

Church Buildings Support Officer (CBSO)

Parish Support, Triage & Mission Capacity

Purpose of the Role

To provide practical, hands-on support to parishes, particularly where there is uncertainty, low capacity, or lack of clarity, helping them to develop a clear and manageable way forward.

The CBSO acts as the primary entry point for parishes and is focused on releasing and strengthening parish capacity for mission through the effective stewardship of church buildings.

The role ensures that parishes are equipped, confident, and ready to take forward appropriate action, including access to repair funding and project development where needed.

Key Responsibilities

Parish Support & Triage

- Act as the first point of contact for parishes needing support with buildings and signpost to Church Buildings Officer (CBO), Project Support Officer (PSO), Net Zero Carbon Manager or other colleagues when appropriate
- Help parishes understand their situation, challenges, and options
- Support PCCs and churchwardens where there is uncertainty, low confidence, or lack of direction

Problem Definition & Early-Stage Guidance

- Help parishes define issues clearly before a project exists and implement annual maintenance plans
- Identify realistic next steps and appropriate pathways
- Translate professional or diocesan advice into practical, manageable actions

Capacity for Mission

- Enable parish leadership to focus on mission rather than being overwhelmed by buildings issues
- Reduce stress, confusion, and inertia that limit local effectiveness
- Support progress that is proportionate to parish capacity and context

Navigation & Coordination

- Support parishes in navigating diocesan systems and processes
- Coordinate input from the CBO, Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) which governs changes to church buildings, and other specialists
- Ensure communication is clear and momentum is maintained

Targeted & Sustained Support

- Provide focused support to priority churches (e.g. identified through Health & Vitality (H&V) Review, vacancy, DAC prioritisation, or at risk)
- Build sustained relationships that enable progress over time
- Help unblock stalled or complex situations

Early Exploration of Opportunities

- Help parishes consider whether new or different uses of their buildings should be explored
- Encourage thinking about mission, sustainability, and community engagement at an early stage
- Identify when ideas are ready to move into defined project or funding development

Repairs Pipeline & Funding Readiness (Including Minor Repairs & Improvements (MR&I))

- Identify churches with repair and maintenance needs and prioritise appropriately with particular focus on monitoring and supporting churches on the Heritage at Risk Register (HARR)
- Prepare parishes to access repairs funding opportunities (including MR&I)
- Support parishes to reach a state of readiness for application and delivery
- Work closely with the PSO to ensure a strong and continuous pipeline of fundable repair projects

Capacity Building & Training

- Strengthen the confidence and capability of churchwardens and PCCs
- Support training, peer learning (e.g. networks), and good practice sharing
- Work with CBO in developing and implementing the Church Buildings Strategy
- Contribute to reducing churchwarden vacancies and volunteer strain

Key Outputs

- Increased parish clarity and confidence in managing buildings
- Reduced volunteer overload and improved local capacity
- Strong flow of parishes moving from uncertainty to defined next steps including moving off HARR
- Robust pipeline of eligible and prepared cases for repairs funding (including MR&I)
- Improved sustainability of church buildings in support of mission

Boundaries

- Does not lead project development, grant-writing, or funding delivery
- Does not provide technical or professional advice (led by CBO)
- Hands over to the PSO once a parish has a clear objective, project, or funding need

Person Specification

The successful candidate will have the following attributes and demonstrate these in their application:

- Good standard of literacy and numeracy, a degree or otherwise demonstrable skills in research and critical review of information would be advantageous
- Professional in-person, telephone and email manner with the ability to articulate and receive messages clearly
- A general understanding of Church buildings, funding and project management and an ability and willingness to develop in this area, with the ability to present to a variety of stakeholders with different levels of knowledge
- IT proficient with a high-level working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Outlook, Excel and file management systems
- An eye for detail, accuracy, and quality to all areas of work
- The ability to respond and adapt quickly to multiple projects and changing priorities
- The ability to work flexibly across teams as well as organise own workload, to set priorities and to work to deadlines
- A willingness to learn the systems, structures and terminology of the Church of England, prior knowledge or experience of these would be advantageous
- Sympathy with the Christian faith, supportive of the work of the Church of England and committed to the ethos of the diocese
- Willingness to learn new skills and take part in any appropriate training

Terms and Conditions

- This is a three-year full-time-time post (35 hours per week) with an annual salary of £33,495. Work may be occasionally required on evenings or at weekends, for which compensatory time off in lieu is available
- Membership of the Church Workers Pension scheme with employer contributions
- Holidays five weeks per year plus three Diocesan Discretionary Days plus pro-rata Public Holidays
- Location: Saint Mary's House, The Close, Lichfield and other locations across the diocese with opportunity for hybrid working
- The post holder will report to the Strategy Programme Director
- The employer is the LDBF (Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance)
- There will be a probationary period of 6 months

Closing Date: Friday 11 September 2026

Interviews to be held in Lichfield on: Tuesday 22 September 2026

The Diocese of Lichfield is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders are expected to share this commitment.