**GRANTS AND FUNDING- INITIAL STEPS**

**Funding projects through grants and fundraising is an essential aspect of resourcing our churches. There are many grants available to churches and in order to give yourself the best possible chance of success, it is good practice to ensure certain steps have been taken before applying.**

# - HAVE A CLEAR VISION OF WHAT THE PROJECT IS

Whether it is repairs highlighted by a quinquennial report or a community project for a new café, it is important that you have a clear vision of what the project is and what needs to be done.

This plan will probably need to include a team of volunteers who are running the project, and experts such as your architect who will help with costings, time frames etc. There is a helpful guide to planning your building project [***here***](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/making-changes-your-building-and-churchyard/plan-your-building-project).

# - GET YOUR PERMISSIONS IN PLACE

It is important to have the permissions in place for projects and works you are wanting to undertake.

Your architect will help with these, but it is always best to contact the DAC to ask what type of permissions, if any, you will need.

You must have these permissions completed or well on the way to completion before applying for grants because many grants have a time limitation. Therefore, if you receive a grant and then fail to gain the permissions in time, you may risk losing that money altogether.

A very useful guide to the DAC and permissions process can be found [***here***.](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/making-changes-your-building-and-churchyard/talk-your-dac-about-permissions)

# - HAVE YOUR FINANCES AND COSTINGS READY

All grant providers will want to know what your current finances look like and also what the cost of the project will be.

When looking into costings, make sure you know how much the project will cost, including whether there will be any ongoing costs from the project.

This information will be available once you have spoken with your architect.

Ensuring that you can show a grant provider that you have achieved ‘best value’ through the procurement process is important.

The contractors you intend to use will also be able provide accurate costings.

If you are unable to give accurate figures it is unlikely that any grant provider will move forward with financing the project.

# - KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Your church may already be the focal point of the local community or it may be that you are looking to engage more with the community. Either way, you will need to know your community.

The best way to do this is through a Parish and Community Audit. This will help build a picture of what your community’s needs are, what the local demographic is and how best your church can serve its parish and wider community.

A guide on how to do this and a template of a community audit can be found [***here***.](https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FG-5-Parish-and-Community-Audit.pdf)

For many grant providers, the outcomes your project will deliver to the community and beyond will be fundamental to their decision whether to fund your project.

It is therefore vital that you know what is needed, by whom, and how your project will help meet those needs.

Speak to your Parish Council, ask them to be involved. They will know the demographics of the locality and have links into the community, as well as having access to more community-based grant sources that may help to support your project.

# 5 - HAVE AN IDEA OF OTHER WAYS YOU MIGHT FUNDRAISE

You will need to consider additional ways in which you and your parish might fundraise for the project, aside from grant income.

Some grants will require funds to be matched and this will mean knowing where you intend to get this additional funding from.

Whether from donations or a big community fundraising e5vent, it helps to have a plan. You will then be able to show grant providers your intentions and community commitment to the project.

There are several useful guides to fundraising for your church.

An A-Z list of fundraising ideas can be found [***here***.](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/Parish-Resources_A-Z-fundraising-ideas.pdf)

A step-by-step guide to raising funds can be found [***here***.](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/making-changes-your-building-and-churchyard/raise-funds)

# 6- START EXPLORING WHICH GRANTS YOU WANT TO APPLY FOR

Once you are happy that the above points are in place, then it’s a good idea to start looking into which grants are suitable for your project.

[Church Grants](https://suffolk.churchgrants.co.uk/) provides you with free access to church and faith-based online grant searches. You will need your parish reference number to gain access (available from your PCC Secretary or your church administrators, or please email [emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org)

Funding 4 Suffolk, a free search tool that enables parishes to search for funding for a project, organisation or group quickly and easily with keyword searches and bespoke results. It allows access to many grants and makes it easier to find the right grants to apply for.

The link to sign up to this can be found [***here***.](https://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/suffolk/)

There are also other useful lists of Charitable Grants found [***here***](https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f214e41ab1e4/content/pages/documents/charitable-grants-for-churches.pdf).

# 7- CHARITABLE STATUS

It is important to note that nearly all churches have charitable status as ‘Excepted Charities’ (the few that don’t are large ones registered with the Charity Commission). If required, a certificate to show this to potential funders can be found by accessing your church’s page on the website ‘A Church Near You’ ([achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com)), clicking on ‘More Information’ on the left of the page, scrolling down to ‘Proof of Charity Status’, and clicking on ‘Download Certificate’.

A Church Near You can be found [***here***.](https://www.achurchnearyou.com/)

**8 - FULL STEAM AHEAD!**

With all the above information in place it will now be possible to start actively applying for grants in the knowledge that you will have much of what is required already in place to confidently complete applications.

**Contact**

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