



## **Historic Church Building Support Officer (HCBSO)**

### **Job Description**

#### **DIOCESAN VISION & MISSION**

The Diocese's four mission priorities are to grow in depth and to grow in influence, thereby enabling it to increase in number and become younger. It seeks to achieve the vision of 'Growing in God' through flourishing congregations, making a difference.

#### **PURPOSE**

Suffolk boasts an internationally significant legacy of historic church buildings. Along with that of Norfolk, they reputedly constitute the greatest concentration of medieval churches anywhere in northern Europe. Out of a total of 476 functioning churches, 50.8% are listed at Grade I and 37.2% are listed at Grade II\*. Seven are classed as Major Parish Churches by the Church Buildings Council.

The purpose of the Support Officer role is to help parishes and communities to care for and maintain their historic listed churches. These buildings are not museums, they are living places of worship at the service of their communities, and responsibility for their upkeep rests primarily on the shoulders of volunteers. When major, expensive fabric repairs become necessary, this can be daunting for a parish without the funds or experience to tackle something so demanding. The aim of this post is not to provide a substitute for PCC officers, but to guide and inform, to build capacity and morale. The successful candidate will enable churchwardens to overcome the most pressing problems, leaving them equipped with the knowledge, experience and confidence to tackle them again should they arise in the future, as well as with a better understanding of how to avert fabric decay through routine maintenance.

Candidates for assistance will be identified primarily through the Heritage at Risk (H@R) Register published annually by Historic England (HE). This will also be one of the measures for performance, and thus the postholder's responsibilities will include ensuring that information in that source is kept up to date to reflect the situation on the ground and the progress achieved. This post is part-funded by HE and the successful candidate will report on a regular, six monthly, basis to a designated representative at that organisation to review progress.

At some churches, fabric repairs are closely related to projects aimed at making the building a versatile asset for the local community, thereby generating income streams which can boost its sustainability. In such cases, the postholder will work in conjunction with the Buildings for

Mission Support Officer, whose remit focuses on development projects and community involvement, both integral to the sustainability of historic church buildings. That support officer also dispenses small grants for fabric repairs and related matters under the Minor Repairs and Improvements scheme, which it is envisaged will be complementary to the HCBSO's activity.

Since the HCBSO post will be partly funded by a fixed-term grant from HE, it has a three-year duration. It is hoped that it will be possible to continue it beyond 2028, but the Diocese is not currently able to make any firm commitment to do so.

## **DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION**

The DAC office is the department of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) that has oversight of the Diocese's functioning church buildings and churchyards. It is the first point of contact for clergy, architects and laypeople in parishes who need guidance on the maintenance, repair and development of their churches and churchyards. The office operates the faculty jurisdiction, the legal system for granting permission for works to them. It also oversees the system for undertaking condition reports on churches at five-yearly intervals (Quinquennial Inspection Reports, usually known as QIRs) and maintains records of church buildings. The office is the point of liaison between parishes and the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), which meets six times annually and provides specialist advice on the care of and works to church buildings and churchyards. Approaching that body, which discharges listed building consent under the terms of the Ecclesiastical Exemption, is the preliminary to obtaining a faculty, the document that provides legal permission to proceed with building and other works.

## **REPORTING TO**

- The DAC Secretary
- HE Team Leader for Development Advice, East of England

## **KEY CONNECTIONS**

- HE's H@R Project Officer
- Archdeacons
- Incumbents and other clergy
- Churchwardens
- Architects and contractors
- Grant-giving organisations (Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Churches Trust, etc)
- Parish Resources department
- Buildings for Mission Support Officer
- HCBSOs in other Dioceses

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **General**

1. Make contact with the parishes of churches on H@R, establish the scope for support.

2. Maintain records of the number of churches with which contact is made, record where this leads to successful engagement, as well as flagging up problem cases where this is difficult or impossible.
3. Work with the parishes of churches on H@R, inspecting architects and other key stakeholders to devise strategies for carrying out fabric repairs.
4. Assist parishes with gauging the proportion of external funding that may be needed to tackle repairs, identify funding sources and advise on eligibility, help with compiling grant applications and coordinate simultaneous bids when necessary.
5. Review incoming QIRs, identifying churches with major and/or chronic fabric defects using agreed criteria, nominating them for H@R where necessary.
6. Assist the DAC Secretary and HE in ensuring that H@R entries are kept up to date, notifying them of cases where the priority category can be downgraded, the condition rating upgraded, or the building removed altogether.
7. Liaise with the DAC Secretary on any proposals brought about through work with parishes that require formal permissions, assist parishes and architects with compiling Statements of Significance and Needs where necessary.
8. Promote understanding at parish level of the importance of regular maintenance in warding off decay and best practice in fabric repairs, provide guidance on sources of grant aid and funders' criteria, to include speaking at training events and webinars.
9. Keep abreast of relevant opportunities, changes and developments with grant-funding for heritage projects, as well as related legislation, forward authoritative guidance and information as required.
10. Maintain regular contact with counterparts at neighbouring dioceses to share experience and advice, attend regional and national meetings for HCBSOs.
11. Liaise with the Buildings for Mission Support Officer on any initiatives where fabric repairs are interlinked with promoting community engagement or projects funded through MR&I.
12. Maintain records of grant applications, including the amount secured (both as a total sum and as a percentage of the total cost of the cycle of works), as well as gathering feedback on unsuccessful applications and using this to inform guidance on future applications.
13. In cooperation with the Buildings for Mission Support Officer, set up and promote a network of church ambassadors, who have successfully fundraised for and carried out fabric repair or development projects at their own buildings, and who are willing to give advice to other parishes facing similar challenges.
14. Support the establishment and development of relevant voluntary organisations such as Friends' groups.

