



How to ...

Save your church money

Stewardship

Stewardship is not just about giving. Stewardship is a broad concept that covers our responsibility both as individuals and collectively as parishes, for the resources entrusted to us including time, money and the environment. This brief guide raises some of the practical steps to consider when buying goods and services on behalf of your parish.

Time

How much time do you have? It is important to do the big things right so if you have limited time start with them, and then carry on down the list as time allows.

No two parishes are the same, but this guide aims to be applicable whether you have a regular congregation of 10 or 200.

Where do you start?

Use the PCC's accounts for last year – list out the expenditures by size and just take the top five to start with. Probably, after the Parish Share, your next two biggest regular charges in the year's accounts are for energy and insurance.

Energy

The energy market can be complex for both electricity and gas. Energy Brokers will often try to lock parishes into long term contracts and rarely give you the best value. Doing the work yourself either through comparison sites or by phoning around can get you cheaper rates but it can be very time consuming to work with the customer service with the chosen supplier if something goes wrong

This is where we'd like to introduce the Parish Buying service, which is provided by the church for the church, to serve parishes in the Church of England and the Church in Wales.



The Parish Buying service was set up with the objective of saving parishes money and time, and by providing a centre of expertise so that goods and services are professionally procured on favourable terms for parishes and the wider Church.

Parish Buying has developed a range of energy choices including green energy options that can help you to obtain good prices, with helpful customer service, and buy confident in the knowledge that you will get completely impartial advice to help you be good stewards.

In the short video below, Revd Stephanie Buchanan and Brian Morris (treasurer) share their experience at St John's Wakefield with Parish Buying.

Click on the picture to play the video

Or visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CfHSX5ZqNU



Have you already signed up with Parish Buying (www.parishbuying.org.uk)? If so then you can go straight to the energy page (<https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/categories/energy.html>) which explains Parish Buying's energy basket for electricity and gas, other fixed-price contracts, and the Parish Buying contract for heating oil.

If you haven't signed up – [then why not click here and do it now?](#) (via www.parishbuying.org.uk). It only takes a few minutes and costs you nothing.

Insurance

Parish Buying doesn't sell you insurance, but it does offer you an [insurance buying guide](#) (click the link or visit www.parishbuying.org.uk) which is approved by the Church of England's National Procurement Group. Like any large purchase - and for most parishes insurance is a major item of expenditure – it is always best to get offers from more than one supplier, and these companies feature in the guide. It is a pretty simple process to get two insurance quotes, and is often well worth the effort.

Office and other supplies

Parish Buying provides a contract with Office Depot, with free next-day delivery in England & Wales for any order size, and special pricing on a wide range of core products used by churches from printing paper to paper towels.

Maintenance

Sometimes parishes make the mistake of trying to save money by reducing maintenance, but this often has the opposite effect, where a small saving now causes huge spending later. [Click here](#) for some advice on how to plan your maintenance (www.churchcare.co.uk/churches).

Other purchases

If you are considering a purchase of a printer or photocopier, computer hardware or software, if you want to review your telecoms contract, or buy fire safety supplies, renew your boiler or invest in LED lighting then, for all of these, Parish Buying has negotiated contracts for you. There are also guides about many of these as well as others on stewardship and ethical buying on the Parish Buying website.

Building work

For any significant building work – particularly on your church building - you need to go through a number of steps first. As well as consulting the diocesan website you may find the advice here on the [Church of England's Churchcare website](http://www.churchcare.co.uk) helpful (www.churchcare.co.uk).

The National Stewardship & Resources team offers workshops on funding capital projects and on church building projects planning and management, which your diocese or a neighbouring diocese may be hosting soon. Contact Eleanor.gill@churchofengland.org or nicolas.jenni@churchofengland.org for details.

The stages for purchasing

Procurement is often under-rated, but getting best value means that that the funds, which you have spent so much time and effort to raise, achieve the aims they were raised for.

It is not always about getting the cheapest deal, because a better service may cost more than a bad one – but it is about setting out your aims clearly, defining what you want and then finding the best people to help you do it.

That means looking at different suppliers and going through an appropriate procurement process.

For some large capital projects where you need to raise funds through grants you may need to go through special procurement procedures. If you have any questions about this or need any support, the Parish Buying team can help you.

Local and Ethical

Parish Buying has a useful guide on buying locally – it is available on www.parishbuying.co.uk [here](#), and the National Procurement Group has produced these guidelines on ethical purchasing [here](#).

You need to log in to Parish Buying website to view these but registration and all the resources are free.

