

**Assessment of the Impact of HLF/English Heritage
Places Of Worship Funding**

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1.0 Executive Summary

This limited study has demonstrated the beneficial effect of grant aiding the repair of historic places of worship, in terms of maintaining or, in many cases, increasing congregational use. Since the future of these buildings depends primarily on their continued use and care by those who worship in them, this is an important and encouraging finding. However, grant aiding repair has not in itself led to an increase in wider community use. Grant aiding new facilities has had this effect, when it has met a clear need and where the structures have been in place to ensure that the facilities are properly managed and promoted. Increased community use has also increased access to churches previously kept locked. It is recommended that the installation of new facilities, appropriate to local needs and capabilities, and compatible with the special architectural and historic interest of the buildings, should be given favourable consideration by HLF in future grant schemes. The continuing problem of inadequate maintenance regimes at many churches also needs to be addressed by ecclesiastical, statutory and grant-giving bodies.

2.0 Overview

- 2.1 I was asked to investigate the conservation impact of projects delivered through the HLF/EH Joint Places of Worship Programme (JPOW) between 1996 and 2002. Funding was used to undertake essential repairs to places of worship, and in some cases also to provide or renovate facilities such as meeting rooms, kitchens and toilets. The project brief (which is attached at Appendix One) posed two specific questions:
- has the funding of new facilities made a significant difference to how frequently and to what extent churches are used by local communities?
 - Is there evidence to show that funding of new facilities, by encouraging greater community use, is having a consequent, positive impact on the condition of churches and their long-term sustainability?

The data produced would be used to discuss the following theory of change:

Funding for new facilities->increased community use of the church (including regular use for worship)-> improved physical condition of the church.

3.0 Methodology and caveats

- 3.1 The evaluation was based on:
- A desk analysis of internal EH and HLF documents
 - Interviews with churchwardens and incumbents
 - Observation of the physical condition of each church
- 3.2 Time constraints did not allow for research into primary documents on site or other documents such as QIRs. Nor did they allow for discussion with individuals within the church hierarchy e.g. bishops or archdeacons.
- 3.3 Following discussion with staff of EH and HLF, twenty churches were selected, eleven of them 'facilities-funded' and nine of them 'no facilities funded'. The 'no facilities funded' group acted as a 'control' sample to test the hypothesis that the

funding of facilities has made a significant difference to the use of the churches and to their upkeep. In the event one church, a 'no facilities funded' example, was not evaluated because the relevant HLF file was missing. This has reduced what was already a very small sample, and throughout this document I have stressed the qualifications that need to be applied to any general conclusions that may be drawn.

- 3.4 The churches were spread across three broad geographical areas: East Anglia, Herefordshire and Worcestershire (plus one in Oxfordshire) and Liverpool and Manchester. This gave a good range of urban and rural case studies.
- 3.5 Suburban churches were not well represented in the sample, and this must be recognised as a limitation of this evaluation.
- 3.6 Similarly, all the case studies chosen were Church of England churches. While these have been the beneficiary of the vast majority of grants under the JPOW scheme, a more comprehensive and inclusive study would have included non-conformist and Roman Catholic places of worship.
- 3.7 For each case study, the evaluation assembled data on the following:
 - The condition of the fabric prior to funding;
 - The physical work undertaken with funding;
 - The condition of the fabric today;
 - The facilities available before the project took place;
 - New or improved facilities funded through the project;
 - How often and for how long the church was open before the project;
 - How often and for how long it is open today;
 - How often regular services were held before the project, and what was their attendance;
 - The regularity and attendance of services today;
 - The extent of community use of the church before funding;
 - The extent of community use today;
 - Whether a maintenance plan is in place and being followed.

4.0 Findings

- 4.1 The findings are divided into four broad subject areas:
 - impact on accessibility to the church
 - impact on level of use by the congregation
 - impact on level of use by the wider community
 - current maintenance regimes

5.0 Accessibility

- 5.1 Of the nineteen churches visited, nine had been normally kept unlocked during daylight hours prior to the grant aided works. These were all in rural areas, comprising six of the seven East Anglian examples, and three of the five Oxon/H&W examples. All seven of the Manchester/Liverpool churches had been normally kept locked.

- 5.2 The current situation, after the grant aided works, is that eleven of the nineteen are normally kept unlocked during daylight hours, a net gain of two. One church (East Hagbourne) was previously unlocked but has decided reluctantly, for the time being at least, to lock the building. Three churches that had previously normally been kept locked are now normally open. One of these is a repaired rural church without facilities (Eaton Bishop) and two are churches in the Manchester/Liverpool area where new facilities were funded.
- 5.3 On the basis of this sample it can be concluded that in rural areas the grant, whether for repair or for the provision of new facilities, has not significantly improved the accessibility of the building. Most of the rural churches visited were kept unlocked before the grant aided works, and most remain so regardless of the nature of the works. By contrast, the urban churches were without exception kept locked before the grant aided works. Most remain so, whether in receipt of new facilities or not, but the two which are open on a daily basis are open by virtue of the community activities enabled by the new facilities.

