

## Church Object: consultation details

This document includes the following:

- the reasons why Trustees are consulting on possible changes to Cloudesley's Church Object
- the proposed change of wording and the implications of this
- the consultation process
- the consultation questions so you can review these before submitting your church's response

### Current Church Object

Cloudesley's current objects are set out in the Charity Commission Scheme of 2 July 1980, as amended in 2016. The Scheme stipulates that half of the charity's net income is to be used for the 'relief of sickness' – Cloudesley refers to this as the Health Object. The other half of the net income is distributed through the Church Object.

The charity's current Church Object specifies that Trustees can make grants:

'towards the upkeep and repair of the fabric of, and the maintenance of services in, any churches of the Church of England in the area of the London Borough of Islington'.

There are currently 27 Church of England churches which are eligible to benefit under the Church Object. In the year to 30 June 2024, 46 grants totalling £1,225,002 were made to 22 of the 27 churches in the Islington Deanery. Grants of £913,002 were agreed through our Main Grants programme and £312,000 was agreed for funding through our two special projects on accessibility and sustainability.

Since 2015, the charity has agreed funding of c. £7mn for eligible Islington churches.

### Proposed wording of revised Church Object

Trustees are keen to hear your views on whether they should apply to the Charity Commission to update and clarify the current Church Object. The proposed wording for the revised Church Object would enable the charity to make grants as follows:

'towards the upkeep, repair and redevelopment of the fabric and facilities of any churches of the Church of England in the London Borough of Islington and the

maintenance or development of the public acts of worship and mission of those churches.’

In this instance ‘churches’ would include ‘all buildings, structures, gardens, paths and grounds within the curtilage of the principal place of worship and any other premises in the London Borough of Islington which are responsibility of the incumbent and/or the Parochial Church Council of that church’.

## **Why are Cloudesley reviewing the Church Object?**

In recent years, the charity has become increasingly aware of the limitations and restrictions of the current Church Object. We are conscious that churches evolve over time but, under the current Church Object, it is difficult for the charity to make grants for churches to undertake reordering or carry out improvements to their buildings unless they fall under the ‘maintenance of services’ part of the Object. This is because the current Object refers only to income being used for the ‘upkeep and repair of the fabric of’ and ‘maintenance of services in’ churches.

Projects undertaken by churches are often a combination of repairs, re-ordering and improvements. Currently, the charity’s Trustees are required to draw artificial distinctions between the different parts of a project rather than focusing on assessing the overall benefit and advantages of the project as a whole. This is inefficient and time-consuming for both the charity and church applicants. We feel that that clarifying the wording will enable Cloudesley to support churches more effectively.

Also, in most instances, it is not currently possible for Cloudesley to provide grants for church boundary walls or works within the church grounds, even though funds for these works may be needed.

At present, the wording of the Church Object means that churches need to review some fairly complicated guidance on the availability of funding including the legal advice linked here: [legal advice](#)

To address this, Cloudesley’s Trustees are consulting on the possibility of updating and clarifying the Church Object, subject to consultation responses and the Charity Commission’s agreement. The draft revised wording for the Object has been developed by Cloudesley Trustees with advice from our charity lawyers, Bates Wells. We have also taken initial soundings on this wording from the Archdeacon of Hackney, the Ven Peter Farley-Moore, Islington’s Area Dean, Rev’d Tamsin Merchant, and our lead contact with the Islington Deanery, Rev’d James Hughesdon.

The charity’s Trustees feel that the proposed changes are in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiary churches. The current Objects were adopted in the 1980s and it is crucial that the charity’s activities evolve to reflect the needs of its beneficiaries and to ensure that it continues to operate effectively and efficiently.

## Implications of the proposed Revised Object

The proposed revised Church Object would not affect the overall level of funds which will be available for churches from year to year, but, if agreed, would mean that it will be possible for grants to be agreed for some additional purposes for the eligible churches. This would include the possibility of funding reordering and improvements to church buildings, as well as works outside the church building itself, for example, to boundary walls and within church grounds.

The charity's Church Object sets out what it is possible for Trustees to fund, providing an overarching framework. Within this, Trustees agree funding priorities through a Church Grants programme. The current Church Grants programme (2020-25) prioritises applications which address the upkeep and repair of the fabric of the churches. You can find out more about the current funding priorities here: [Church Grants programme 2020-25](#)

## Consultation process and next steps

We hope that each eligible church will submit a response to this consultation.

Your church's response could be from your PCC or, if you feel it would be more appropriate, from your Buildings Committee (if you have one) or other grouping responsible for buildings issues and/or Cloudesley funding applications. When you submit your response, we will ask you to indicate who it has been agreed by, e.g., the PCC, Buildings Committee or other grouping.

Please submit your consultation response to us via the [online form](#) by **5pm on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024** at the latest.

Once the responses are received, they will be considered by Cloudesley's Trustees. Trustees will then decide whether to proceed to the next step and ask the Commission if it might make changes to the Church Object. Depending on the responses received, this could either be to request that the Church Object is updated as set out in the 'Proposed wording' section above or amended in another way in light of consultation responses.

We will update you again once the Trustees have considered the responses and made a decision about whether to approach the Charity Commission.

## Summary of consultation questions

If you have any questions about what is being proposed and would like to talk to us about this before submitting your consultation response, please do get in touch.

### Views on the proposed revised Church Object

1. Do you support the proposal to change the Church Object as below? Yes/No/Unsure

*'towards the upkeep, repair and redevelopment of the fabric and facilities of any churches of the Church of England in the London Borough of Islington and the maintenance or development of the public acts of worship and mission of those churches.'*

*In this instance 'churches' would include 'all buildings, structures, gardens, paths and grounds within the curtilage of the principal place of worship and any other premises in the London Borough of Islington which are responsibility of the incumbent and/or the Parochial Church Council of that church'.*

Please set out your reasons for this response.

2. If the revised Church Object is supported and then agreed by the Charity Commission, what current and future needs might this assist in your church in the next 5-10 years?

### The upkeep and repair of your church

3. Do you expect to make applications to Cloudesley towards the cost of the upkeep and repair of your church in the next 5-10 years? If so, what sorts of things are you likely to apply for funding for?
4. Is your need for external funding for the upkeep and repair of your church likely to grow, reduce or stay about the same in the next 5-10 years?

### Development of your church

5. Has the use of your church buildings changed over the past 10 years? If so, please could you give summary details.
6. Do you expect the ways in which your church buildings are used will change over the next 5-10 years? If so, please give details and an indication as to whether you are likely to consider redeveloping or reordering or making other improvements to your church building?

## Any other comments

7. Please add any other comments here.

## Further information

If you would like to discuss the consultation process and/or what is proposed, please do get in touch. We would be very happy to come along to your church to meet with you or set up an online meeting or phone call. Please contact Cloudesley's Director or your Grants Manager about this via the details below.

- Melanie Griffiths, Director  
[melanie.griffiths@cloudesley.org.uk](mailto:melanie.griffiths@cloudesley.org.uk), 020 7697 4220
- Catherine Sorrell, Grants Manager  
[catherine.sorrell@cloudesley.org.uk](mailto:catherine.sorrell@cloudesley.org.uk), 020 7697 4049
- Kevin Turner, Grants Manager  
[kevin.turner@cloudesley.org.uk](mailto:kevin.turner@cloudesley.org.uk), 020 7697 4201

If you have any questions about the online response form, please contact Jo Latham, our Operations and Database Officer - [jo.latham@cloudesley.org.uk](mailto:jo.latham@cloudesley.org.uk), 020 7697 4094

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