

Coventry Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers

Guidelines for grants

The Coventry Guild operates a Bell Repair Fund, which is part of its registered charitable activities. Grants from the fund are made principally for the improvement and major renovation of rings of bells, including augmentation by the addition of more bells in the same tower. Day to day maintenance and “non-bell work” does not normally qualify but, exceptionally, repair work to tower fabric may qualify where this is a prerequisite to allow bells to be rung “full circle”.

Under the Charitable Rules of the Bell Repair Fund, the procedure for applying for a grant is as follows:-

1. The intention to apply for a grant must be notified to the Guild in time to be advised to Guild members at a Quarterly Meeting. The meetings are held in January, April, July and October of each year. The dates are advertised on the Guild website and on the programme card that is distributed to each member. It is preferable that this notice is in writing.

At this stage only outline details of a proposed works need be given and no detailed cost estimate is necessary. The notice of intention to apply for a grant should come from an officer of the church in question, for example, the incumbent, the Tower Captain or a churchwarden.

2. The formal written application will be considered by the Guild Committee at its meeting, which may take place up to c.4 weeks before a subsequent Guild Quarterly Meeting. The date of this meeting is available from the Guild General Secretary.

An Application Form is available, either from the Guild website, (in the Handbook Section), or from the Guild General Secretary, that can be filled in for this purpose. Written applications must provide the items of information that are required in this form.

At this stage full details of the proposed works, quotes and chosen preferred bidder are to be provided and any detail of relevance such as amounts already raised and/or promised from church or other sources and the likely date that the proposed work will commence.

Should the date of the commencement of work be some time in the future the Guild Committee may decide to indicate to the applicant that a grant is likely to be awarded, but that the amount will be decided nearer the commencement of the work, as estimates from bell foundries/bellhangers may well lapse in the interim.

Should an applicant be in the position where the information required in Stage 2 can be provided at the first point of contact with the Guild this will also be sufficient to be counted as giving notice of the intention to apply for a grant and there is therefore no need for two separate sets of documents.

3. At the quarterly meeting a formal recommendation is made by the Guild Committee to the members that a grant of £XXX is offered and, subject to their endorsement or amendment, any grant is held by the Guild for payment to the church on the completion of works. The applicant will be notified of the sum agreed.

Recent grants have typically varied between 10 and 20% of the cost involved, depending on the extent to which the Guild feels help is needed and the availability of funds at the time of application.

The rules require the payment of the grant to be made “on satisfactory completion”. Evidence of this is usually in the form of a contractor or architect completion certificate, or on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Guild’s Towers and Belfries Committee after a site visit by one or more of the Guild’s Bell Inspectors. The grant must be claimed within 3 years of it being agreed at a quarterly meeting.

Should the nature of the work that is actually done to the bell installation be substantially different to that indicated in the initial application relevant information must be passed to the Guild as soon as possible with documentation and the Guild may decide to adjust its offer of a grant accordingly. If there is any doubt as to whether the change is “substantial” the applicant should seek advice from the Guild General Secretary.

If the work is not completed within 3 years after its approval at a Quarterly Meeting the offer of a grant will lapse and a new application for a grant must be submitted, together with updated costs of and, if applicable, changes to the scope of the project since the original application was made.

Example timescale

1. No later than the start of the Guild Quarterly Meeting in October 2010,

A notice of intent to claim grant, or full details of the work to be undertaken, is submitted to Guild Secretary by an officer of St Barnabus' church, Highbrow .

2. October 2010 ,

Guild members at the Guild Quarterly meeting are given advance notice of the intention of Highbrow to apply for grant

3. By the Guild Committee Meeting in December 2010,

If not already supplied, full details and estimate of the cost of the work is submitted to Guild Secretary by a church officer at Highbrow.

4. December 2010,

Guild Committee considers the application and recommends a level of grant for consideration at the next Guild Quarterly Meeting.

5. January 2011,

The application is considered by Guild members and the grant endorsed or amended. The officer at Highbrow is notified of sum that will be paid on completion of the works.

6. January 2014

The latest date for claiming grant on completion of works

It is advisable to elicit deadlines for submission of documents beforehand, with a view to not missing the three month cycle of meetings.