



# A STEWARDSHIP TOOLKIT for the Rural Church



## Tool 5 : Running a Giving Programme

This tool outlines how to run a simple giving programme, tailored to a smaller rural parish.

### STEP ONE

**Form a small team.** If you can gather a team of two or three, it not only provides additional pairs of hands, but also a team can then give mutual support and encouragement.

**Get together for an initial planning meeting.** You will need to agree some plans, and gain PCC approval before the giving programme can get under way. Decisions that you will need to make include :

- ❖ The timing of your programme. If you hold a presentation (see Step Four) you should expect to write out 4 weeks ahead of this to invite people, followed by a further letter three weeks before the thanksgiving Sunday when pledges are collected. If there is no presentation, the letter should go out three weeks ahead of the Thanksgiving Sunday.
- ❖ Agreeing 2 or 3 reasons why people should give to support the church. It helps if there is some aim beyond just “keeping the show on the road” e.g building improvements such as kitchen / toilet, encouragement of tourists, work with children etc.
- ❖ Gathering the data needed to complete the appeal literature. This should include completing a budget and projection (See Tool 3 in this toolkit), and will also involve getting a list of people linked to the church, or living in the local community.

### STEP TWO

**Gain PCC approval for running a programme.** It is essential that a giving programme has the support of the PCC, and the more active the support the better! As part of this, they will need to agree the reasons that will be presented for supporting the church.

### STEP THREE

**Write and send out letters.** You will need to decide whether you will include a presentation in your programme, which will alter the letter you send. Your initial letter will either seek to :

- ❖ Invite people to a presentation event when the needs of the church can be presented along with a supper or lunch. The letter should request people to respond a fortnight before the presentation, giving both time to follow up some who the team think might be interested in coming, and also providing some idea how many to cater for. **OR**
- ❖ Ask people to consider setting up a standing order, or increasing it if they already have one. This letter should include a standing order / gift aid form, and preferably an addressed envelope. We suggest that you send out two different letters, one to those who are already supporting the work of the church through planned giving, and one to everyone else. Suggested templates to work from are provided at the back of this toolkit.

## STEP FOUR

**Hold a “Giving Sunday”** before the presentation, or immediately after the letter seeking additional funds - where the sermon should focus on Christian messages why generosity in giving is a part of our Christian faith. Support resources for this are available on the web at [www.parishresources.org.uk/preachteach.htm](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/preachteach.htm)

## STEP FIVE

**Hold the presentation**, if you are having one, and at this, give out follow up letters and standing order / gift aid forms. You should note who is at the presentation, and send a second letter to those who were unable to attend enclosing a Standing Order / Gift Aid form. The ideal format for this is an evening meeting, possibly with a buffet. Your presentation should cover the following four points :

- ❖ The background to the Church, and it’s ministry. The “Footfall” tool (Tool 2 in this toolkit will help you explore how broad the church’s reach is.)
- ❖ The costs of maintaining the church - ensuring that parish share is linked with the provision of clergy.
- ❖ Some future vision - that it’s not just keeping the show on the road, but there are some exciting new things that the church would like to do.
- ❖ Acknowledge existing giving and support, and explain what is needed. Invite prayerful consideration and explain when pledges need to be received.

**Send out letters to those who were unable to attend the presentation.** These should be based on the standard ones included in this toolkit. This can be simply amended to reflect the presentation e.g. by adding “Following the presentation on 15<sup>th</sup> September, ...” at the beginning of the letter.

## STEP SIX

**Hold a thanksgiving Sunday, when pledges can be offered.** Those received before the day should be counted, and then included with those that are brought to the service. One possibility is for the offering of pledges to be offered early in the service, and for the newly offered ones to be added to those that had come in beforehand, so that the results can be communicated back to the congregation towards the end of the service. If this is done, it is important to maintain a focus on thanksgiving, whether or not the target is reached.

**You may want to write again to those that had not responded** - perhaps giving a summary of the results to date, and the amount still required.

## STEP SEVEN

**Write out to thank all those who have offered pledges.** A sample letter is provided as Appendix Four, which you should edit and amend as appropriate.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. All of the letters and Gift Aid forms are provided as electronic Word templates at [www.parishresources.org.uk/ruraltoolkit.htm](http://www.parishresources.org.uk/ruraltoolkit.htm)
2. A more comprehensive set of letters is offered as part of the Giving in Grace package at [www.givinginGrace.org](http://www.givinginGrace.org)
3. Most dioceses have a Stewardship Advisor who can give you advice and help in running such a programme. Contact your diocesan office to see who you should speak with.



