

Consultation on the future of the National Lottery

This is important

The Government is inviting views on how lottery money should be distributed from 2009. You have until the **end of February** to respond.

Half the money will go to the Big Lottery Fund. The other half will be divided between art and film, sport and heritage.

Currently these three areas get equal shares. One of the most important questions in the consultation asks if that should continue.

Why this matters for church buildings

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is currently contributing about £20m per year to the repair of listed places of worship. To put this in context, the total repair spend of the Church of England on all its church buildings (listed and unlisted) was about £100m in 2003.

In addition, the HLF has committed massive multi-million pound development grants to iconic church buildings, such as St Martin-in-the-Fields, St George's, Bloomsbury, and St Paul's, Bristol.

Finally, the HLF gives many smaller grants, some of which are received by church organisations for a range of purposes.

Overall, in one way or another, the HLF reckons it has awarded nearly £300m to churches, chapels and cathedrals since 1994.

We know that the Olympics will use lottery money. There are other pressures, too, which there is not space to discuss here. It is crucial that at the very least, the HLF retains its share of lottery funding (one third of the half not give to the Big Lottery Fund – that is, 16.7% of the overall pot).

How you can make your views known

Make your views known by filling in the consultation document. You can just tick the boxes (very quick) or write short comments as well (probably 30 minutes in total, including ten minutes reading the online consultation document).

The single most important questions are number 6 (should the lottery funds continue to receive equal funding) and number 3a (the transforming impact of lottery support on heritage).

To fill in the questionnaire online: www.lottery2009.culture.gov.uk

To phone up and ask for a hardcopy questionnaire: 020 7211 6372

To find some links to other useful websites: www.ecclsoc.org

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