedral. The topics resonated with delegates from different regions of Europe: community, extended use or adaptation of places of worship when the congregation is no longer able to cope alone, how to fund work needed to keep these places open for visitors and ways of making politicians aware of the difficult issues that organisations face.

As one participant noted: *"I learned that my organisation is only one of many doing comparable work throughout Europe so we are not alone, and can find others to give advice and share their experience."*

International experts spoke at the event and got involved in discussions with participants. They included **Mrs. Inger Liliequist**, Director General of the Swedish National Heritage Board; a politician's response from the **Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Beith MP** and a pan-European perspective from **Mr John Sell**, Vice-President of Europa Nostra. Evening speakers were **Dr. Simon Thurley**, Chief Executive of English Heritage and **Mr Loyd Grossman**, Chairman of The Churches Conservation Trust and The Heritage Alliance. From further afield, **Prof. Luc Noppen** from the University of Montreal gave a world perspective. Prof Noppen hosted a conference in 2005 where the idea for a European network was first discussed.

A tour led by ecclesiastical historian **John Vigar** provided delegates with the opportunity to explore places of worship in the area. These included St Martin's in Canterbury, the oldest church in England still in use; the old Synagogue in Canterbury, two churches in Sandwich cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust and Pugin's church of St Augustine's in Ramsgate.

The event was supported by **English Heritage**, the **Churches Conservation Trust**, the **National Churches Trust** and the **Headley Trust**.

The steering group will meet in January to finalise a work plan from the many practical suggestions made during the forum. New members interested in joining the network are most welcome. Further information on the event and network can be found on the website:

www.placesofworship.eu.org.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT ON “The Non-Conformist Churches and the Big Society” 6pm, October 19th 2010: Committee Room 2, House of Lords

As the Coalition Government promote their idea of the Big Society and Baroness Warsi tells us that the Church is “at the heart of society” and “the key to its future”, Churches are excited about the role they can play but they are – like many people – also confused. What is the Big Society? What will it look like in reality? What is the Church’s real role in it? On the eve of the Comprehensive Spending Review, where the public sector faced drastic financial cuts, One Church 100 Uses thought it was timely to ask – and attempt to answer – some of these tough questions. The response to the event was phenomenal and over 80 people attended. Those who could not fit into the room asked for a series of follow up events. The event was covered by 6 newspapers from the Church Press.

One Church, 100 Uses – Setting the Scene:

Welcome and Introduction: Lord Mawson OBE

Andrew gave an introduction into founding the Bromley-by-Bow Centre from what, was 26 years ago, a run down Victorian church with a congregation consisting of twelve elderly people.

- He stressed the importance of seeing problems as opportunities.
- He gave a summary of One Church, 100 Uses (1C100U):

One Church 100 Uses promotes and assists the effective regeneration of churches for wider community use. It helps congregations create dynamic and inclusive spaces that can become change-makers within their communities. The approach is rooted in a church's local context - it builds links with local entrepreneurs, organisations and enthusiasts. By developing effective working partnerships, One Church 100 Uses helps to ensure sustainable futures for church buildings. Local people with a real understanding of their church and area are at the forefront of each development. This allows for every project to truly reflect the individual needs of different communities – there is no “one size fits all” approach.

The National Picture: The significance of 1C100U for the United Reformed Church: Revd. Rowena Francis (Northern Synod Moderator)

Rowena gave some background to the working relationship that the URC has with 1C100U. She stressed that this was the national regeneration agency for the URC, which was particularly concentrating on church regeneration in England. She felt that 1C100U enabled the URC to continue their dissenting tradition as it enables churches to be renewed and identifies key needs in the community which church buildings can fulfil e.g. health promotion, sacred space, artistic space etc. 1C100U brings key partnerships – e.g. its partnership with English Heritage – to churches and empowers church congregations.

