

FUNDING GUIDE 18: Online Giving and Social Media

Enabling people to donate online can really increase the amount your church can raise for specific appeals and one off events. Online giving and mobile phone giving are generally additional ways to give, not substitutes for regular giving to your church. Your regular givers should continue to give regularly in their usual way, whether that is by envelope or standing order (preferably the latter as it is quicker, cheaper and more secure). Donors may wish to give online over and above their regular giving however; for example, to specific appeals or to mark special occasions. Online giving can also help attract donations from people who do not normally give; for example, people who do not usually attend church services, people who are attending a wedding or concert or other one-off event, tourists, people moved by a special appeal etc.

JustGiving is probably the best known provider for online giving but in the last few years a number of competitors have sprung up. Before you decide which to go with, you should think about the costs and benefits of each. Costs may include a one-off set-up fee, a regular monthly fee, a % of each gift taken by the provider and the credit/debit card fee or other transaction charge which may be levied. Benefits can include whether the provider will claim Gift Aid for you, how well-known and trusted the provider is, how user-friendly it is for you and your donors, what sort of reporting it provides, whether people doing sponsored events can create team pages, whether you can link it to Facebook, Twitter etc, whether you can upload photos or news items to your page, whether it sends automated 'thank you' messages etc.

Below is a summary produced by www.moneysavingexpert.com on some of the leading providers. Click here to get some more detailed info (how easy it is to register, how easy it is for donors, how long the site has been going etc) on these: <http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/charity-fundraising-sites#online>

If donor gives £10 + Gift Aid (using Visa Debit card):	Amount given directly to charity per £10 Gift Aided Donation	Transaction fees/ VAT	Charges to charity	Number of charities signed up
MyDonate	£12.35	£0.15	£0	240 (MyDonate is fairly new)
Bmycharity	£12.34	£0.16	£180.00 - one off	300
www.charitycheckout.co.uk	£12.20	£0.30	£5/month for small charities (<£25k) (£8/month <£100k; £12/month <£500k)	100 and adding c.10/week
Virgin Money Giving	£12.15	£0.35	£120.00 - one off	1,500
Charity Giving	£12.10	£0.40	£0	2,000
Sponsor-me	£12.00	£0.50	£0	40,000
The Big Give	£12.00	£0.50	£0	6,800
Every Click	£11.91	£0.59	£0	220,000
Just Giving	£11.71	£0.79	£15 - monthly	8,000
Global Giving	£10.50	£2.00	£0	150
Mission Fish	£10.50	£2.00	£0	4,000

NB Of these sites, JustGiving is currently the only one which will allow you to use your HMRC Gift Aid registration number instead of a registered charity number if you are not a registered charity.

With most of these sites, once you have registered your church, individuals can set up their own pages to raise funds if they are doing, for example, a sponsored event for your church. You can also set up pages in the same way to raise money for specific church events or appeals such as the Tower Appeal, the Youth Group's mission week, the church's Winter Shelter or the Rector's Parachute Jump.

Giving through mobile phones: JustTextGiving

JustGiving recently launched a new, free service called JustTextGiving which enables registered charities to receive donations made through mobile phones. NB This is currently only open to registered charities. For churches which are below the charity registration threshold, there may be a solution through your diocese (see below).

If you are a registered charity and would like to try this out, all you need to do is contact <http://www.justgiving.com/justtextgiving/charity-non-members> to find out how to register for JustTextGiving.

You'll be asked to choose your own unique charity code of 4 letters and 2 numbers e.g. **COFE12**. Once you've received confirmation from JustTextGiving that you are set up, ask people to donate by texting **COFE12 £10** to the number **70070**. If they prefer, they can donate £1, £2, £3, £4 or £5 by texting COFE12 £1, COFE12 £2, COFE12 £3 etc instead. At present, the only amounts people can donate are £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 & £10.

There are **no charges** for either the church or for the donor for this service.

The donation is added to the donor's phone bill (or debited from their credit balance if they use pay as you go). They receive an automatic acknowledgement with a link for Gift Aiding, thanking them for their donation.