6.0 Use by the Congregation

- 6.1 Of the nineteen churches visited, thirteen reported an increase in the number of those attending regular services. Five reported no significant change and one a decline in numbers.
- 6.2 Breaking that figure down on geographical lines, in East Anglia four churches reported an increase, two no significant change and one a decrease. In Hereford and Worcs/Oxon four churches reported an increase, one no significant change and none a decrease. In Manchester/Liverpool five reported an increase, two no significant change and none a decrease.
- 6.3 In the eleven churches where new facilities were grant aided, six reported an increase in the congregation, four no change and one a decrease.
- 6.4 In the eight churches where new facilities were *not* funded, seven reported an increase in the congregation and one no change. None reported a decrease.
- 6.5 Assessment is made complicated by the fact that in one or two cases, non-grant aided new facilities were installed at the same time as the grant-aided repairs. However, one conclusion that one may draw from these figures that is that grant aid on any kind is likely to have a beneficial impact on congregation numbers. That thirteen (over two thirds) of the eighteen churches should report an increase in congregations, albeit often a very modest one, bucks the reported national trend of continuing decline.
- 6.6 If these findings have any significance (and the small size of the sample demands qualification), to what might we attribute this increase? One factor might be the increased sense of participation and ownership that goes with collective fundraising (so often presented as a negative or dispiriting process), coupled with the sheer relief and enjoyment of using the repaired building afterwards. Funding new facilities does not appear to have had any particular additional benefit in this regard; a higher proportion of 'no facilities funded' churches reported an increase, and the only church reporting a decline in numbers (Salthouse) was one where new facilities had been funded. The most-frequently given reason for

increases in congregation size was the availability of clergy (given multi-parish benefices and the problem of lengthy interregnums) and, where they are available, their character and energy. More prosaically, many interviewees also commented on the importance of decent heating.

7.0 Use by the Wider Community

- 7.1 Of the eleven churches with grant aided new facilities, eight reported an increase in community use. Three reported no significant change, and none a decrease.
- 7.2 Of the eight churches which were not provided with grant aided new facilities, five reported an increase in community use. Three reported no significant change, and none a decrease.
- 7.3 Community use has grown most significantly in those cases (Castleton and, to a lesser extent, Spotland) where the church has become a multi-purpose community facility. However there are cases (e.g. Martham, Flempton) where new facilities appear to have been of primary benefit to the congregation, with little take up from the wider community. Equally, one can point to examples of increases in community use in spite of the relative absence of facilities (Blackley).
- 7.4 The evidence of this evaluation is that grant aiding new facilities is likely to lead to an increased use of the building by the wider community. However, this needs to be carefully targeted and tailored to local needs and circumstances. It has been most effective when allied with a demonstrable local need (if there is a better equipped village hall next door, the church will probably never compete) and an available pool of enthusiastic people able to devote their energies to the task. Managing and promoting such facilities need not be the responsibility of the incumbent or even the PCC; in one case this work has been successfully undertaken by a Friends organisation. Without these conditions, the facilities are likely to be of primary benefit to the congregation and the benefits to the wider community not fully realised.

8.0 Maintenance

- 8.1 Of the eleven churches provided with new facilities, five underwent grant aided repair at the same time. The condition of two of these (Castleton and Bardsley) had been such that closure and demolition had would almost certainly have taken place but for the grant. All eleven, and the eight which did not receive grant aided new facilities, are now in fair, good or very good condition.
- 8.2 Whether they remain in good condition depends in part on future levels of maintenance. At seven of the eleven churches with new facilities, appropriate maintenance regimes, using voluntary labour or contractors, are now in place. However, in four cases maintenance is not being attended to sufficiently, despite the fact that in some cases the return of an annual maintenance checklist to EH was a condition of the grant.
- 8.3 Where repairs alone have been grant aided, maintenance is more likely to be satisfactory. Six churches have satisfactory regimes, while two are falling short. It is worrying that six churches out of nineteen (nearly a third of them) do not

have satisfactory maintenance regimes in place. This cannot be in the interest of the buildings, the congregations or EH/HLF's investment.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The fortunes of individual parishes are subject to many variables and it would be dangerous to draw too many conclusions from such a small sample as this. However, some patterns have emerged, which might be followed up by further studies or comparisons with other studies.
- 9.2 On the question of accessibility, perceptions of the risk of vandalism and theft have been seen to be far more significant factors than the existence or otherwise of facilities. As a general rule a country church is more likely to be left unlocked than an urban one. Inner-city churches will tend to remain locked when not in use for worship, although major schemes of extended use and partial conversion have had the effect of increasing accessibility.
- 9.3 While grant aid in general appears to have had a beneficial effect on the numbers attending church for worship, the existence of new facilities has not in itself greatly added to this effect. The possible exception to this might be new heating systems.
- 9.4 New facilities have however been seen significantly to improve the likelihood of the building being put to wider community use, where there has been a demonstrable need for these and where there have been people available with the time and expertise to manage and promote them.
- 9.5 Increased use and increased sense of ownership can only encourage the long-term sustainability of these buildings. It discourages casual vandalism and theft, has income generation possibilities, and increases the pool of those who have a stake in the continued repair and availability of the building.
- 9.6 In most rural churches, the facilities need only be fairly modest in nature. A decent heating system, an accessible WC and a basic kitchen can turn many a parish church from a liability used for one hour a week to a building widely and frequently used.
- 9.7 The same might be true for many an urban church, although the location, character and size of many of these is such that a more dramatic intervention in terms of extended use, and much greater subsidies (from local and central government bodies and charities as well as EH/HLF) may be justified.
- 9.8 Identifying the appropriate solution in any given case requires a strategic approach from grant giving and ecclesiastical bodies, and an understanding of the significance and potential of each historic place of worship.
- 9.9 Finally, English Heritage and HLF would be well advised to redouble their efforts to promote good maintenance, both through capacity building and other grants, and through pursuing the return of maintenance checklists. Failure to return these should be taken into account when future grant applications are considered.

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Holy Trinity Bardsley Oldham Lancashire



1844 church in an idiosyncratic neo-Romanesque style by Starkey and Cuffley, a local practice. Listed grade II.

Visited 7 April, external and internal inspection (accompanied by Revd Geoff Garrett, incumbent and Barbara, a churchwarden).

What was the work undertaken?

High level repairs – reslating of aisle roofs and improvements to rainwater disposal, timber repairs and dry rot treatment.

New facilities – creation of WC/kitchen and meeting room, rewiring and new heating system.

Grant £336,000 (75%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Extensive rainwater penetration and dry rot caused by long neglect. Original balcony at west end had been recently removed on account of dry rot. Severe structural problems with vestry. QIR of 1995 gave church a lifespan of 18 months, and grant application said 'it is doubtful if it could survive another winter'.

