

Connect Session: Questions from participants

Securing grant funding

- ***What are the opportunities for external sources of funding and any conditions attached?***

There are lots of external funders about, and it depends on what you're seeking to fund. A good place to start is looking at the National List of Charitable Funds for Churches: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Charitable-Grants-for-Churches-2017.pdf>

- ***The shortfall in funding for our work is about £600,000. What grant applications should we seek that don't require us to jump through hoops or require the congregation to grow significantly?***

1) If you are asking for £600,000 I recommend that you do jump through hoops - this is a lot of public money you're asking for! Funders (most often) are charitable organisations and therefore bound by their charitable objectives. They must ensure that their charity funds are used to achieve the greatest impact and reach and therefore it is your responsibility to meet their objectives - if you don't meet their objectives you will not receive the funding.

2) If you are asking for £600,000 I recommend that you do grow the church significantly - again this is a lot of public money you're asking for! The Church belongs to the community and therefore whilst you may not see an increase in bums on pews, more people from a wider pool of society should benefit from the investment the church has made locally. The more people who feel connected with your church and feel a sense of belonging, the more sustainable and financially viable it will be for future generations.

- ***How will changes to the Heritage Lottery Fund Grants for Places of Worship Scheme affect us? We have a Grade 1 listed church which will need major funding for the balance of the roof slopes within 5 years plus major stonework. What should we be doing now?***

The changes have happened and therefore we now have one less HLF programme to apply under. However you can still apply under the other schemes which have a greater flexibility, fewer churches using these programmes and more money to apply for. We expect other POW funders to start funding more repairs and maintenance focused projects in the long term but we cannot guarantee this. I would recommend looking at the other HLF programmes, having a conversation with them, but also look to other large and local funders and thinking about how you can diversify your funding streams but also make this project more than a stonework project (for example train 10 local stone work apprentices etc.)

- ***Which grant givers are more sympathetic to church led community projects?***

See attached lists. All funders recognise the valuable role churches play in the community and the fantastic resource they offer. You will find many charitable funding bodies support and encourage applications from POW.

- ***Are there any particular sources of support and information, or any particular approaches that you would recommend, for projects involving the restoration of bells and associated works?***

Try the Keltek trust (<http://www.keltektrust.org.uk/index.html>) and contact the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Bell ringers (<https://www.bellsgandb.org.uk/>) to get some local support.

- ***Is there any guidance about the proportion of locally raised funds to external funding that most funders would expect to see?***

Most funders like to see a minimum of 5% of funds raised locally, more commonly it's 10% raised locally. In my experience it's 35% - 40% of funds are raised locally.

- ***How can you meet the 'match funding' challenge for significant projects when your church has modest financial resources?***

Try asking PCC and parishioners to donate, to create an initial sum of money, explaining that this will help gain other funds by matchfunding. This could be in the form of a loan rather than a donation. Also the value of volunteer time/expertise can be used as a match in some grant applications

- ***We have a large Designated Fabric fund for repairs to the church. We also have a sizable fund for our church hall project. Will the fabric fund count against looking for a grant for the church hall? The two buildings are about ½ mile apart.***

It shouldn't, as long as you highlight in your accounts that the fund is designated and cannot be spent on the church hall project.

- ***Can we have more clarity about feasibility studies – necessity, depth and detail?***

It depends on the requirements of your funders and the scale of your project. Some helpful guidance on writing feasibility studies is here:

<http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FG4-Tool-Feasibility-Study.pdf>

Project management and leadership

- ***Ours is a small congregation of more mature years. How do we find the energy, enthusiasm and leadership to see through a challenging project?***

This can be a challenge. A successful project needs to bring people behind a clear, shared vision. And needs leadership. I would start by getting the congregation together to identify and articulate what your shared vision is, perhaps as part of your Sunday services, and then identify people to lead on small, manageable chunks of work that will help move towards achieving that vision. Break it up into bite-sized bits. Once a large group of people all have responsibility for a small project area, you will see much broader ownership of the project and the battle will be almost won. Good luck! See this funding guide 3 on bringing together teams for church projects:

<http://www.parishresources.org.uk/resources-for-treasurers/funding/funding-guides-capital-fundraising/>

- ***In the small rural parishes with large grade one listed buildings how are we going to find people with the time to organise and raise significant sums of money to maintain and repair buildings in addition to the normal day to day running costs?***

See above. You might also want to investigate setting up a Friends group to support the project. More guidance is here: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/friends-schemes/>

- ***Is it worth using a professional fund raiser in order to finance a re-ordering project?***

I would recommend every attempt is made locally to find people with the necessary experience (admin, teaching, government, charity) and this should include all members of the community. However if you can't find the right people for the job, you can hire professional fundraisers of course. I would encourage you to a) interview them, b) follow up on references, c) work closely alongside a member of the church - to get that necessary local feel and d) ensure they have experience of church fundraising (it's different to charity fundraising, regardless of what they say)! Guidance is available here: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FG-7-Helpful-Hint-Employing-Professional-Help.pdf>

Sources of information

- ***The amount of reading is a challenge: Diocesan documentation, Insurance, Building Regs, Historic England etc, etc Where do we start, and what is essential?***

Again, what is essential will depend on your particular project. Perhaps get in touch with a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee to talk this through.

