

Chancel repairs liability

This paid search guide will help you to decide whether to use The National Archives' paid search service.

What information can you find out?

We will always carry out a search of our records to a high standard based on our expertise and professionalism. With any search, there is never a guarantee that you will find the information you are looking for. There are often a number of possible reasons for an unsuccessful search, including the possibility that records were destroyed or lost, or that there are multiple records for individuals with identical names and we have insufficient information to distinguish between them.

The National Archives cannot interpret the results of a search, give advice on questions of liability in individual cases or advise on chancel repair policy. You may wish to seek legal advice on these matters.

Even if the records of ascertainment do not show liability for chancel repairs, or no records of ascertainment exists, it does not necessarily mean that the land or property is not subject to chancel repair liability. See our [research guide](#) for more advice.

The National Archives does not have records for all land and property subject to chancel repair liability and only holds information on liability identified under the Tithe Act, 1936.

Search 1: general liability in a specific parish

This is a search in record series IR 104, to find out whether a parish has a record of ascertainment and therefore establish whether chancel repair liability may fall on certain owners of land and property in that parish. If we find a record, our search results will include the following as appropriate:

- index reference
- record of ascertainment showing the proportionate liability of corporate bodies (such as the Church Commissioners or a university or college) and individual plot numbers that correspond with apportionment numbers on tithe maps
- advice on how to obtain details of where liable plots are located

Plot numbers are not given for corporate liability and if land has subsequently been sold, a proportion of the liability may fall on new owners. If you think that this may affect you, you will need to seek advice from the former landowners.

Search 2: individual plot liability

This is a search in record series IR 104 and IR 29, IR 30, IR 90 or IR 94, as appropriate, covering tithe maps, altered apportionment maps, tithe apportionments and district record maps. If we find the respective records, our search results will provide the following:

- index reference
- record of ascertainment showing the proportionate liability of corporate bodies (such as the Church Commissioners or a university or college) and individual plot numbers that correspond with apportionment numbers on tithe maps

- tithe maps showing the location of the tithe plots identified in the records of ascertainment that may bear proportionate liability for chancel repair

If relevant, we can also provide:

- altered apportionment maps indicating plots and properties
- tithe apportionments which may be used to determine plot details where several plots are given in the records of ascertainment as a joint field apportionment

Identifying individual plots can be difficult. The tithe plots were first recorded on manuscript maps following the Tithe Commutation Act, 1836. Where the plot was sub-divided, this was recorded on manuscript altered apportionment maps. In many cases the commissioners copied the new plot numbers onto Ordnance Survey maps.

In cases of uncertainty we may need to send you a research quality map for you to highlight the specific plot you are interested in.

Limitations of a chancel repairs search

There is no single central register which can be used to identify all chancel repairs or other liabilities or restrictions attached to land and property in England and Wales.

Record of ascertainment

The records of ascertainment deal solely with the tithe rent-charge liability, if any. They do not deal with parishes where tithe rent-charge was never created, nor do they necessarily cover the whole liability in a parish. Examples of situations where liability may exist but is not documented in the records of ascertainment are:

- where all the tithes in a parish were converted into corn rents
- where the tithes in part of a parish were converted into corn rents and the rest were commuted into tithe rent-charges
- where, under an Enclosure Act, lands were allotted in lieu of tithes
- where the tithes (and not tithe rent-charges) were merged in land under the Tithe Acts
- where rectorial glebe land has passed into lay hands
- where land previously held by such institutions as universities and the Church Commissioners has been sold to private individuals, liability may also have been transferred

Our searches do not address any specific terms of liability which may exist as covenants within the deeds of a property, but which is not derived from tithe or tithe rent-charge liability.

Individual plot liability

The records do not identify individual plots of land owned by corporate institutions. If any of that land has been sold or passed to individuals since 1936, it is possible that proportionate liability may now be borne by private individuals.

Enquirers are strongly recommended to check the deeds and to contact the Land Registry and current landowners for relevant information. Questions concerning compounding liability need to be addressed to the Parochial Church Council and the diocesan authorities. Contact addresses for diocesan authorities are available on the [Church of England website](#). In the case of a chancel in Wales or Monmouthshire, enquiries should be addressed to the Representative Body of the Church of Wales, 39 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9XF, tel (029) 2034 8200.

What are the charges?

Search 1

Standard charge for a general parish liability search: £112.08

Search 2

Standard charge for a individual property liability search: £252.18

What information do we need for a search?

Please send as much information as you can. The following details are either essential or desirable for a search at our standard charge:

Essential	Desirable
map showing full extent of parish or agreement that the boundary shown on the Church of England website is correct (search 1 only)	name of Church of England or Church of Wales ecclesiastical parish or township
map or plan showing full extent of property (search 2 only)	map showing the location of the land or property in a broader context (search 2 only)
	postcode of property (search 2 only)

If you would like to request any of the paid searches listed in this guide, please contact us either by completing our [online enquiries form](#) or by completing one of our paper response forms.

You may decide, instead, to do the research yourself. For advice on conducting your own research you should consult the relevant research guides, accessible through our online [guidance index](#).

Research guidance

[Chancel repair liabilities in England and Wales](#)

