



FUNDING GUIDE 7 : Projects involving Other Organisations

A huge amount can be achieved by working in partnership with others and there is a wide variety of other organisations who share the objectives of the Church of England with respect to looking after important heritage assets and improving and enriching peoples lives. It can be of use in any project whether it's building repairs, an older person lunch club or a homelessness project.

Why work in partnership?

It will bring to a project new skills, ideas and resources.

In any partnership that is going to work effectively both partners have to contribute something to the partnership.

Churches can offer:

- a building
- volunteers
- a wish to serve and support their communities
- a local presence: an ability to reach into the heart of their communities including those hard-to-reach groups which especially need support
- funding

What churches may be looking for from potential partners could include:

- funding
- expertise
- skilled staff
- resources and support from their national body
- a wider client base

An effective partnership should mean that:

- we work with others who have similar objectives and work together to achieve the same goal, not duplicating but complimenting and delivering together
- it gives us the confidence to attempt new things and learn new skills

Bear in mind that although partners in a particular project may not always be looking for exactly the same outputs, it is important that they share the same values. There can be tensions in partnerships between faith and secular organisations if there are differences of priorities and values eg: faith groups will have a long term commitment to the community, whereas a local authority may be constrained to delivering a government initiative over a defined timescale.

There can also be problems if partners don't fully understand each others 'jargon' which can lead to misunderstandings and even discrimination. It may be useful to facilitate with partners a mutual learning exercise to help overcome any of these barriers associated with language and jargon. In particular, secular organisations may not be aware of the Christian year, and could be caught out by services on days such as Ash Wednesday or Maundy Thursday.

What type of partnership?

There are two types of partnerships that are worth getting involved in -

1. There are many local and national partnerships already in existence that as a faith group we can add real value to. Time spent in developing good relationships with these organisations will always be worthwhile and helps with the sharing of skills and resources. It also enables the church to be seen as a mainstream part of the community development sector, helping to maximise the amount of finance and support that can be made available to support both Diocesan and Parish projects.

This can include:

- getting involved in the development of your parish/town plan. As church we should be not be afraid of taking part if we want to remain at the heart of our local communities. Secondly, by taking part in and contributing to Parish/Town Plans, we can be in a good position to be part of the solution to whatever issues arise.
- participating in some of the bodies at local authority level that are responsible for developing future strategy for an area and getting a representative on local development partnerships eg: Local Strategic Partnerships, Community Foundation and Funding Partnerships, Leader + groups etc. Some of this may more effectively be done at diocesan officer level.

At the very least, building up these types of partnerships/relationship enables the church to be more aware of sources of local/regional funding and resources and also raises the profile of the church as a potential partner in the delivering of all kinds of services to local communities.

2. There are also the partnerships formed around specific projects. These can be with:

- other faith groups
- other voluntary or community groups
- local authority departments: social services, education
- other secular bodies eg: Post Office Ltd

When considering forming a partnership for a particular project it will be important for each partner to ensure that they understand and appreciate:

- the particular values of the other partner/s eg: will a partner insist that all religious references are omitted?
- how the other organisation/s operate eg: how alterations to a church building are undertaken; that the church is primarily a place of worship

It is advisable that a form of agreement is drawn up. In some instances this can be done formally by means of a licence or a contract, but in all cases it should make clear:

- financial arrangements
- agreed objectives
- length of agreement and termination/extension procedures
- governance
- use of buildings and other capital assets

In some instances you will need to take professional legal advice on the form of agreement or contract, although this depends very much on the complexity of the project and the levels of risk and responsibility involved. The first port of call should be the Diocesan Registry

“The Registry is the legal office of the Diocese. Its officers are appointed, and its work is governed by a large number of statutes and measures, notably the Ecclesiastical Judges and Legal Officers Measure 1976. Under orders made by the General Synod, the Registry’s work includes (but is not limited to):

- giving general legal advice to clergy, parish officers, boards and councils throughout the Diocese
- assisting clergy and answering parishioners’ enquiries relating to marriage
- functions as Registrar of the Diocesan Synod
- consecration of churchyards
- operation of the faculty jurisdiction.

All such advice is given free of charge to parishes and Diocesan officers. It is always best to ask for advice from the Registry sooner rather than later, as legal problems, if left unaddressed, can become increasingly difficult to resolve” (from the Oxford diocese website)

While the Registry will provide free advice, if a parish employs one of its solicitors s/he will charge a fee. One of the partners at a Diocesan Registry will not necessarily be the best person for the job. Advice can be obtained from the Archdeacon, experts on the DAC or other parishes that have been involved in similar projects.

Whichever route you go down, do not be tempted to try and save money when drawing up agreements. A short term saving can be dwarfed by longer term problems caused by poor planning.