

Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd

Job Description

Job Title:	Church Building Support Officer
Salary:	£31,064 per annum
Hours:	Full Time (35 per week)
Location:	Diocesan Offices, Walker Park, Blackburn, BB1 2QE
Responsible to:	Senior Church Buildings Officer

The Diocese of Blackburn

Blackburn diocese is approaching its 100th anniversary having been founded on the 12 December 1926 and serves almost the whole of the county of Lancashire with a population of 1.3 million. It is divided into 14 Deaneries and two Archdeaconries (Blackburn and Lancaster). The Diocese covers an area of extraordinary variety, from the stunning countryside of the Trough of Bowland to the former mill towns of East Lancashire, from the University cities of Preston and Lancaster to the seaside towns of Blackpool and Morecambe. We have Parishes of all traditions and are strongly committed to the principle of mutual flourishing.

Vision 2026:

Vision 2026 is an agenda for growth and change agreed by the Blackburn Diocesan Synod in 2015. It challenges our parishes to be healthy churches which can transform the communities in which they are set. It also lays out four ways in which this over-arching goal can be achieved: Making Disciples, Being Witnesses, Growing Leaders and Inspiring Children and Young People for Jesus Christ.

Over the course of 2020 the Diocese engaged in a 'Vision Update' through which we have sought to identify what is going well and where the challenges are as we seek to realise our Vision of seeing Healthy Churches Transforming Communities in 2026. This Update began with a 'Parish Vision Survey' and has encompassed extensive feedback from parishes and representative groups including Deanery Synods, Areas Deans and Bishop's Council in order that plans focus on what will really make a difference to realising our Vision. The Update has resulted in the Vision 2026 Implementation Plan (2021 – 2024) which can be found on the diocese website [here](#).

The Diocese of Blackburn is in the process of applying for national Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment to help to catalyse the growth of healthy churches across Lancashire.

Background

The Diocese of Blackburn comprises 238 parishes which collectively have 271 churches with many also having church halls. For many parishes, care of buildings can be a challenge, with much time and energy spent on their care. As our church buildings are a vital element of being or becoming a healthy church that transforms its community, additional help and advice for those volunteers who care for their buildings is needed.

Buildings play a strategic role in the future flourishing of our Diocese. We are conscious that as the Church of England we have a cornucopia of buildings – some more or less suitable for mission, often with significant landmark status across our villages, towns, countryside and cities. Enabling church buildings to be maintained and developed to enable the worship of God and mission to their communities is therefore significant in enabling the delivery of our diocesan vision.

Each church in the diocese must be inspected by an architect or building surveyor every five years and a report produced which highlights key repairs needed over the next five years. This is known as the Quinquennial Inspection (QI) report. A copy of the report is sent to the Parochial Church Council (PCC), the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC). More information on QI reports can be found [here](#).

The DAC is an advisory body who offers advice and guidance to parishes on works to churches and also advises the Chancellor of the Diocese on permissions to make changes to church buildings. All works to churches require some form of permission either from the Archdeacon or through a judicial process known as a Faculty. More information about permissions for works to churches can be found [here](#).

The General Synod for the Church of England has made a commitment to reach Carbon Net Zero by 2030. Blackburn Diocese is committed to helping all our parishes reach that target. It recently appointed a Carbon Net Zero Project Manager who established a Carbon Net Zero Steering Group. This group meets monthly to forward the Net Zero agenda and has recently produced a Carbon Net Zero Action Plan, agreed by Diocesan Synod in October.

The 'Missional and Financial Flourishing' (MFF) team is led by the Director of Vision Delivery and comprises the Parish Renewal Lead, Senior Church Buildings Officer, Project Manager, Mission and Pastoral Officer and the MFF Project Support Officer. The team is focused on enabling Healthy Churches that Transform their Communities across Lancashire.

This new role will be a point of contact and expertise for all parishes in the diocese in relation to the upkeep, care and sustainable management of their buildings. It is a full-time role (35 hours per week) for a fixed term of two years. It will sit within the MFF Team and report to Jen Read, the Senior Church Buildings Officer, on a day-to-day basis.

Note, although this is a fixed term post for two years, this could be extended if further funding becomes available through the Church Commissioners Buildings for Mission funding stream. This, however, cannot be guaranteed.

Key responsibilities

- Maintain an overview of the condition of churches in the diocese, reviewing QI reports, liaising with inspecting architects/surveyors and making site visits and assessments as appropriate to prioritise cases for particular support and intervention, in particular those 'stitch in time' projects which can save money in the long term.