**St Michael's Church, Littledale**

*You are invited to be our guest(s) at a  
**Parish Supper Evening***

*on*

**Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October**

**at 7.30 p.m.**

**in the Village Hall**

*Please reply by 24<sup>th</sup> September*

**St Michael's Church, Littledale**



**Parish Supper Reply Card**

Are you able to come ? **Yes / No**

How many people are coming ? .....  
including.....children.

Any special dietary needs ? .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....Phone.....

Please tick if transport is needed

**Please return this Reply Card to : Church or to the  
address overleaf by Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September.**

APPENDIX TWO : Sample Letter for current Planned Givers :

Dear

**Finances of St Michael’s, Littledale.**

Your planned giving over the years is very much appreciated, and has been a vital source of regular income. Until recently this has enabled the Church to meet our ongoing costs, providing a place for prayer and worship and a base for sharing of life together at baptisms, weddings and funerals. Of equal importance the church is a home from which the Gospel can be spread. We play a key role in the village school, in the Village Fete, and through our parish magazine help cement together our rural community.

Those of us who worship at St Michael’s have always accepted the responsibility of paying the day to day bills for our building, our vicar, the insurance, heating, and to continue to provide the range of activities that makes up the life of our church. In addition, the present congregation, with the support of many in the village, has raised extra money to enable special projects to be completed such as the roof repairs. The fact that so much has been achieved in the last ten years is a credit to this community.

As you may already be aware, over the last 3 years expenditure has exceeded income and our reserves are being eroded. In the last 2 years alone deficits have been £1750+ and £1900+ respectively. The possible consequence of no longer having a viable Church in our community is extremely concerning. Currently we need £215 per week to cover ongoing costs and with existing income of £163 per week, we need to raise an additional £52 per week to cover our regular costs. We also seek around £8,000 to allow us to install a small kitchen and toilet.

It is appreciated that you will have many other calls on your income beyond normal living expenses, from the many worthy charities that seek your support. May we however ask you to prayerfully consider this request for increased giving and, if you feel able to help, raise the amount you give through your planned giving. The equivalent of a gallon of petrol a week - £5, would make all the difference.

Once more, please accept our thanks for your support of the Church thus far. We hope you will feel able to increase this to enable the work of the Church in our community to continue. Thank you for reading this letter and the thoughtful way in which we know you will respond.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Other  
Church Treasurer

**St. Michael’s, Littledale, Village Wide Appeal**

Dear Ann, *(Please tick the appropriate box and strike out as necessary.)*

- Yes, you can count on my/our financial support. Until further notice, you can expect from me/us\* on average **£ 20/£ ... every month.**
- I/We enclose a completed Standing Order form.
- I enclose a completed Gift Aid form (thereby increasing my/our gift by an additional 28% at no further cost).

From: .....

It would help us plan if you were able to return this before or during the Thanksgiving Service on Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Dear

### Village Wide Appeal

On behalf of the St Michael's Littledale Parochial Church Council, I am sending this letter to everyone in the Village seeking their regular financial support to sustain our lovely church. I do this in the hope of securing a stable financial future for St Michael's.

Quite simply, the eleven members on our Church Electoral Roll cannot continue going it alone. Last year 535 people attended our thirty or so regular Sunday services, and a further 290 attended special services, weddings, funerals and baptisms. Receipts from Planned Giving, Collections, Donations, and the recovered Gift Aid Tax totalled £8,323. Outgoings exceeded £10,000. We cannot go on running at a loss as we have very few reserves.

We currently have twenty-three Gift Aid and Planned Givers. Some worship quite regularly, others only occasionally and some hardly ever. Some give £5 a month. Others give a very great deal more, but all support our church regularly and loyally. They have set an example, and I know that in our village many people will want to follow their lead and play their personal part.

I appreciate that most people in the village lead busy lives and are not able to attend church services whenever they are held; however, I believe that everyone can offer their support - preferably with a monthly Standing Order. As little as ten pounds a month from another twenty-three supporters would put us well on the way to being able to sustain our position in terms of being able to meet regular bills, and also improve our facilities.

