



# Funding Guides



## FUNDING GUIDE 8 : Launching the Appeal

This funding guide aims to provide you with some guidance on how to get your appeal launched successfully. You can only launch once to any audience, so make sure you have planned carefully, and that you aim to make a splash!

### BEFORE THE LAUNCH

The church council should have

- Agreed the plans for the project, including full debate, acknowledgement of any reservations or dissension, and agreement on a united front for the appeal
- Set up its committee structures with an appeal chair and treasurer (different from the church treasurer if possible) with clearly defined terms of reference
- Approved a business plan, a budget and a timetable
- Decided whether to employ a professional fund raiser (see below)
- Agreed a Press and Media Strategy
- Discussed its values with regard to fund raising e.g. use of gambling, receiving money from the National Lottery, use of interest-free loans

Production of an appeal leaflet

- The appeal leaflet should be attractive, concise and clear as to the aims of the appeal
- In its first paragraphs it should spell out the project vision, what needs it will fulfil and how much money is needed
- Background information should come later in the leaflet
- The leaflet should include clear information on how to respond with contact details and information on how a gift will be acknowledged and how to keep it anonymous if desired
- Professional design of the leaflet can be advantageous making it stand out. A best-case scenario is if a local design firm can be persuaded to do it for free, knowing that their details will be included and that every local business will receive a copy
- Even if professional help is not available, attention should be paid to
  - Including appropriate illustrations, pictures and graphics;
  - Avoidance of wordiness and use of white-space (proportion of unprinted paper);
  - Consistency with font styles and colours (two or three carefully applied is plenty)
- You should also produce a press release and circulate it to local media. Be sure to include a contact number and e-mail address so that they can call you if they are interested.

### LAUNCHING THE APPEAL

To potential local donors

- Even poor inner-city, housing estate, or rural parishes may have potential local donors working or living in the community who might be asked for (say) £500 towards the appeal
- They can be identified through previous interest to church or other community initiatives, or through membership of community forums or organisations (e.g. Round Table)
- They should be approached first by sending the leaflet with a letter asking for an opportunity to explain the appeal, followed up by a phone call and, if invited, visit
- Visitors should be trained on a open and friendly approach, how to enable a donation (with all necessary paper-work to hand and understood) and how to cope with a negative response

- All contacts to potential local donors should be completed before fund-raising events begin (to avoid the response that help has already been given through an event)

### **To the wider community**

- Households and businesses in the parish are sent a carefully-worded letter, giving details of a public launch meeting to be held in the near future plus the appeal leaflet
- This letter should also be sent to people who once lived in the parish but no longer do so, and to others who have links with the parish e.g. those who were baptised or married in the church or whose family members have been buried there.
- The launch event could take a variety of forms, but must be cheerful and positive in atmosphere. Short speeches (maximum five minutes!) may be made setting out the nature of the appeal. If the expertise is available, a short video or slide/PowerPoint presentation can be given, but again beware of excessive length. The event could be in the context of a special service or a major festival, or perhaps the stewardship supper approach may be used. Certainly refreshments and a festival atmosphere are important. People should get some fun out of your appeal.

Posters and graphs can be used to good advantage, for example breaking down the overall target to a human scale e.g. how the weekly equivalent of a newspaper or pint of beer will accumulate into large sums of money. A colourful and professional-looking appearance works wonders.

### **To local business**

Many people expect to do well with an appeal to local businesses, but are usually disappointed. The fact is that businesses get numerous unsolicited requests for grants or sponsorship and the smaller firms in particular may have a policy of consigning the whole lot to the bin. Unless you have a good relationship with particular firms, you will find this quite a tough nut to crack.

The situation will be different if you have someone on board who knows the local business scene well and who has the confidence and persistence to follow up his or her contacts in person. If you do decide to do a cold mailing, your district council should be able to provide a list of local firms; alternatively you will find various directories at the main reference libraries.

- If possible, write to the Managing Director or Chief Executive by name
- You may find it helpful to ask for a specific amount, rather than making an open-ended appeal for “any contribution, large or small”. For a local business which does not normally give money to church repairs, it may be easier to make a quick decision as to whether or not to respond to your appeal if a reasonable figure is suggested in your letter.
- Firms unwilling to give directly to the appeal may agree to sponsor an event, or to fund a leaflet, because of the publicity which they will receive. Make use of any local contacts you may have, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, etc.
- It is important to remember that the Gift Aid scheme is also available for corporate donors and there may be tax advantages for the company from this form of giving. Have your forms at the ready!

### **FUNDRAISING EVENTS** (see also FG18 in this series)

In most cases there will be locally organised events, ranging from the familiar coffee morning through to more ambitious and imaginative sponsored events. Provided that the requirements are clearly understood in the parish, it is surprising how willingly subscribers and event organisers appear and offer their ideas. The important thing is that the appeal committee offers help, avoiding repetition of events or a clash of dates.

Fundraising events are important, not only for the money they raise, but also for keeping a high profile for the appeal. A balance needs to be struck between encouraging free enterprise and making sure that events keep within agreed guidelines (e.g. gently discouraging a race-night if the church council has turned its back on gambling). All fundraising events should be accompanied by a plentiful supply of appeal leaflets and an up-to-date display on the progress of the project.

The appeal committee should also keep a close eye on the cost of proposed events in terms of financial outlay and organisational effort. One village church appeal committee made a rule that any fundraising event in their one-year programme must aim to raise at least £500 and ideally not less than £1,000.

For example a proposed pantomime was ruled out because it would have involved an enormous amount of effort, and would have detracted from other fundraising events, but would probably have netted only about £100.

There is no limit to the variety of events which can be organised. An auction has often proved successful, preferably with a celebrity to conduct it. Proceeds might be divided 50/50 between the appeal and the donors of the objects being sold. Sponsored events of every description are usually popular, although not all are as imaginative as the cow pat guessing game used by a recent appeal. Part of a field was marked out in squares, and a cow was borrowed for the occasion. Sponsors selected one or more squares, the first to be marked (in obvious fashion) being the winner!

Other ideas have included a scarecrow exhibition, model railway show, sponsored walks, Christmas tree festival, etc., etc. It is good to involve children, too. A novel idea from Swindon village was bungee jumping from the tower - for teddies!

### **MARKETING PROMOTIONS**

Many marketing firms can provide suitably inscribed goods such as mugs, T-shirts, Christmas cards, etc. The initial cost can be high and you should look closely at the likely sales and eventual profit. Be very wary of dated goods such as calendars or diaries. Obviously these are valueless once they are out of date.

### **PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISERS**

Professionals may have their place in a very large appeal, but are otherwise most unlikely to be worthwhile for the medium or small appeal. Their fees and expenses must be paid from money raised, regardless of how much their efforts bring in.

### **GIFT AID (See also FG19 : Gift Aid)**

All appeal treasurers should be aware of the advantages of Gift Aid, which enables tax relief to be claimed even on small one-off contributions, provided the donor is a taxpayer.

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These Funding Guides have been developed by a "Good Practice" group of the National Stewardship Committee of the Church of England and are intended to support your church's fundraising. They are available on-line at [www.parishresources.org.uk/funding](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/funding) or at [www.churchcare.org.uk/funding.php](http://www.churchcare.org.uk/funding.php)