**Information Pack**

Historic Churches Support Officer – Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

BACKGROUND

The Diocese of East Anglia was Established in 1976. It covers the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and the metropolitan area of Peterborough and includes the Cities of Norwich, Peterborough and Cambridge and the major towns of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth. Together with its extensive coastal and rural communities it covers almost 5,000 square miles.

The Diocese is based in Norwich, a lively and youthful City with a well-established University but the Diocese is extremely diverse with minority populations from many parts of the world. Right at the heart of what we do are our 51 parishes which include 83 places of worship of which 25 are listed Grade II or above and a further 28 are assessed to contribute to conservation areas or are eligible for local listing. Whilst overall the condition of the fabric of the churches is assessed to be fair to good, four churches are currently on the ‘Heritage at Risk’ (HAR) register.

At the end of 2020, the Diocese was offered a significant grant by Historic England to support the sustainability of the historic patrimony of the Catholic Church in East Anglia. The Diocese aims to build on the vital work undertaken in the 2018/20 review of its Churches, ‘Taking Stock’, to ensure that its historic buildings continue to play their key role in sustaining and renewing the Faith. Our church buildings are important, visual symbols, and the establishment of this post presents the opportunity to ensure that they remain beacons of Faith in their communities. By working closely with Parishes, not only helping address repairs and restoration issues but also the development of them as modern places of worship and community which respect their sacred space, the Diocese looks to build the capacity of Parishes to sustain their patrimony and to understand its role in evangelisation and national heritage.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the Historic Churches Support Officer (HCSO) role are:

* To assist Parish Priests and Parish Finance Committees (PFCs) of listed churches in the planning and funding of appropriate developments to their buildings, and in organising repair and conservation works of a suitable standard, to ensure that the practical requirements of the modern users of a living place of worship and mission are met in a way that complements and celebrates its historic value and respects its sacred space.
* To support PFCs in developing their buildings to be fit for purpose for the ministry and mission to which God has called them. This includes helping them to:
* Plan robust and considered Statements of Significance and Needs for their buildings, as tools to inform development opportunities;
* Enable their churches to be open as much as possible throughout the week for use by the congregation and the wider community, ensuring access for private prayer;
* Keep their churches well maintained, warm and welcoming;
* Ensure that the running costs are considered for the full lifecycle of a project, including the carrying out of an up-to-date scheme of inspection and regular maintenance, to secure a sustainable financial future for the church;
* Realise fully the building’s mission and engagement opportunities through developing interpretive and interactive materials for visitors, in both physical and online form, to enhance their appreciation of the spiritual and historic significance of the space;
* Establish clear external signage that is visible, informative and appealing; and
* Address accessibility and other issues associated with welcoming those with additional needs so that everyone can access the hospitality of the Church.
* To work to address the clear and urgent need to support and engage PFCs in the introduction of baseline fabric management processes for their churches, to ensure that annual planned preventative maintenance for each building is carried out regularly and for the long term.
* To work in conjunction with PFCs and Historic England’s ‘Heritage at Risk’ (HAR) Team to remove buildings from the HAR Register.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

In the initial 2 years of the project the post holder will ensure:

* PFCs with responsibility for a listed church building have a greater understanding of its potential in terms of extending welcome and have improved their transferable skills in its care and best use. Strategic listed churches have developed a robust Statement of Significance, to inform and support future development and community engagement.
* Long-term programmes for regular, planned preventative maintenance are in place and being carried out for:
* All churches on Historic England’s HAR Register;
* All listed churches identified as being in ‘Poor’ condition in Quinquennial Inspection from 2017 onwards; and
* All churches that seek permission to undertake significant development and/or repair projects.
* Effective contribution to the potential Diocesan bids for funding for related projects.
* Parish Clergy and PPC have a good understanding of the process for managing Faculty applications and other key regulatory requirements.

DUTIES

The day-to-day responsibilities of the HCSO will include:

* Support PFCs in realistic and sensitive planning to realise the full potential of their historic church buildings for mission and wider community engagement identifying the capital requirements for both development and repair projects, and developing a model for sustainable revenue generation;
* Identifying grants to support church building development and repair, and assisting PFCs in making applications for these grants;
* Supporting PFCs in the appointment of professionals and contractors as part of development and repair projects, in accordance with the appropriate public procurement regulations, and assisting in liaising between the PPC and its paid professionals;
* Helping PFCs follow the necessary procedures to secure all of the appropriate approvals before carrying out a building development or repair project;
* Advising PFCs on developing effective maintenance regimes for their church buildings;
* Liaising with Historic England’s HAR Team to ensure a considered and proactive approach to the churches most at risk, and to develop and ensuring the implementation of proposals that would see their removal from the HAR Register.
* Encouraging PPC and congregations to develop effective interpretation resources;
* Support PPC in working with community groups, local authorities and other organisations to promote the potential of church buildings as community resources, and explore ways to generate revenue;
* Assist the Diocesan Property Team in reviewing the Quinquennial inspection reports, to identify buildings that would benefit from further support;
* Compile quantitative and qualitative data on cases, with case studies, to provide evidence to form the basis of a potential future funding bids to support to PFCs beyond the 3 years of the current project;
* Develop personal and professional skills through training, and maintain familiarity with current developments in the conservation of church buildings as places of mission and ministry as well as for wider community use.

MANAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS

The HCSO will:

* work within the Diocesan central office under the line management of the Director of Resources and Finance.
* work closely with the Chair and Hon Sec of the Historic Churches. In addition, the HCSO will need to liaise regularly with Historic England’s East Team at their offices in Cambridge.
* liaise closely with the Vicar General, Deans, and the Youth Ministry, Education and Communications Teams, as appropriate for the needs and objectives of a given project.
* develop working relationships with external stakeholders such as local authorities, funders and community organisations.
* develop sustainable working relationships outside of the office, on-site at various churches, with clergy, and members of the PPC and congregations with responsibility for historic church buildings.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

A successful HCSO candidate will have:

* A relevant degree or professional qualification/s in property, construction or the management of heritage and proven practical experience in the management, development and conservation of the living historic environment.
* A clear interest in supporting England’s historic Catholic places of worship in being welcoming and attractive places for all ages that mirror the welcome of Christ;
* Knowledge of and sympathy for the core aims of the Catholic Church in England and in particular the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales;
* Experience in successful problem solving, project management and securing grant support;
* Experience of fundraising or helping to facilitate fundraising events for heritage or community bodies;
* Excellent skills in leadership and developing interpersonal relationships, negotiation and persuasion, oral and written communication and presentation;
* The capacity to work and make decisions with a high level of personal discretion; and

Due to the major emphasis on visiting churches and working outside of the office, a HCSO candidate must have a valid driving licence and access to an appropriately insured vehicle.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

* Hours: Part-time (20 hours per week), with flexible hours, for a fixed term of 3 years, with the possibility of extension depending on funding. This role is joint-funded with Historic England.
* Salary: £21,000 to £23,500, depending upon experience.
* Pension: Membership of the Diocesan Pension scheme with 11% employer contributions.
* Holidays: 25 days per year plus Bank Holidays plus 3 additional Diocesan Discretionary Days.
* The post holder will report to the Director of Finance and Resources and to the Chair of the Historic Churches Committee.
* The employer is the Diocesan Trustees of the Diocese of East Anglia.