

**Application for Financial Assistance (Historic Buildings Grants) from the Conservation and Heritage Fund – St Peters Churchyard retaining wall, Maer (Ref: 21/22001/HBG)**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Working Party indicate its views on proposals going to the Planning Committee that:-**

- 1. £ 3,966 Historic Building Grant be given towards repairs and reinstatement of the historic churchyard wall.**

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Working Party of applications for financial assistance towards the cost of repairs to the wall at the above property and give the Working Party an opportunity to express its views on the application.

The application is for assistance to help pay for rebuilding and repairs to the graveyard retaining wall at St Peters Church, Maer. The church is located high above the narrow road with the high stone boundary wall holding back the embankment. This section was probably built when the road was created through the village and separated from the hall and the bridge and revetment walls built either side of the church in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In February 2020 during storm Dennis, a 6 metre section of the high retaining wall collapsed into the road. The parochial church council (PCC) obtained 3 quotations from local contractors and contacted their insurers. The insurers instructed structural engineers to design an appropriate scheme of repair and reinstatement including a schedule of works and obtain competitive tenders. This information has been included as part of this application.



This structural engineers recommended reconstruction of 21 metres of wall. This included an additional section of wall than the section which had collapsed, which was also deemed in poor condition and unsafe and required rebuilding. The insurers said that this was the responsibility of the church and would not be covered by the claim.

Three competitive quotations have been received and considered by the engineers. The total cost of this section for the PCC to cover is £19,831 including VAT. The total cost of the whole wall repair is £143,883.



The church contacted the council in 2020 to ask for financial assistance but at this point in time, due to covid-19, all money had been withdrawn from the fund. The fund was reinstated recently and whilst

some of the works have begun on site and the scheme is not completely retrospective, it seems applicable that the Fund assists the church in the costs of the repair of the wall, now the Fund has been reinstated and given it requested help in 2020 after the collapse. It has taken until now to deal with the insurance.

The church is a Grade II\* Listed Building and is within Maer Conservation Area, and the work is eligible for 20% grant towards the cost of the works.

The church received a small grant of £992 in 2018 from the Historic Building Grant Fund, towards the cost of repairs to the church tower and stonework.

#### Financial Implications

Historic buildings and structures are entitled to apply for up to a maximum of £5,000 from the Conservation and Heritage Grant Fund. The intervention rate is 20% of the cost of the work for Listed Buildings. In this case 20% of the cost of the repair work to the wall to be covered by the PCC is £3,966 which brings to total amount of grant that the church will have received to £4,958 since 2018.

There is sufficient funding to meet this grant application with a little over £18,657 in the Fund; allowing for commitments. This will leave £14,691 available to offer subsequent heritage assets within the Borough.