

Update for Project Team Meeting on 4th March 2026

Churchyard Biodiversity and Heritage Project Meeting, 27th January 2026

Attendees: Frances Hall (Community Engagement Officer for the Churchyard Biodiversity and Heritage Project), Sophie Smith (Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Officer), Alison Wilkes (Project Manager), Nick Miles, Jeff Robinson, Chris Twine and Sue Foster.

Alison reported that substantial work had been taking place behind the scenes to shape the Churchyard Biodiversity and Heritage Project, supported by Claire Strachan (*Church Buildings Development and Project Officer for the Diocese of Coventry. Her role sits within the Church Buildings (DAC) team, where she supports PCCs in caring for, maintaining, and developing their church buildings*) and Andy Duncan. (*Grants and Funding Adviser for the Diocese of Coventry*).

A strong number of churches had already expressed interest, and the diocese had appointed the team to lead a development phase beginning in November 2025.

This development phase will pilot key elements of the wider project and test different approaches across a range of contexts. Holy Trinity has been selected as one of ten churches and churchyards to take part, representing a broad mix of urban, town-based, and rural settings, each with its own distinct characteristics.

Notes from the meeting have been uploaded to the church archive.

Following this meeting, the Churchyard Biodiversity and Heritage Team led an event for young people on 20 February 2026 and also attended the meeting held on 21 February 2026 to launch the Heritage Group.

Meeting with JCW Electrical Installations, 3rd February 2026

The DAC indicated that (and have subsequently confirmed in writing on 25th February 2026) that one of the companies who quoted for the electrical works - KES Electrical Systems - would not be acceptable. The DAC stated that *"While the quote appears to be realistic we are unable to recommend the use of this company as they are not NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) or ECA (Electrical Contractors Association). Membership of one of these organisations provides important insurance safeguards to the church in the event of poor workmanship or should the company cease trading, and should mean that the work should be completed to a good standard."*

We approached JCW Electrical Installations, a local company, who are NICEIC Certified. Their subsequent quotation is £21,145.

Our second option is to use Prime Electrical Services Ltd, another local company, who are also NICEIC Certified and have carried out work at church previously. However, their quotation is ~50% more than JCW Electrical Installations.

Nick BB and Jeff would like the Project Team to confirm their acceptance of JCW Electrical Installations as the preferred contractor. Subject to additional confirmation by the PCC, we can update our paperwork for the DAC accordingly.

Meeting with Church Architect, Steven Matthews, 12th February 2026

From our discussion with the DAC regarding Faculty Applications – it has been made clear that if a parish undertakes work based on informal advice, volunteer input, or a contractor's opinion, there is no indemnity if something goes wrong.

- Architects and structural engineers carry professional indemnity insurance (PII).
- Their drawings, reports, and specifications are legally recognised and insurable.
- The DAC can only give a recommendation to the Chancellor if the underlying advice is professionally accountable.

Without this, the liability would fall back on the PCC, which the DAC cannot allow.

Therefore, we need to appoint an Architect. Steven Matthews undertook our recent Quinquennial Report. Steven is:

- A Chartered Architect
- A director and designated member of Brown Matthews Conservation Architects LLP

Brown Matthews are known for:

- Conservation architecture
- Church reordering
- Repairs to listed churches
- Heritage-sensitive extensions

This aligns with the type of work we are undertaking. They are well respected by the DAC.

Nick Miles, Nick BB and Jeff Robinson met with Steven to start our works with him. Brown Matthews costing will be on the basis of 10% of the project cost where we do not apply for Grants, and 12% of the project costs where we apply for grants.

Enquiry E-Mails, sent 25th February 2026

Following the meeting with Steven Matthews, and using the funder lists provided by Steven Matthews and Andy Duncan, the two sets of information have now been combined into a single overarching document. Each of the 80 identified funders has been individually researched to understand their specific priorities and to determine the most appropriate way to approach and structure any future applications. A sortable spreadsheet has been created to make it easier to assess potential funders and identify the strongest matches.

After a follow-up meeting with Nick BB and Jeff, it was agreed that several enquiry emails should be sent to funders who specifically support specialist reports or inspections from architects, structural engineers, arborologists, conservation specialists, and similar professionals prior to works commencing. These reports will be essential for developing the project and are required to meet DAC expectations around professional indemnity.

Enquiry emails have been sent to the selected funders, and we are currently awaiting their responses.

- The Church Buildings Council

- The Leche Trust
- National Churches Trust – Maintenance Grants
- National Churches Trust – Project Development Grants
- National Churches Trust – Repair Grants
- The Veneziana Fund
- Church Buildings Council
- William and Jane Morris Fund
- The Worshipful Company of Glaziers

Nick BB and Jeff have developed a strategic approach that they intend to present at the meeting, and they are seeking the Team's approval before the scheduled discussion with Andy Duncan on 11 March 2026.

Documentation Quality Control System – in line by BS 5750

Implementing a Documentation Quality Control System (DQCS) aligned with ISO 9001 provides a clear, structured framework for managing information across complex heritage and church projects. It ensures that all drawings, specifications, reports, and approvals are controlled, traceable, and kept up to date, creating a single reliable source of truth for architects, engineers, contractors, DAC advisers, and the parish. This reduces the risk of errors, miscommunication, and costly rework.

An ISO 9001-style system also strengthens legal and financial protection. By maintaining version control, audit trails, and documented decision-making, the parish can demonstrate due diligence to insurers, funders, and the DAC. This is particularly important for historic buildings, where undocumented changes can cause long-term damage or invalidate insurance cover. The system aligns closely with DAC expectations by showing that the parish is managing risk professionally and relying on accountable, insured advice.

For funders, such as Garfield Weston, Benefact, or NLHF, a recognised quality-control approach signals strong governance and project readiness. Over time, the system becomes a valuable legacy resource, preserving clear records of interventions, materials, and approvals for future PCCs and quinquennial architects. In short, a BS 5750-aligned DQCS brings clarity, accountability, and long-term protection to heritage stewardship.

If agreed as appropriate, Jeff will take charge of Document Control. He will update all current documentation, and re-issue them in an appropriate format.