Condition of fabric today

Generally good. The vestry has been recently demolished leaving exposed brick wall; this area needs to be made good.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

None.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

The pews were removed and replaced with individual timber chairs. Kitchen/WC and meeting room spaces have been created in two 'pods' at the west end of the nave. The only entrance to the church is at the west end, up a flight of steps; there are proposals to create a level access in the area of the former vestry (part of the original application but abandoned after costs rose).



How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Locked, but key available from the vicarage.

After the project?

Unchanged. Furthermore, the churchyard gate is now locked too, following a spate of vandalism.

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

One service every Sunday, attended by 65 adults and 30 children (according to the grant application) or 35-40 (according to the churchwarden).

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. About 60 adults attend regularly – up from 35-40 according to the churchwarden.

Extent of Community Use before funding

None. The (then) incumbent wrote in the application: 'No-one in their right mind would use it at present. It is such an unpleasant, impractical place to be'.

Extent of same today?

A Congolese Christian group uses the church on Sundays and Wednesdays. A local walking group uses it as a refreshment stop. There have been successful James Bond and 1960s and 70s evenings in the church.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

The church is very conscious that the earlier fabric problems were due above all to poor maintenance. They have entered into a contract with a local firm of builders who clean the gutters and refix any loose slates once a year.

Conclusion

The parlous state of this building and its disadvantaged location were such that without the grant it would almost certainly have been closed and demolished. The grant has not only secured the preservation of a listed local landmark, but has allowed the church to expand its outreach to the local community. While vandalism remains a problem, and the church cannot be left unattended, the level of community interest and involvement has grown significantly.

Church Of St Nicholas, Blakeney, Norfolk



Large medieval church, notable for vaulted C13 chancel and unusual 'beacon' Jenkins' *England's Thousand Best Churches*.

Visited 15 March, accompanied by Canon Norwood, incumbent.

What was the work undertaken?

New facilities. Provision of new heating system, including a free-standing boiler house on edge of churchyard. Grant £55,000 (45%)



Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Good

Condition of fabric today

Good.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

No proper kitchen, only basic tea and coffee making facilities, and no WC. Inadequate and inappropriate heating system (unauthorised calor gas heaters).

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

New heating system.

More recently, a kitchen and WC and meeting room have been created in the tower area, and a vestry in the south aisle (from the parish's own funds – there was a legacy).

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Church unlocked during daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

One or two Sunday services, one weekday. Average attendance 37 (boosted in the summer by weekenders/holiday makers)

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. Small increase in regular congregation (av. 40).

Extent of Community Use before funding

- Concert venue
- School services
- British Legion and area religious festivals
- Scouts and guides

Extent of same today?

- As above
- More hospitality – Deanery Festival

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

There is a fabric officer, and a maintenance contract with Grimes, local builders. The recommendations of the QIR are followed.

Conclusion

It is clear immediately upon entering that St Nicholas Blakeney is an active and well-loved church. There is a large book/card stall, and refreshments for visitors (self-service with an honesty box).

Figures are not available for visitor numbers, but the incumbent is liaising with local tourist boards and businesses to ensure that the churches in the benefice are included in promotional campaigns. The church was Tourist Church of the Year in 1994 (i.e. before the new facilities were provided).

The church is included in Simon Jenkins' book, where it is awarded three stars. He writes: 'Blakeney today conveys a sense of vigorous activity...Each bay of the aisles was devoted to a local institution: the lifeboat station, the sailing club, the primary school, the bookshop, war veterans and church history. There was also an exhibition of the church's restoration over the years. In other words, Blakeney offered a rare example of what every large historic parish church should aspire to being, also a community centre, market place and museum. Visitors could make themselves cups of coffee and take windfall apples from a basket. They were made to feel welcome, for whatever reason they had come'.

The grant-aided heating system, and the more recent provision of WC and kitchen facilities, has undoubtedly contributed significantly to the expansion of this ministry.

Church Of St Martin Castleton Moor Rochdale Lancashire



19th century Gothic revival church (architect Ernest Bates, 1860), a major landmark in a former coal mining and textile village. Listed grade II.

Visited 7 April – external and internal inspection (with Mike Taylor, former churchwarden)

What was the work undertaken?

A major scheme of full repair, including entire reroofing, and conversion to house worship and community facilities. Grant £671,500 (75%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Very poor. The church had been closed and fenced off since 1992, having been declared unsafe. No maintenance and repair had been carried out for a long time, and the congregation worshipped in the nearby parish hall.

Condition of fabric today

Very good. There has been a comprehensive programme of repair from top to bottom. While EH had reluctantly accepted the demolition of the chancel, in the event the whole of the building envelope has been retained, apart from one or two later and less significant accretions at the east end.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

None.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?



The church has been reorientated so that the worship space is at the west end of the nave, facing west. A new mezzanine floor has been inserted in the area of the former chancel and transepts, allowing for the creation of WCs, kitchens and meeting rooms for local community use. Vehicular and wheelchair access also provided.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

The church was locked and abandoned.

After the project?

The community spaces are in daily use.



How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Services held in church hall. 3-4 weekly services, with about 80 adults in Sunday attendance. 153 on electoral roll.

Regularity and attendance today?

Two Sunday services and one midweek service. Sunday attendance 70-80/ 160 on electoral roll.

Extent of Community Use before funding

The church hall was extensively used – mums and toddlers, Boys and Girls Brigades, youth group, amateur dramatics, residents groups etc.



Extent of Same Today?

These uses have all continued in the newly converted church, along with other new users – such as the local authority (surgeries for people with learning difficulties). The church is in use every day, morning and evening.



Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

A contract has been entered into with a local building firm, who will carry out maintenance (clearing blocked gutters, pushing back loose slates, reporting on any problems) once every two years.

