

Charitable Grants for Churches

- *Grants are subsidies used to fund specific projects or activities following an application process.*
- *They are an important form of funding that help PCCs keep their churches in good repair and open to the wider community.*
- *They are available for projects as wide ranging as restoring furniture, repairing roofs and improving facilities*

Why apply for charitable grant aid?

The main benefit of a grant is that it doesn't have to be repaid. It is a key way for PCCs to generate income they would not be able to raise themselves. Grants also unlock other funding streams, which can help you to build interest and capacity, and develop new church activities.

However, in some instances funders' budgets are being cut and schemes are becoming increasingly competitive and oversubscribed. Your project will also have to conform to the funders' priorities and you will have contractual obligations to fulfil.

What do you need funding for?

You will need to have a specific project in mind before you approach funders as they all have different priorities and eligibility criteria.

Do you need repair works to be carried out? Does a flag need to be conserved? Is a community project being considered?

It is important to bear in mind that the aims of grant-givers are currently changing and more emphasis is being placed on the impact of the project on a wider audience. It is no longer enough to want to make your church watertight. Your project will often have to demonstrate a commitment to community engagement.

Useful Information When Applying For Grants

Charity Status

Parish churches are excepted charities.

- An **excepted charity** is one that does not have to register with the Charity Commission, but in most other respects, is fully within their jurisdiction.
- Under section 3(5) of the Charities Act 2011, any church whose annual income from all sources **does not amount to more than £100,000** does not need to be registered as a charity.
- Churches which are currently excepted and whose annual income is below £100,000, will remain 'excepted' and will not have to consider registration until the situation is reviewed on **1st October 2012**.

Expenditure and Income

When talking about your finances, try not to use phrases that could confuse or appear evasive i.e. not everyone will know what 'open plate giving' means.

The following headings may be useful:

Expenditure

1. Routine Running Costs [bills, day to day expenses]
2. The Needs of the Building [repairs, maintenance]
3. Outward Giving [giving to others]
4. Deanery Share

Income

5. Existing Regular Giving [standing orders, regular donations]
6. Fees [weddings, funerals etc.]
7. Parish events and Activities [fund raising, concerts etc.]
8. Other Giving [collections etc.]

Match Funding

Often, but not always, funding organisations will require you to provide 'match funding'. This basically means that if the funding organisation is putting some money into the pot, they want to see that someone else is too. In some instances your church will be able to invest some of its own money into the project. If your church can't do this you can often use money that you've been awarded by one funder to match- fund another.

Typical procedure

- Make initial telephone contact with funders; this allows you to check eligibility and the likelihood of success.
- Consult with the local community and gather wider support for the project.
- Read the guidelines, check your eligibility and the aims of the funder – are you a priority? Are you able to fulfil any post-grant conditions they may impose?

Filling in the application form

- Answer all the questions fully and make sure you have addressed each of the eligibility criteria.
- Write clearly, concisely and succinctly; do not include irrelevant information.
- Be factual rather than emotive.
- Ask other members of the PCC to check through drafts.

Writing the cover letter

- Consider the funders **priorities** – check their website or the Charitable Grants document in this resources pack.
- Outline your organisation – PCC.
- Give brief history of the church.
- Explain the project – how will the funds be used, what are the start dates?
- Why is your need greater than anyone else's? Why is it urgent?
- Who will benefit and how? How will the community be involved?
- Finances – detail how much you have, how much from fundraising, how much from other grant sources.
- Costs of the project – break it down.
- Give start dates of works if know.
- Sustainability, environmental impact of the project.

Justifying your proposals

- Schemes are competitive so it is vital to be able to demonstrate the need for funding; it is not enough to anticipate this need.
- Use specific examples and try to provide evidence for your claims i.e. it is not sufficient to say 'lots of different people will benefit'; exactly which groups will benefit from your project?
- Sell yourself and play to your strengths, you need to tell funders that;
 - You meet the funders priorities
 - There is a real need
 - Your project meets this need

You are capable of handling the money

- You cannot do the project without financial assistance
- You have identified specific outcomes for your project

Supporting documentation

- Additional information is often necessary and a lack of documentation is the most common reason for an application being rejected.
- You could include accounts, specification of works and estimated costs, photos of specific repairs and general views of the church, evidence of faculty, proof of insurance, letter of support or rejection from English Heritage and your fundraising strategy.
- Have you conducted a wide consultation, the results of which demonstrate community support for your project? Evidence of the numbers of people who will benefit and community involvement is very important.

Deadlines and assessment

- Check the dead-lines as each funder will have a different set of deadlines and dates for committee meetings.
- It is important to keep these in mind for each funder so as not to miss deadlines.