- ***Is it worthwhile to use web funding sites to raise money?***

Yes, but remember they will all charge a fee. This works well if there is a wide network of people, generally younger people are better connected and more familiar with this style of fundraising. You still need to make a clear story and reason why people should fund you.

- ***How can I find my way round diocesan website looking for funders, especially as I think we may have to get work done on our wall first and look for funding in retrospect.***

There is some information signposting church funders per the Diocesan website here: <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/fundraising/> This is another useful site for Christian funding opportunities <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/christian-funders-forum/>

C of E or Diocesan policies

- ***Where does the C of E currently stand on the issue of the moral and ethical dilemma of applying for Heritage Lottery funding?***

The CofE House of Bishops agreed a national policy in regards to HLF funding which can be viewed here:

<http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FG-8-Tool-The-National-Lottery.pdf>

I would encourage churches to have a debate for and against the use of lottery money to explore the key issues before making the decision. The question I always ask is - if a member of your congregation won the lottery and made a large donation / left a large legacy - would the PCC accept it. If it won't accept lottery money, it needs to be able to confidently confirm it only accepts 'ethical money' from all charitable streams of income.

We had a discussion on our table about the scenario whereby the PCC is generally against lottery funding from the standpoint of the lottery funds being raised by taking advantage of the people in our society with most needs. In these instances, I'd encourage you to balance this in your discussion by considering whether the work to be undertaken with the potential lottery funds would address the issues of those needy in society, thereby redressing the balance.

- ***Sadly personal experience for obtaining all the approvals necessary to carry out a project for adding facilities to our church have been extremely lengthy and resulting in major expenditure in professional fees. How can the process be streamlined?***

We're sorry to hear that this has been your experience. If you'd like to discuss this further, we'd be very happy to hear suggestions about how to streamline the process. Please get in touch with a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

- ***More clarity about the need to consult three architects. We intend to follow our informal meetings with a question sheet so that we get comparable information from each architect. Is this sufficient?***

For work over a certain amount, there is a necessity to get three quotes - and sometimes this is all that's needed. However, quotes can often come in different formats, so it's always useful to have full design proposals, drawings etc. and a way of comparing them 'like-for-like' to help funders, PCC, congregation, stakeholders, understand why you've opted for one architect over another.

- ***We should like vehicular access to our churchyard to create a disabled parking area. We already have a suitable gate but there would be some disturbance to one or two old graves. What are the procedures for this? What hoops and hurdles would we need to negotiate and with whom?***

This is not necessarily impossible but there would be some processes to follow. The main visible obstacle will be any headstones erected on the graves in question. These would obviously need to be relocated and this would require a faculty. If they are relatively modern and you had a way of contacting the relatives, then it would be worth doing that up front. If not, the faculty process in itself has a public notice period in which anyone with an interest can, in theory, make representations. If the stones can be moved then you need to think about the graves themselves and, again, you will need to take into account how old/deep the last burials were. If there will not be major excavations/foundations then you can probably use the ground above without disturbing the graves at all - but if you do need to dig down, you would need an archaeological watching brief in place to deal with anything that was uncovered. Again, this would be dealt with as a condition of the faculty process. Finally, it's worth saying there is a really good 'mesh' product which can be laid into grass to provide firmer footing for vehicle parking. Garsdon parish church in North Wilts has used it to really good effect.

Stewardship advice

- ***Is there a suggested timeline for when to have gift days vs project status?***

It is a good idea to get the congregation and community behind your project vision, and then regularly update them on progress and challenges. It is up to you when you decide to hold Gift Days. It could be at a time to fit into the church calendar ie Harvest where there's opportunity to link with the lectionary and preaching schedule; or you could time it alongside the project progress ie when you hit a milestone. More guidance on gift days is here: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/givingglorygod.pdf>

- ***How do we get people enthused about the vision and buildings in order to give?***

Be clear on exactly what you are raising funds for. Get a clear statement of need and clear statement of the difference your work would make. By people, do you mean congregation or local community? Each member of the congregation could be an ambassador for the work. Give leaflets and talks to local schools, playgroups, lunch clubs etc. Be present. And yes, this is hard work!