Conclusion

The fortunes of this church, a major local landmark and one of only two listed buildings in the village, have been turned around. From being perceived as a cold and draughty liability, almost certainly destined for closure and demolition, it has been fully repaired to become a vibrant and much needed community facility. The standard of the conversion works are very high, and received an award from the local civic society. While the repair and bringing back into full use of this church was a long and sometimes fraught process, the result is without doubt an inspiring example of what can be achieved when church and heritage bodies work together to secure their complementary objectives.

Church Of St Michael And All Angels, Copford, Essex



Listed Grade I and famous for its Romanesque wall paintings. Popular tourist destination, featured in Simon Jenkins' *England's Thousand Best Churches*.

Visited 14 March, accompanied by Mr Warburton, parish treasurer.

What was the work undertaken?

New Facilities: Provision of free-standing building in churchyard housing accessible WC and store. Grant £17,000 (42%)



Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Good

Condition of fabric today

Good. Recent work undertaken includes reshingling of spire following woodpecker attack. Completed without grant aid (EH rejected on financial grounds).

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

Only basic tea and coffee making facilities

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

Provision of free-standing building in churchyard housing accessible WC and store.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

The church is unlocked during daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Two Sunday services, regular congregation 30-35

Regularity and attendance today?

Unchanged. Small increase in regular congregation (37-38).

Extent of Community Use before funding

- Edward Bear club for mums and toddlers
- Concerts by choir and local musical groups
- Flower Festival
- About 900 recorded visitors in 1995, including 4 coach parties
- Weddings (3-4 a year)

Extent of same today?

- As above
- New development - Children's Activity Day (three times a year, open to all - advertised locally)
- Weddings now about 10 a year
- Recorded visitor numbers have steadily increased – 1100 in 1996, 1300 in 1997, 1300 in 1998, 1400 in 1999, 2100 in 2000, 2400 in 2001, 2500 in 2002, 2300 in 2003 and 3000 in 2004.
- Larger, mainly coach parties have also increased from 4 in 1995 to 5 each in 1996 and 1997, 7 each in 1998 and 1999, 10 each in 2000 and 2001, 14 in 2002, 9 in 2003 and 14 in 2004.
- Total income from visitors has grown steadily from £750 in 1995 to £2400 in 2004.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

The wall paintings are inspected by a wall paintings specialist at the time of the QIR (at the parish's expense). There is an annual maintenance contract with a local builder, who clears gutters, gullies etc, pushes back loose tiles and reports on any more significant problems. This takes place in December. Have had problems about H&S regulations and questions of liability of churchwardens, but these appear to have been resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Conclusion

Recent years have seen a significant increase in the number of visitors to the church. There has also been an increase in the number of weddings and a smaller increase in the use of the building by the congregation (and in the numbers attending services). There has not been a significant increase in use by the local community.

How much of the increase can be attributed to the existence of the new facilities is difficult, but it is likely that for visitors, and particularly large parties, the availability of the WC is a significant factor. At the time of the original application in 1995, the parish stated that 'we lost several organised visits due to the fact we have no facilities and our church was excluded from some tours'. The churchwarden reports that the facility is well used by visitors, and much appreciated.

Another factor in the expansion of visitor numbers might be the inclusion of the church in Simon Jenkins' book (first published 1999), where it is awarded four stars.

Church Of St Andrew East Hagbourne Oxfordshire



Medieval church in prosperous commuter village near Didcot, interesting for the sum of its parts. Included in *Jenkins* (one star).

Visited 21 March – external and internal inspection (unaccompanied). Later discussed with Fr Clements, incumbent.

What was the work undertaken?

New facilities – works to building services, considered dangerous, including new heaters. Grant £33,200 (55%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

A priority works identified in EH report were: some repointing/stonework repair, repairs to leadwork, renewal of rainwater goods, increase ventilation to pew platforms, timber preservation.

Condition of fabric today

Good. Am advised by incumbent that all the above works have been completed.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

There was/is a rather damp meeting room without natural light in the tower space, and a basic WC in the former coal shed which abuts the south porch.

This is not wheelchair accessible on account of the stone threshold in the south door.

Pendant combined heaters/lights, supplemented with spotlights and night storage heaters.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

New heating and lighting – quartz rays and spot lights.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Normally open 10-4. Otherwise details of key holder are on the north door.

After the project?

The church is now locked following an unspecified ‘unpleasant incident’ last year. The keyholder is in the Old Rectory (not present when I called, and there is no sign denoting that the building is the Old Rectory). There is a current application to introduce CCTV into the church, which if approved will allow the church to be left unlocked during the day.

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

2-3 Sunday services, attendance 90. 2 midweek Eucharists, daily said Evensong.

Regularity and attendance today?

As above, with addition of Holy Communion on Friday. Congregation of 80 (up from 60, says Fr Clements, in contrast to the figure given in application)

Extent of Community Use before funding

Termly school services, concerts, tower room used by various groups.

Extent of same today?

About the same. Incumbent not sympathetic to idea of community use – ‘this is a building for worship’.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

Fr Clements says the recommendations of the QIR are followed, using volunteers.

Conclusion

It is difficult to discern any significant impact of the grant aided works, perhaps not surprising given the fact that they simply involved replacing one lot of services with another (albeit better and safer). Congregation figures have held up, and wider community use appears not to be greatly encouraged.

Grant aiding quartz ray heaters seems not to have been regarded as controversial (EH advice was that they were regrettable but reversible).

This is the only church visited which is less accessible than before the grant aided work, although there is a specific reason for this.

Church of St Catherine, Flempton, Suffolk



Modest medieval parish church in rural Suffolk.

Visited 14 March, accompanied by Mrs Lindsay, Churchwarden.

What was the work undertaken?

Repairs and New Work. Structural repairs to tower and conversion of boiler house to kitchen and accessible WC accessible from vestry (to become a community room). Grant of £20,900 (60%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Generally good, apart from derelict boiler house.