- Provide guidance to incumbents, churchwardens and PCCs on making regular inspections, planning for maintenance and implementing maintenance tasks, whether by volunteer action or by commissioned work as appropriate to the nature of the task.
- Administer a grants fund for minor repairs and improvements aimed at long term sustainable use of church buildings. In particular: identify suitable projects, work with PCCs to obtain specifications and help carry out procurement as necessary.
- Working with the Senior Church Buildings Officer, provide training and guidance for incumbents, churchwardens, PCCs and volunteers on fabric matters.
- Provide guidance to churches on fundraising, in particular to identify potential funding sources for repair projects, help prepare applications and carry out project development.
- Work with individual churches and inspecting architects/surveyors to prioritise repair projects and help plan, procure and implement them. Advise on project management, procurement and client support as necessary.
- Encourage long term financial planning for maintenance and repair and build an awareness of local building and maintenance contractors with skills and experience of working on church buildings.
- Represent church buildings on the Carbon Net Zero Steering Group. Work with the Carbon Net Zero Project Manager to oversee and assist those churches selected for the Carbon Net Zero Demonstrator Project, ensuring effective coordination with the Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants Fund as necessary.
- Liaise with Historic England to identify cases for inclusion on the Heritage at Risk Register as appropriate.

Key relationships

Parishes

- 1) Churchwardens and/or fabric managers
- 2) Clergy
- 3) Inspecting Architects and Surveyors
- 4) Church Building Maintenance Contractors

Diocese

- 1) Senior Church Buildings Officer
- 2) The Diocesan Advisory Committee
- 3) Carbon Net Zero Project Manager
- 4) Diocesan Stewardship Advisers

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated to degree level or a relevant academic qualification with appropriate experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A professional buildings qualification e.g., in architecture, buildings surveyor, building conservation etc
Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrable experience of either working with or advising on repairs to historic and listed buildings. Experience of reading building reports and/or surveys to extract and summarise relevant information. Strong organisational and planning skills to anticipate and plan for work in advance. Excellent communication skills capable of establishing credibility, respect and building strong working relationships with a wide range of colleagues – clergy, parish representatives, architects etc. Strong analytical skills with the ability to document and present facts and figures in a clear and concise way. Competent using MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Demonstrable experience of delivering engaging presentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of project managing a historic building maintenance project including completing funding applications. Knowledge of buildings legislation and its application in a Church of England context and/or the Church Faculty regulations and mechanisms of the DAC. Knowledge and interest in the environmental sustainability of church buildings and climate change issues.
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interest in heritage buildings, their use and care Able to remain calm under pressure and effectively prioritise. Proactive self-starter with initiative and the capacity to work with minimal supervision. An approachable manner, comfortable to work across theological contexts and a desire to serve the county wide diocesan community. Have a full UK driving licence and access to a car. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A committed and communicant member of a Christian church recognised by Churches Together in England.

Outline of Terms and Conditions

Employer: Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance

Contract type: Fixed-term, two years

Salary: £31,064 per annum

Hours: This is a full-time role based on a 35-hour working week, but the post holder may be required to work additional hours as to meet the reasonable requirements of the role. The post holder will be entitled to time off in lieu for attending meetings outside normal office hours which may include evenings and weekends.

Location: The post holder will be based at the Blackburn Diocese Board of Finance, Clayton House, Walker Office Park, Blackburn, BB1 2QE. The nature of the role requires regular travel around the diocese. A smartphone and laptop can be provided to assist remote working.

Pension: The default for staff is a Royal London Pension Scheme, 10% Employer contribution 2% minimum employee contribution. Clergy can opt into the Church of England Clergy Pension Scheme via a salary sacrifice. Details of this are available on request.

Annual leave: The full-time entitlement is 25 days (not including statutory bank holidays) in the first year of employment rising by 1 day per completed calendar year up to a maximum of 30 days per year. This is pro rata for part time employees. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

Probationary period: The appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probationary period.

Notice Period: During the six-month probationary period two weeks' notice is required on either party. Thereafter you will be required to give six months' notice should you wish to resign.

Expenses: Working expenses are paid at the diocesan rates.

Employee Assistance Programme: is available.

Right to work: The post-holder must have the right to reside and work in the UK.

Diversity - The Diocese of Blackburn believes that diversity enables us to thrive and develop and is committed to race equality, welcoming applications from UK Minority Ethnic/ Global Majority Heritage backgrounds.

The Diocese of Blackburn is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

How to Apply

Please apply via the Church of England's *Pathways* website at [Church Building Support Officer - Pathways | Pathways \(churchofengland.org\)](https://churchbuilding.support/churchofengland.org)

For an informal conversation regarding this post please contact: Jen Read, Senior Church Buildings Officer at jen.read@blackburn.anglican.org or 07899 348952.

Closing date: 14th January 2024
Interview date: 25th January 2024

Job Description Agreement

Recruitment Manager's signature	Jen Read	Date	14/12/2023
HR Manager's signature	Andy Cooke	Date	14/12/2023

Preparation of Job Description

Author of Job Description	Jen Read		
Date signed off	14/12/2023	Version	