We would like to install a small kitchen and toilet, which will make our church building will be much more accessible for everyone. Your help now will make possible a bright future, and I am grateful to you for taking the time to read this letter and to respond on the form below, using the enclosed envelope.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Other  
Church Treasurer

*All costs connected with this mailing have been kindly donated.*

### St. Michael's, Littletown in the Dale, Village Wide Appeal

Dear Ann, *(Please tick the appropriate box and strike out as necessary.)*

- Yes, you can count on my/our financial support. Until further notice, you can expect from me/us\* on average **£ 10/£ ... every month.**
- I/We\* enclose a completed Standing Order form.
- I enclose a completed Gift Aid form (thereby increasing my/our gift by an additional 28% at no further cost).
- I/We would like a set of offering envelopes for 2007.
- I/We will put my/our gift on the plate whenever I come.

From: .....

It would help us plan if you were able to return this before or during the Thanksgiving Service on Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

APPENDIX FOUR : Sample Standing Order and Gift Aid Form.

The PCC of St Michael’s Church, Littleton  
Standing Order Form

To: .....(Your Bank or Building Society)  
Address: .....  
..... Post Code .....  
Your Account no: ..... Sort code: ..... - ..... - .....

Please pay to Bank of P O Box 34, Littleton, Countyshire, AA3 5XX for the account of St Michael’s Littleton PCC (Account No. 123456789) (Sort Code 12-34-56):

Amount (in words & figures): The sum of £ ..... (figures)  
.....(words)  
on the .....day of.....(month).....(year)  
and a like sum each month / quarter / year \*until further notice.  
PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS REPLACES ANY PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER DECLARATIONS.

Signed : ..... Date : ...../...../.....

The PCC of St Michael’s Church, Littleton  
Gift Aid Declaration

Details of donor

Title: .....Forename(s): ..... Surname .....  
Address .....  
..... Post Code .....

I want the charity to treat (\*delete as appropriate)  
\*the enclosed donation of £ ..... as a Gift Aid donation  
\*the donation(s) of £ .....which I made on ...../...../..... as (a) Gift Aid donation(s)  
\*all donations that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations  
\*all donations I have made for the six years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

You must pay Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year (25p for each £1 you give from April 08).

Signed : ..... Date : ...../...../.....

Notes:

- 1. You can cancel this Declaration at any time by notifying the charity.
- 2. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
- 3. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.
- 4. Please notify the charity if you change your name or address.

## APPENDIX FIVE : Sample letter to thank those offering pledges

Dear

### **St Michael's, Littledale, Village Wide Appeal**

I am writing to express my grateful thanks for your prompt and generous response to our recent appeal. Your heartfelt concern and practical action is a real encouragement.

#### **USE ONE OF THE NEXT TWO PARAGRAPHS**

**[If letter is signed by the Vicar ]** : Of course I am not aware of the details of individual responses; as that is confidential to our treasurer / planned giving officer (*edit as appropriate*). But I am aware of the general level of response and I know that you will also be encouraged by what has happened so far. When Gift Aid is added to the pledges received we will be able to count on an additional £xxx per week, which equates to about £x,xxx in a full year. This figure will do much more than simply balance our budget for the coming year. This wonderful response gives us the freedom to invest in new and existing areas of ministry in the church. You can rest assured that your giving is making a real difference in this church and in the wider community. I am delighted by the response and I know that you will also be pleased.

**OR**

**[If letter is signed by the Planned Giving Officer ]** : Thank you for pledging to contribute £X per month. Your generosity, and that of others means that when Gift Aid is added to the pledges received we will be able to count on an additional £xxx per week, which equates to about £x,xxx in a full year. This figure will do much more than simply balance our budget for the coming year. This wonderful response gives us the freedom to invest in new and existing areas of ministry in the church. You can rest assured that your giving is making a real difference in this church and in the wider community. I am delighted by the response and I know that you will also be pleased.

This response to our appeal has meant that we are now able to ... (*edit to insert items from the points presented to the PCC for future vision*).

Once again thank you for your generosity and for your continued support and encouragement, all of which is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

***Vicar or Ann Other, Treasurer/Planned Giving Officer***

*If letter is signed by the treasurer / planned giving officer :*

P.S. All pledges are kept confidential to me as treasurer / planned giving officer.