Condition of fabric today

Good. But maintenance is not good (see below)

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

Only basic tea and coffee making facilities.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

Kitchen and accessible WC in former boiler house



How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Church unlocked during daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Two Sunday services a month (6 churches in the benefice)

Attendance figures not available.

Regularity and attendance today?

Now 9 churches in benefice, served by one priest and assistant. Now three services a month.

Regular congregation of about 20 (tends to worship in chancel) – advised that the numbers had not greatly changed.

Extent of Community Use before funding

Vestry used for coffee mornings, over 60s club, mothers and toddlers.

Extent of same today?

As above. Also recently a lecture given in church by local historian, followed by mulled wine (not possible before) – done jointly with parish council.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

No – work is carried out ‘as and when’ using volunteers. Evidence that basic maintenance is not being carried out - vegetation in the gutters and blocked gullies at time of visit.

Conclusion

In their original application the parish pointed out that apart from the pub, the church was the only meeting place in the village (pop. 165), and that local groups had to meet in private houses. The provision of new facilities has made such meetings in the church easier, and they are clearly appreciated by the congregation. However, there does not appear to have been a significant increase in use by the local community.

Church Of St James Gorton Manchester



Gothic Revival church of 1871 by G and R Shaw with conspicuous broach spire. Listed Grade II. In an area of high social deprivation.

Visited 7 April – external and internal inspection (with Mr Hedley Richardson, Churchwarden).

NB Information on this case lacking in part due to unavailability of HLF base file.

What was the work undertaken?

High level repairs – Masonry and roof repairs, renewal of rainwater goods, timber treatment. Grant £205,000 (89.5%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Damp, suffering from rainwater penetration and dry rot.

Condition of fabric today

Main body of church in good condition. Urgent repairs to tower and spire (included in original application but deleted after costs rose; to be carried out this year with a further grant)

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

None.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

None.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Locked, but access could be arranged by appointment with the vicar or churchwarden.

After the project?

Unchanged.

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

One service every Sunday, one every Tuesday. Attendance figures not available.

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. Average attendance 55 (an increase, says Mr Richardson).

Extent of Community Use before funding

Rainbows, brownies and guides met weekly in church. A number of groups had expressed an interest in using the church, including the local primary school and art, drama and musical groups, but none of this would be possible until the building had been repaired and new facilities put in.

Extent of same today?

The ongoing repair of the fabric is taking priority, but in the meantime the parish is developing proposals for provision of new facilities at the west end of the church. In the meantime, they have the use of a building next door recently vacated by the Methodist church.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

A local builder, who is also a rock climber, clears the gutters once a year.

Conclusion

The parish is keen to see the building put to wider community use, and has identified a demand for the facilities they propose. However, they have quite properly recognised the need to address the needs of the fabric first. The grant has allowed them to plan ahead with some confidence.

Church Of St Mary, Martham, Norfolk



Substantial medieval church, with major C19 alterations of high quality. In a large village in a deprived part of Norfolk.

Visited 15 March, accompanied by Mrs Bircham, Churchwarden.

What was the work undertaken?

New Facilities – tower conversion, providing kitchen, accessible WC, two meeting rooms, ringing floor . Bells restored for full circle ringing (separate CCC application). Identified by HLF POWAC as an EXEMPLARY scheme, on account of the high architectural standard of the new work.



Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Good

Condition of fabric today

Good – but evidence of damp, due in part to inadequate maintenance – see below.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

Only basic tea and coffee making facilities

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

Kitchen, accessible WC, meeting rooms.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Church unlocked during daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

One main Sunday service, plus Holy Communion on Wednesdays. Attendance at main Sunday service about 40

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. Present congregation about 30 (42 on electoral roll).

There are also confirmation classes in the tower room on Fridays.

Extent of Community Use before funding

Local primary school used for annual services

Extent of same today?

Now used by three local schools for services and concerts

Tower meeting room hired out monthly to the local Boat Dyke Trust.

Bell ringers practice.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

There is no planned maintenance, as is evident from several blocked gutters and gullies.

I was advised that an external and internal 'spring clean' was imminent, and that this would include external maintenance.

Conclusion

Although not far from Great Yarmouth and the Broads, Martham is not a tourist destination, and the church does not benefit from large numbers of visitors. It is in an economically depressed area.

The new facilities are greatly appreciated by the congregation. Although there has been some take up by other community users, this has not been as great as the parish originally hoped/expected. It is a large village, with a number of other meeting spaces and venues.

The new facilities do not appear to have had any impact on church attendance – the numbers given show a small drop, although I was advised verbally that the figure had remained steady.

St Mary The Virgin, Mellis, Eye, Suffolk



Modest medieval village church in mid-Suffolk.

Visited 14 March, accompanied by Mr Hayden, Churchwarden

What was the work undertaken?

Repairs and new facilities: Repairs to fabric funded by EH, repair and rehangng of the bell, new heating system by HLF. Total grant £13,700 (90%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

A priority works identified in QIR included reslating of belfry, overhauling of bell mechanism, replacement of softwood boarding under pews and chancel stalls, releading and refurbishment of ferramenta in some windows, masonry repairs.

Condition of fabric today

Good – these works all completed

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

None. Heating was old tubular pew heaters supplemented by portable calor gas heaters.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

Replacement of the heating system with pew heaters supplemented by two quartz ray heaters on the east face of the chancel arch for the choir (at 90%).

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Church unlocked during daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Figures not available

Regularity and attendance today?

Recent parish reorganisation – increase from 4 churches to 9 in the benefice. There are two morning services on one Sunday each month – fewer than previously.

The churchwarden reports ‘a small increase’ in the numbers attending services.

Extent of Community Use before funding

Local school held an annual service

Extent of same today?

School now holds three services a year

The improved heating has allowed the annual traditional jazz concert (going for eight years) to be moved from Whitsun to Harvest time

Chancel used for parish council meetings during building work on village hall

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

There is a ‘chap in the village’ who shins up a ladder once a year to clear the gutter and push back any loose slates. The new churchwarden is a retired engineer and very health-and-safety conscious – got a quote for doing this from scaffolding (£3500) – they will stick with the chap on a ladder.