This has great potential for one-off fundraising events, for churches in areas where tourists drop in and for events with lots of young people present. For example, you could have a poster on the wall saying: 'To help preserve our beautiful church, donate £10 now: just text COFE12 £10 to 70070' – ramblers, tourists and other visitors may these days be more likely to have their mobile phones with them than to have any cash in their pockets! You could also print it on service sheets or concert programmes, project it onto the wall at your youth group events, include it as the final slide on your powerpoint presentation; there are lots of possibilities. That said, we have not heard of many churches which have managed to raise significant sums through mobile phone giving; please contact us if your church has!

If you are already a fee-paying JustGiving user, you can have several charity codes so that you could have different codes for different appeals.

If you are not a registered charity, sadly you can't use this service at present. However, if your diocese has signed up for the fee-paying JustGiving service (£15/month + VAT), there may be a solution for you.

The diocese of Norwich, for example, has signed up to the fee-paying JustGiving service and so is entitled to have as many JustTextGiving codes as it wishes. Parishes in Norwich can therefore sign up via Norwich's JustGiving page as 'fundraisers' for the diocese, and this enables the parish to generate its own unique JustTextGiving code. Parishes can then display the JTG code in their church, at events etc and donors can donate by text for free using the unique code. When the donations come in to the diocese, the diocese re-allocates them to the correct parishes based on the unique JTG code of each parish. Each parish can also access branded posters to publicise the donation method in their church, and donors can add Gift Aid to the text-donation too.

For more information on this, see <http://www.norwich.anglican.org/pccs-and-finance/parish-finance/giving-by-txt>

Spreading the word

As well as using new technologies to help people give, you should consider using new technologies such as Facebook or Twitter to spread the word about your appeals, events and other good stories. The best thing is to find a willing volunteer who already uses Facebook or Twitter and ask him/her to set up and operate an account for your church/appeal.

To be effective, the volunteer needs to 'post' news, events, updates etc regularly. The aim is to increase the number of people you engage with and reach. Some of these may become your own friends (as they are called on Facebook) and followers (as they are called on Twitter). Ultimately, some may become your donors too, although Facebook and Twitter are typically more about raising your profile than raising funds.

One note of caution: The instant nature of Facebook, Twitter and other online media can make them seem ephemeral and in many ways they are – something you write today will be buried beneath hundreds more Facebook updates and Tweets by tomorrow. However, in other ways they are not ephemeral at all, and as we have seen above (and as we see in scandals in the media occasionally), anything you write could be spread far beyond your immediate circle. Never say anything offensive via these sites nor anything which could give your church a bad name. Think twice before posting anything you would not want to see repeated in, say, the parish magazine or your local newspaper!

Of course, you must still get permission before you use photos of children on these sites too.

You can think about Facebook and Twitter in 4 stages:

- First stage: **publicising** what you do. Once you have created your Facebook or Twitter account, you begin posting news, photos etc. Your friends and followers can then see what you are up to.
- The second stage is to encourage others to **engage** with you, to comment on your posts or tweets so that they enter into a **dialogue** with you.
- The third stage is to encourage them to **share** or 're-tweet' your posts to their own friends and followers. At this stage, they have become **your ambassadors**, introducing your work to people you do not know who are beyond your original network.
- The fourth stage is to bring these 'friends of friends' **into your own circle** so that they become your friends and followers, interested in what you are doing and sharing it further. And so it continues.
- For fundraising, one further application of Facebook and Twitter is '**crowd funding**.' You ask each of your followers to give a £1 (say) for a particular cause and to 'share' the same appeal with all of their own followers, who do the same thing and share the appeal with all of their followers and so on and so on... You can see how it could escalate and you could reach many more people than you could imagine.

One good way to keep thinking of new things to say is to frame questions or refer to news articles you've read in other places. For example: 'What do you think of the article in today's local newspaper [link] about the need for more community facilities for young people? What could our church provide?'

Don't feel obliged to set up Facebook or Twitter if they are not for you, however. There is not much point setting them up if you won't use them regularly and they are not compulsory!