The role will involve desk-based work in the Diocesan offices and regular catch-ups will be held there with the DAC Secretary to provide guidance and discuss progress, although home working will be possible in due course. The role will involve a high degree of independent working, including frequent travel around the diocese and, on occasions, outside it. In time, the successful candidate will be expected to be master of his/her own diary, taking the initiative in organising meetings with PCC officers, architects, stakeholder organisations and so on. By nature, the role will be varied and so the schedule will change from week to week.

Please note that this list of responsibilities is not exhaustive and may be subject to change. From time to time, the postholder may be required to take on other duties of a similar nature. It is the practice of the DBF via the line manager to review and amend job descriptions annually, in consultation with the post-holder. HE strongly encourages post holders to develop a programme of appropriate Continuing Professional Development in agreement with their employers.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Education and professional qualifications</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undergraduate degree in history / history of art and architecture/archaeology or other relevant subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master's degree in conservation or related discipline (e.g. heritage management)</li> <li>Membership of relevant professional body (e.g. IHBC)</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge and Experience</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of church architecture and buildings</li> <li>Successful track record of repair and conservation projects involving listed buildings.</li> <li>Knowledge of heritage and community grant-funding resources, understanding of their priorities and experience of writing applications.</li> <li>Able to read and interpret technical drawings, specifications and schedules of work.</li> <li>Experience of managing volunteer-led projects, including providing in-person training and written advice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An understanding of the Church of England's legal and governance processes, including the faculty system</li> <li>Familiarity with Suffolk</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Abilities /Aptitudes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent written and spoken English</li> <li>Able to explain technical matters clearly and comprehensibly to non-specialists</li> <li>Ability to design, present and deliver training events.</li> <li>Good IT skills</li> <li>Full driving licence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competent photographer</li> </ul>
<b>Work-Related Personal Qualities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A self-starter, content to work independently.</li> </ul>	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to identify priorities and manage flexibly a high workload with a range of tasks being handled simultaneously.</li><li>• Able to understand importance of role in a larger structure and its interdependence with other departments and related organisations.</li><li>• Good problem-solver, able to distinguish between matters requiring short-term fixes and long-term aims.</li><li>• Able quickly to form effective working relationships with people from a wide range of different backgrounds.</li><li>• Diplomatic and tactful, positive and enthusiastic manner</li><li>• Sympathy for the values of the Church of England and commitment to the aims of the Diocese</li></ul> |  |
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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **About Us**

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich has 445 parishes in 112 benefices and serves approximately 660,000 people living in a geographical area of more than 1,400 square miles.

The Diocesan Board of Finance serves and supports our parishes and schools offering the people of Suffolk the opportunity to encounter God and grow in Christian faith. We strive to do this in providing service and support in line with our values of Respect, Transparency, Quality and Well-being.

### **Terms and conditions – general information**

Salary	The salary range for this post is £33,990. Band B
Pension provision	Membership of the Church of England Pensions Board Pension Builder 2014 Scheme following completion of probation period.
Hours of work	Full time (35 hours) per week Monday to Friday with some flexibility required and offered. TOIL (time off in lieu) is applicable for evening and weekend working to be agreed with line manager. We are open to considering other options, including job sharing, part-time working and compressed hours working.
Holidays	25 days' pro-rata paid leave in addition to the usual public holidays plus Discretionary days (at Easter and Christmas)
Probation Period	Six months, during which time progress is regularly reviewed and the period may be extended
Notice period	During probation 2 weeks, thereafter 1 month
Place of work	Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ However, these offices are currently up for sale, and we are planning a potential move away from this location to new offices within a reasonable distance (either within Ipswich or on the outskirts of Ipswich) which will become the main place of work.
DBS requirement	The appointment is subject to an unblemished enhanced DBS check in relation to the requirements of this role.
Transport	The postholder will require use of own personal transport and provide evidence of insurance cover for business use. Expenses for mileage will be met.