The vision of the Government: David Burrowes (Conservative MP, PPS and Policy Advisor to Minister of State)

David congratulated 1C100U on this timely discussion on the eve of the spending review. He felt that it was easier to define the Big Society by what it is not. **It is not:** financial cuts, Government Policy, a purely Conservative agenda. **It is:** giving power to local communities and supporting networks of individuals, a shift in power from Central Government to local care in the community, empowering neighbourhoods especially in areas of need where capital is often less, cultural change and a recognition of community heroes especially the Church and other faith groups. David stressed the importance of voluntary and faith groups playing a part in bringing about long-term change in the Big Society. He felt that churches were uniquely placed for developing local partnership networks. He stressed that the Conservative Government has an “open door” approach to the Church.

Opportunities for the Government:

How to get it right! Donald Findley (Director of 1C100U)

Donald applauded the Coalition Government’s policy of handing power back to the local community. However, he stressed that there were problems with doing this in practice and he wanted to discuss how best to achieve this. He believed the key problem with the last 10 years of the Labour Government was that their approach towards the work, that Bromley-by-Bow demonstrated, as “despite of” and not “because of”. Churches like Bromley-by-Bow and their work need far more practical engagement by Government, so that they understand the practical issues on the ground. Nice words are not enough. Donald felt that it was a few individual politicians who had made a difference over the years

to the work at Bromley-by-Bow rather than the majority, which needs addressing. He also felt that churches need to start acting rather than thinking and talking and give a vision of where they are going in the future and, in particular, their plans for participating in the Big Society. Donald gave a few examples of how 1C100U is encouraging use of church buildings and believes these can be developed into templates nationally: business hub, youth organisation and youth provision, artistic space, health care, international collection of film, café, studio use.

Elizabeth Berridge (Chairman of the Conservative Christian Fellowship)

Elizabeth kindly stepped in for Julia Manning (CEO of 2020 Health) as Julia was taken ill.

Elizabeth stressed that the Coalition Government had an “open door” approach to all churches and an understanding of faith based contributions and the benefits that faith groups can bring to the Big Society. She suggested that people read Baroness Warsi’s recent address to the Bishops of the Church of England in understanding the Conservative’s approach towards the Church. Elizabeth also quoted from the Editorial of the CCF’s “The Difference” magazine. She felt that the best possible way to grow a Big Society was to let growth happen organically. She stressed that the Church has a unique position in terms of resources. She also stressed that churches should be more welcoming to those who aren’t Christians but want to volunteer or contribute to a church’s work in some way as this will enable them to see faith up close.

Margaret McVeigh (Former Conservative candidate, member of CCF, school teacher)

Margaret felt there was an intrinsic connection between schools and churches because both revolved around communities. Historically, too, there is a connection between churches and faith schools. Margaret felt that churches and schools – in the present economic climate – had an opportunity to think outside the box. She felt that joint projects and shared use of purpose built space were an excellent starting point to strengthen relationships between schools and churches. She stressed the importance of starting small and building upon partnerships.

English Heritage

How do the non-conformist churches play their part? Baroness Andrews (Chairman of English Heritage)

Baroness Andrews wanted to stress that English Heritage are open to redevelopment ideas of church buildings and have a “yes” approach. English Heritage wants to develop better places by encouraging interaction between innovation, community and place. She stressed the difficulties in getting individuals and congregations to take a risk. She sees English Heritage as instrumental in giving advice to churches which gave them increased confidence in their projects and buildings. Baroness Andrews stressed that E.H. weren’t exclusively about helping buildings but that a building should be used: E.H. want to help communities.

Questions, Answers, Comments:

What’s the best way for churches to build a bridge with Parliament?

Baroness Andrews: ministers need to see evidence of real benefit in a project to support it.

How do we improve communication between churches?

Rowena Francis felt that 1C100U plays an instrumental role in helping build partnerships between churches. Donald Findley encouraged people from church congregations to come forward with ideas for future seminars that 1C100U will host. Colin Gregg suggested that churches talk to their community.

Why are the plans discussed at tonight’s seminar so big for churches? Are they too big?