Conclusion

There has been a modest increase in community use, especially that of the school. I was told the head teacher is a Baptist and more keen to involve the pupils with the church than his predecessor. The new heating system is undoubtedly a visual improvement on that it replaced, and better in terms of safety and its effect on the building fabric.

The small increase in regular worshippers, in the face of amalgamation of benefices, is also a positive sign.

How much the heating can be credited for the modest revival in the church’s fortunes (as opposed to the general repairs or indeed the reinstatement of the bell) is difficult to assess. All must be relevant factors.

Church Of St Nicholas, Salthouse, Norfolk



Like Blakeney, in the popular tourist destination of North Norfolk coast. Also featured in Simon Jenkins' *England's Thousand Best Churches*.

Visited 15 March, unaccompanied. Subsequently discussed with Dr Sarah Dawson, Churchwarden

What was the work undertaken?

Repairs and new facilities. Provision of accessible WC and kitchenette in medieval north porch (HLF) and stonework, window repairs and rewiring (£28,530 EH).





Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Generally good, in need of masonry and some window repairs.

Condition of fabric today

Good. Much drier inside.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

Only basic tea and coffee making facilities

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

Accessible WC and kitchenette in north porch.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Church unlocked during daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Normally two Sunday services per month, regular congregation about 8 (higher in summer)

Regularity and attendance today?

Weekly service, and now a Christingle service at Christmas. Regular congregation is 7.

Extent of Community Use before funding

- Concerts and exhibitions
- Carol service by local school
- Fund-raising events organised by 'Friends'

Extent of same today?

- As above, but more so
- There is a four week summer art exhibition organised by Eastern Arts, attracting about 2000 visitors

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

There is a young volunteer, local builder is also used. Building is in a good state of maintenance.

Conclusion

An outgoing churchwarden writes in the parish magazine: 'because of concerts and exhibitions, and the inclusion in Simon Jenkins' book, visitors to our church have increased'.

While the provision of the new facilities is greatly appreciated by the congregation, there has been no increase in church attendance. However, the other churchwarden is in no doubt that the new facilities have helped with community uses – indeed, I was told that Eastern Arts would not have staged their summer art exhibition in the church without the facilities, since they are needed by the people who staff the exhibition. There has also been an expansion in the number of other exhibitions and concerts. This is due in no small part to the efforts to the Friends of Salthouse Church; there is clearly a strong local attachment to the building, beyond the worshipping congregation.

Church Of St Clement Spotland Rochdale Lancashire



Gothic Commissioners' Church of 1835, architect Lewis Vulliamy. A preaching box with galleries on three sides. Listed grade II.

Visited 7 April – external and internal inspection (with the incumbent, Revd Lynne Connolly and two churchwardens)

What was the work undertaken?

New facilities – Extension of narthex, installation of new kitchen and WCs, new services, level access. Grant £103,400 (53%).

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Fair/Good – the building has been reroofed in recent years and had various other repairs with grant aid.

Condition of fabric today

Fair – there is a problem with rusting iron cramps blowing off the stonework, most visibly in the internal gallery area.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

Very primitive WC and catering arrangements.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

Extension of narthex i.e. increasing gallery at east end to create flexible space for use by congregation and wider community, including accessible WC and state of the art kitchen.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Locked, but key available from the vicarage.

After the project?

Open daily by virtue of increased level of use.

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Three services per week. Sunday attendance average 60 adults, 13 children (2001). Electoral roll 128.

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. Attendance 60-70 adults, Electoral roll 118.

Extent of Community Use before funding

Monthly lecture club, weekly brownies, school visits in term time, weekly meditation group. These discontinued after the church hall was demolished.

Extent of same today?

All the above can and do now take place in the reordered church. Also daily use (9.30-4.30) by adult special needs group (hired by local authority). The church is now fully accessible and there is a good new church guide.



Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

The churchyard is beautifully maintained, albeit as a garden rather than a churchyard. There are no formal arrangements for building maintenance, although maintenance problems were not noted.

Conclusion

St Clements is in daily use, and now open for visitors by virtue of this. Although there has not been significant growth in the regularity of services or number of worshippers, the new facilities are clearly much in demand both by the congregation and the wider community. They also bring in useful income. The building is fully accessible. All this has been achieved successfully without damage to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

Church Of St Margaret, Tatterford, Norfolk



Small village church 1862 by W Lightly. Listed grade II.

Visited 14 March, accompanied by Mr Davidson-Houston, Churchwarden

What was the work undertaken?

Repair, mainly to chancel and E nave gables. Grant £33,600 (80%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Very poor – severe structural problems with gables.

Condition of fabric today

Generally good, but evidence of delamination of outer skin of flintwork on north wall. Roof slates have been ‘turnerised’ and will need to be replaced in due course.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

There was and is a very modest kitchenette behind a curtain in the nave.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

None.

Recently an unsightly metal wheelchair ramp has been installed at the main entrance.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Church kept locked (keyholder lives opposite)

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

One Sunday service, regular congregation 2-6

Regularity and attendance today?

Two Services held every Sunday and one on Thursday. Congregation now up to 8-12 (pop. of village 50).

Extent of Community Use before funding

Occasional concerts

Extent of same today?

