



A STEWARDSHIP TOOLKIT for the Rural Church



An Introduction to the Toolkit

This toolkit is offered as a practical resource to help rural parishes increase their financial sustainability.

On average rural churches have smaller congregations, and hence lower levels of income to the PCC. Yet many of the costs are fixed, whatever the size of church, particularly in the insurance and maintenance area. The smallest rural churches allocate a quarter of their expenditure to maintenance, a much higher proportion than average, and still are only able to spend one third of the cash expenditure that other parishes can.

Many rural churches have had to take money from reserves over the past few years, and a good number are feeling that they are coming to the end of their available reserves.

So what can be done?

This toolkit aims to help encourage a greater financial sustainability by providing simple tools appropriate to the needs of rural churches. It has unashamedly been kept simple. Most of the tools are on one or two sides of A4, and thus provide a basic approach, but may not fit exactly with a parish's particular situation. If necessary, please adapt the tools to meet local needs, keeping the essentials of the tool in place.

The Toolkit consists of :

1. A [Sustainability Tool](#) to diagnose where your parish fits, and where you might look to increase your sustainability.
2. [Footfall](#) - a simple tool to looking at community impact - how many people is the church in touch with each year?
3. A [Budget Planner](#) to help you explore your financial situation.
4. [Four Key Tasks](#) which every church can carry out to encourage giving. These are not complex, and for the smaller parish are not particularly time consuming. However, they are important in sustaining what is likely to be the church's principal income stream.
5. [Planned Giving Analysis](#) tool which enables the PCC to see the range of giving within the church without disclosing individual donations.
6. A [simple Giving Programme](#) designed for the rural church. This has options of being extended to the wider community, and to include a presentation evening when the needs of the church can be shared. Template letters are provided.
7. Some tips on setting up a [Friends Scheme](#).
8. A range of [Web Resources](#).