Donald Findley said it was really horses for courses and that the philosophy of 1C100U was that “no size fits all”. He stresses the importance of starting small and building on small successes. Baroness Andrews said that small things, especially in rural communities which face greater challenges in some ways, inspire growth. David Burrowes said that MPs should champion small local projects especially when they have the time in recess. Peter Southcombe (a director of 1C100U) said that Bromley-by-Bow was an example of starting small and developing slowly and successfully. A minister from a church in Kensington said that good work does not depend on grand visions but on small ideas. Richard Oxley (project assistant and English Heritage Officer to 1C100U) said that the main problem is identifying people with entrepreneurial skills in churches and that entrepreneurship should be encouraged.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Historic Churches and Chapels

The APPG has met twice since the General Election in May 2010, on the 20th of July, and on the 2nd of November. Loyd Grossman, (chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust and of The Heritage Alliance) was the keynote speaker at the summer meeting

He began by saying that he was very concerned about what would happen to the heritage sector in the present fiscal situation. Although the sector was happy to pay its part in the necessary cutbacks, and believed in fiscal restraint, he felt that the spending cuts should be fair and proportionate. He was grateful for the 40% increase in the funding of arts and sports by the last government, but at the same time there had been a 19% reduction in heritage funding. The last government failed to see the link between history and culture, and there had been over a decade of falling expenditure. When heritage is damaged, it takes years to repair.. When it is lost, it is gone for ever, whereas the arts can recover from cutbacks.

Places of worship are particularly vulnerable. He said that he was concerned that the new government was not paying enough attention to the role heritage has to play in rural employment, and urban regeneration. The present conversion of All Souls Bolton by CCT is the biggest conversion project in Western Europe. We all need to create a much greater understanding of the role of places of worship in communities. The conservation organisations should not just become a zoo for neglected churches, but instead provide far more preventative support, rather than intensive care when it is almost too late.

Working together, English Heritage, POWAlliance and the Church of England created a list of new MPs after the election whose track record suggested that they would have a special interest in heritage and places of worship. These people have been specially invited to the APPG meetings and encouraged to come along.

There will be a final APPG this year on the 7th of December, to which John Penrose, the Minister for Tourism and Heritage is coming as keynote speaker. He will discuss the post CSR landscape for historic places of worship in the UK. An account of the meeting will be placed on the POWAlliance pages of The Heritage Alliance website afterwards.

Big Lottery Fund launches £75m grants scheme for buildings

The Big Lottery Fund is opening a £75m community buildings grants programme for voluntary organisations and parish and town councils in England. Not-for-profit groups will be able to apply for sums of between £100,000 and £500,000 each from the BLF's Reaching Communities programme from early December.

The BLF spokeswoman said that funding would be available for "all types of multi-purpose buildings used by communities, including memorial halls, community centres and village halls".

Each project should have a total value of no more than £750,000.

Applications will be assessed on a monthly rolling basis.

Organisations can register for further information by calling 0845 410 2030

We have been assured that as with the 2008 Community Buildings Programme, faith groups will be eligible as long as they meet the criteria.

For more information watch the Reaching Communities pages of the Big Lottery website i (www.biglotteryfund.org.uk).

NEWS & EVENTS

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD CONFERENCES SPRING 2011

“A community development approach
to the use of church buildings”

EAST ANGLIA — 6th APRIL 2011

Organised by the Dioceses of Norwich, and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and to be held in the Weston Room, The Hostry, Norwich Cathedral. For more details please contact:
jennie.hawks@norwich.anglican.org ;
marion@stedmundsbury.anglican.org

NORTH EAST— 22nd MARCH 2011

Organised by the Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham. To be held at St John's Church, North Shields. For more details please contact:
a.duff@newcastle.anglican.org

Obviously there will be a regional focus, but everyone is welcome.

Resourcing the Challenge Climate Actions, Plans, Projects, Partnership Presentations on Solar Energy, Finance and Permissions, Carbon Credits and Climate Action Plans

Saint Paul's Church, The Highway, Shadwell
Tuesday 23rd November 2010
5.30—7.30pm

Register by email to
brian.cuthbertson@london.anglican.org

The Church in Wales

The Church in Wales is delighted to confirm that Tina Andrew has been appointed as Church Heritage and Conservation Officer. This is a new post funded by the Church in Wales, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Cadw to develop a project entitled Taking Forward Our Church Heritage. This three year project seeks to develop training, guidance and assistance for congregations caring for historic places of worship as well as developing existing initiatives in Wales such as Open Churches Day and Church Maintenance Week.