Occasional concerts

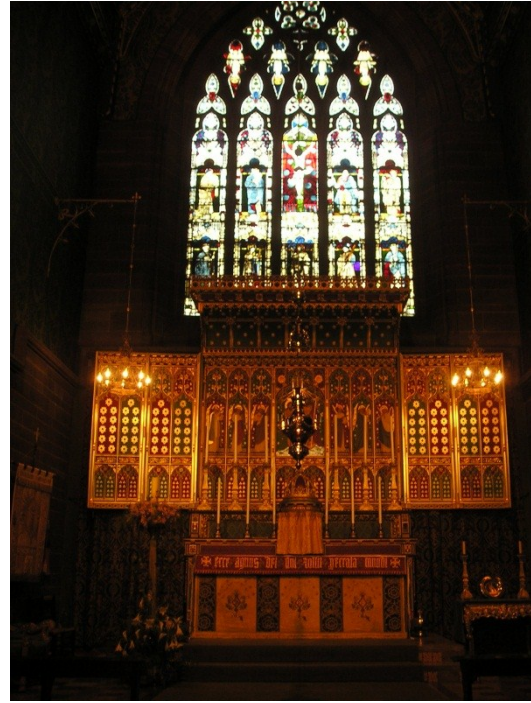
Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

There is a lad in the village who goes up a ladder. Generally maintenance appears to be good, although at the time of my visit a gutter had collapsed on the north side – attributed by the churchwarden to snow.

Conclusion

There has been a revival in the fortunes of this modest church in recent years. The current incumbent is in no doubt that had it not been for the repairs, the church would have closed by now. That the repairs were undertaken, and that this was accompanied by an increase in the congregation, is due in no small measure to the energy and commitment of the incumbent. There has been no discernible increase in community use.

Church Of St John The Baptist Tuebrook Liverpool



Magnificent Bodley church with an Anglo-Catholic tradition in a deprived area of Liverpool. Included in *Jenkins* (3 stars) where it is described as 'a sumptuous affirmation of art in a lost Liverpool suburb'. Listed grade I.

Visited 6 April – external and internal inspection (with the incumbent, Revd Canon Dr Paul Nener)

What was the work undertaken?

High level repairs – Reslating of nave and aisle roofs, renewal of rainwater goods, roof timber treatment and repair, upgrading lightning conductor. Grant £340,000 (75%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Extensive rainwater penetration and dry rot caused by long neglect. Described by Archdeacon in application as 'run down and failing to meet the demands of a significant Urban Priority Area'.

Condition of fabric today

High level works all attended to. 'A' priority repairs to lower level masonry and drainage still outstanding. Stencil decoration in aisles lost in places on account of damage by rainwater penetration and subsequent making good with new plaster.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

There was a church hall close by, with basic facilities.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

None. Application included constructing a new link between church and church hall, including accessible WCs. Ruled out as lower priority. The link has now been constructed using funds from a legacy.



How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Locked, but key available from the vicarage. The church is open daily for morning and afternoon services.

After the project?

Unchanged. A small lobby has been created at the main entrance so the interior can least be seen when the church is not open.

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

One service every Sunday, daily morning and evening prayer. Electoral roll 52.

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. Attendance has gone up – 80 on electoral roll, and Sunday congregation regularly around 100.

Extent of Community Use before funding

The church hall used by at least six groups on a regular basis, and there is a daily surgery too. Church was previously physically detached from and not much used in connection with these activities.

Extent of same today?

With the construction of the (non grant aided) link connecting the church and hall, housing accessible WCs, a wider use of the church and the hall is possible. The Healthy Living centre, a parish run initiative, is finally about to get off the ground. There will be a full-time salaried manager, and the church will be used for concerts, dance, meetings and other (in the incumbent's words) 'non-invasive' uses.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

No. Canon Nener himself gets onto the roof himself when the gutters are blocked.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that St John's is in better shape now than it has been for some time, both in terms of fabric and pastoral activity. Without the significant grant aid for the repairs this would not have been possible. However, the addition of the (non-grant aided) link between the hall and church, however questionable in aesthetic terms, has also helped in this regard. Even more significant is the evident energy and commitment of the present incumbent, who was effective project manager during the grant aided works, carries out such maintenance as there is, and is seeing through the creation of the Healthy Living Centre.

Church Of St Mary Wardleworth Rochdale Lancashire



Fine Comper church of 1911, his only work in the North, replacing (and partially incorporating) an earlier chapel of ease.

Visited 7 April – external and internal inspection (with the incumbent, Canon David Finney)

What was the work undertaken?

Repairs and new facilities: Structural and non-structural repairs, new heating (reviving disused original hot water system) and lighting, provision of accessible WC. Grant £276,000 (90%).

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Fair – there had been a succession of EH grants. Major problem was a lack of a functioning heating system.

Condition of fabric today

High level works all attended to and the building is warm, wind- and weather- tight. The Comper stencil decoration has been lost in places due to damage by historic rainwater penetration.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

None. Lack of heating and poor lighting meant that social events were limited to the summer months.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?



Heating and lighting, accessible WC at west end of nave.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Locked, but key available from the vicarage. The church is open daily for morning and afternoon services.

After the project?

Unchanged, but church in greater use.

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Two services every Sunday, one midweek. Evening prayer held daily. Electoral roll 36, average congregation 15.

Regularity and attendance today?

Service times unchanged. Attendance has gone up to about 40. Credit for this is due to the character and energies of the new incumbent as much as if not more than the new facilities.

Extent of Community Use before funding

Very little – lack of heating and condition did not encourage wider use. The church on a local heritage trail and close to Toad Lane museum, important in history of Co-operative movement.

Extent of same today?

Now available for use all year round. Much musical activity, on account of the splendid acoustics – there is a lunchtime concert every Wednesday, a youth orchestra rehearses here and a concert of Indian classical music is coming up.

There is a new church guide.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

No maintenance regime in place at present.

There is a Friends Committee supported by the former MP Sir Cyril Smith, local businesses and rotary clubs. A covenant scheme has been established.

Conclusion

The church has been cut off from its parish community by an inner ring road, and is having to develop a distinctive town centre ministry. The repairs and in particular the heating system have enabled it to make considerable progress here. Prior to these, there was a serious prospect of closure, something which is now unthinkable.

Church Of St Peter And St Paul Weobley Herefordshire



Sandstone church on the Welsh border, with a commanding spire. On the edge of a pretty black and white timbered village. Listed grade I.

Visited 22 March – external and internal inspection (unaccompanied). Subsequently discussed with Revd Bob King, the incumbent.

What was the work undertaken?

Repair – Tower and spire masonry, roof insulation, boiler house etc. Grant £225,000 (75%)

Condition Prior to HLF/ EH Funding

Extensive stonework erosion, particularly on tower (cordoned off to protect public from falling masonry)

Condition of fabric today

Generally good. There is a problem with the new welsh slates on the nave roof, some of which are splitting. Some rotten pew platforms.

What facilities were available before HLF funded project took place?

Basic tea and coffee making only. No WC.

What new or improved facilities were funded through the project?

None. However a new heating system was installed without grant aid at the same time as the grant aided repairs to the boiler house.

How often and for how long was the church open before the project?

Open every day in daylight hours

After the project?

Unchanged

How often were regular services held before the project and what was their attendance?

Every Sunday (two services on 1st and 3rd Sundays), Holy Communion on Wednesdays. Ave attendance at main Sunday service 38-40.

Regularity and attendance today?

As above. There are also now monthly mother and toddler services. Average Sunday attendance up to 62.

Extent of Community Use before funding

Regular concerts in aid of church funds, flower festivals, exhibitions. The church is well visited by tourist coaches stopping of in this picturesque village.

Extent of same today?

Use has increased. The improved heating has encouraged more regular use, including winter concerts and greater use by the local schools in term time for projects.

Is there a maintenance plan? Is it being followed?

The recommendations of the QIR are followed, and a contract has been entered into with a local building firm to clear the gutters and undertake other routine maintenance every two years.

Conclusion

The congregation size and wider community use of the church have both increased since the grant aided repairs took place. This may be attributable to the new heating system as much as the repairs themselves. The incumbent believes that the lack of decent catering facilities and WCs is holding the church back from achieving greater community use, although they have made great strides in this regard. There are current proposals to install WCs and a kitchen.



Assessment of the impact of
HLF / English Heritage places-of-worship funding

Project Brief

I Overview of the research

- 1.1 HLF wishes to commission research which investigates the conservation impact of projects delivered through the Heritage Lottery Fund / English Heritage Joint Places of Worship Programme (JPOW). JPOW was funded jointly by HLF and EH between 1996 and 2002. In all cases funding was used to undertake essential repairs to churches and other places of worship, in England. In some cases funding was also used to provide or renovate facilities such as meeting rooms, kitchens and toilets. The questions we would like answered through the research are: -
- Has the funding of new facilities made a significant difference to how frequently and to what extent churches are used by local communities?
 - Is there evidence to show that funding of new facilities, by encouraging greater community use, is having a consequent, positive impact on the condition of churches and their long-term sustainability?
- 1.2 The projects to be included in the research will be selected from the set of JPOW projects funded between 1996 and 2002. All will have been completed. To date, 280 projects have been completed out of a total of just over 500. Of these we would expect around 20 projects to be selected as case studies for in-depth research: ten involving funding for new facilities and ten without.
- 1.3 The results of the research will primarily be useful to HLF in feeding key lessons into the decision making process for our third Strategic Plan. We would also expect the results to be of use in demonstrating the achievement of the Fund's aims and objectives, as detailed in the Strategic Plan, and in reporting back to government and other stakeholders the extent to which HLF is assisting in the delivery of society's objectives.

2 Aims and objectives of the research

2.1 The overall aim of the research is to assess whether the funding of new facilities has had a significant impact on the use and physical condition of churches.

2.2 For each case study the evaluation should assemble data on: -

- a) the condition of the fabric of the church prior to HLF/EH funding;
- b) the physical work undertaken with HLF/EH funding.
- c) the condition of the fabric of the church today;
- d) the facilities available at each church before the HLF funded project took place;
- e) new or improved facilities funded through the project
- f) how often and for how long the church was open before the project,
- g) how often and for how long it is open today;
- h) how often regular services were held were held before the project, and what was their attendance;
- i) the regularity and attendance of services today;
- j) the extent of community use of the church, before funding;
- k) the extent of community use of the church today.
- l) Whether a maintenance plan is in place and being followed

2.3 The evaluation should then use this data to discuss the following theory of change :

Funding for new facilities → increased community use of the church (including regular use for worship) → improved physical condition of the church

2.4 The result of the evaluation should be a clear set of conclusions and recommendations for practice.

3 Methodology

3.1 We anticipate that the evaluation will be based on: -

- a) a desk analysis of internal HLF/EH documents;

- b) research into available primary documents on-site such as meeting logs and room booking records, plus interviews with project managers and others involved in the management of each of the churches;
 - c) observation of the physical condition of each church.
 - d) analysis of any other available reports on the condition of the church fabric such as updated QQRs
- 3.2 A further option to be considered is to seek the views of relevant individuals within the church hierarchy e.g. the archdeacon or bishop in each of the project areas.
- 3.3 It's expected the consultant will have some involvement in the selection of the sample for the evaluation. The main criteria here will be to obtain two sub-samples – 'facilities-funded' and 'no facilities funded' – which in all other aspects (local area; age and type of building; condition of facilities before HLF funding) resemble each other as closely as possible. In this way the 'no facilities funded' sub-sample will operate as a control sample to test our hypothesis that the funding of facilities has made a significant difference to the use of the churches and to their upkeep.
- 3.3 It is expected that it may well be necessary to undertake research during the evening and at week-ends as well as during week-days.
- 3.4 Day to day management of the research within HLF will be with Gareth Maer.

4 End Results and timescale

- 4.1 The following outputs will be required:
- A draft final report
 - A final written report to include a complete analysis of findings, recommendations and case studies, with appendices as agreed between HLF and the contractor.

All reports to be produced in Microsoft office format and supplied in both hard copy and electronic format

- 4.2 We expect the research to begin in February 2005 and be completed by 1 May 2005.