

Project Management: How to Get Your Church Building Project Ducks in a Row.



The Key Stages in a Church Building Project

-  Basics
-  Vision
-  Team
-  Community Engagement
-  Early Advice
-  Evidence
-  Fundraising
-  Project Development
-  Consent
-  Project Delivery
-  Project Completion
-  Evaluation

BASICS

Maintenance Matters - It can't be stressed enough how important it is to keep on top of regular maintenance and minor repairs. Grants are available to help with costs, and *MaintenanceBooker* from The National Churches Trust is available online to help find accredited contractors.

Check rainwater goods, clear gutters and look for any evidence of leaks and water ingress. Have a maintenance plan, share it with key people and implement it. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has a number of free resources on their website including a handy print out calendar of monthly maintenance tasks. <https://www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operatives-project/mcp-fim-resources>

The following guidance documents are available to download from www.elydiocese.org:

- ~ Top Tips for Maintenance and Minor Repairs
- ~ Church Cleaning – Top Tips

Quinquennial Inspections are important and a statutory requirement. Without them, you will not get funding. When you receive the report, you are advised to meet with the architect as soon as possible to discuss a programme to tackle the recommended repair works. Your QI architect does not have to be involved in all the works but should be consulted.

Keep the **inventory** of the church up to date.

Check your kerb appeal - little things like litter and faded signs can give new people the wrong impression about your church. Large banners can sometimes obscure key photo opportunities for visitors and scaffolding or sectioned-off areas without any explanation miss opportunities to gain support and even donations.

Is your church open and welcome? A locked door is a universal symbol of exclusion. If it's not possible to keep the church open during daylight hours, consider having a key available to collect somewhere nearby or a person to contact. Make sure the signage relating to this sounds positive and welcoming and is clearly visible; please avoid a laminated sheet of paper that will weather quickly.

Read '*Church Buildings for Everyone: A Visitor Welcome Toolkit*' for further advice and information, available from www.elydiocese.org.

Look for opportunities - are there ways to become more involved with the wider community and the expanding tourism economy?

VISION

A project needs a clear purpose – 'fixing the roof' or 'we need a toilet' often isn't enough. You need to explain why you want to do this project and, for most funders, you will need to show wider community support for your project. Some key things to think about:

- How are you called to be a church in this place?
- Look at what is already in place elsewhere in your community/settlement. Are there any gaps?
- What do you already do well, what could you do better?
- Think about where your infrastructure is - water, electricity, gas, drainage – will it need to be added or upgraded?
- Dream BIG and don't worry about the budget to start with. Projects are better in the long term if you can show you have considered all the possibilities. You may not need to do as much as you think you do.
- Try to establish a Project Manager/Lead Person for this stage, ideally someone who will continue to manage the whole project.

Write a Mission Statement - a sentence or short paragraph which reflects your church's core purpose, identity, values and principle aims – "who we are and what we do".

Develop a Vision Statement - a sentence or short paragraph (2-4 sentences) providing a broad, aspirational image of the future. It expresses the desired destination of the church within a certain timeframe. It is in line with the Mission Statement but goes beyond it to look to the future.

Develop a simple Action Plan to help you identify a range of actions, faith-based and community-based, that will take forward your mission and vision.

Carry out a Buildings Audit. Ensure you are up to date on the condition of your building and how you manage maintenance. Look at how you currently use the building and any other assets. Are you aware of your energy use? Check if your building is listed, in a Conservation Area or is on the Heritage at Risk register.

Write a Statement of Significance. This describes how your building has evolved over time, why notable features are important and what contribution they make to the character of the building.

Read the '*Statement of Significance*' guidance available from www.elydiocese.org.

Discuss with your congregation.

TEAM

Decide how you are going to manage the development of your project and define clear roles. It is often a good idea to have a Project or Buildings Team with sub-groups focusing on key areas such as fundraising and

communication. Consider the wider community or partnership working - you could set up a Friend's Group.

Draw up a **Resources Plan/Skills Audit** in which you list the skills you think you will need, those you already have, those you hope to find and those you might have to 'buy' in.

Financial Controls - think about what bank account will be used, who will co-ordinate payments, what procedures and monitoring will be used etc...

Communication/PR is important in maintaining the support of your church and wider community. Funders will also expect to see that the community is involved throughout the project. Draw up a simple communication plan and remember to use the local press and other media at key milestones. Keep details of everything, from meetings and events to publicity and press releases.

Policies and Procedures. There will be many policies you need in place when managing a building project, providing facilities and/or running community activities. These will likely be created along the way and should be collated into one main folder. Policies will include but are not limited to, equal opportunities, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety and GDPR.

Think of the **long-term management** of your project – what sort of governance will you need for the project once it is up and running. If your project focuses on repairs, this might concern maintenance and the setting up of a volunteer group to help. Or it could be looking to see if the heritage engagement activities delivered as part of a grant-aided project could continue post funding. Never overlook the 'small' things e.g. toilets need cleaning, toilets rolls etc...

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Think about:

- What already happens in your community?
- Where are the information sources in your area?
- What else would people like to happen locally?
- How can you use the church space to host other community events?

Carry out a Parish Audit, a factual profile of your church. Describe as many aspects of your church as possible such as style/s of worship, a profile of the people who come, current resources and activities that take place within the church and current relationships with the local community. This links to your buildings audit.

Undertake a Community Audit - survey and consult with the local community. Specific advice on community consultation is available on the Church Buildings pages of the Diocese of Ely's website.

EARLY ADVICE

Have an initial conversation with the DAC. Seek advice early, before you have any formal plans drawn up – it will likely save you time and money. The Church Buildings team are more than happy to visit your church to offer early advice. A DAC site visit might then be arranged at a later date.

The PCC is also recommended to **consult an architect at an early stage.** This can, but does not have to be, your existing quinquennial inspecting (QI) architect. There may, however, be some merit in taking advice from your QI architect as they should be familiar with the building and any structural or other issues which may be relevant to the project.

Visit other similar projects. Your architect and the Church Buildings team can suggest similar projects for you to visit; though every church is unique, visiting other sites can be a great source of inspiration and education.

EVIDENCE

Once you've absorbed all the information gathered so far, you can then **finalise the aims and objectives of your project** and write your **Statement of Need**. Keep objectives **SMART** – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely. Identify the process and the person who is responsible for achieving the objective.

Statement of Need - this is your opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise your proposals. You must clearly explain why the needs of a church cannot be met without making changes/repairs to the building, and why the changes/repairs need to be made at this time. If you are applying to an external funder you will likely have to justify the need for your project in terms of the impact it will have on the wider community. Funders will also expect evidence to prove this need; some key things to think about:

- Why do you need to do your project?
- Is it being done elsewhere?
- Who have you asked?
- Research local statistics and data e.g. Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Collect attendance numbers at events- show growth if possible.
- Audit – accessibility/open and welcome/kerb appeal.
- How have you reached your vision?

Read the 'Statement of Need' guidance available from www.elydiocese.org.

A Business Plan is an essential tool in planning and managing a project. It explains how your church will turn the vision for its building into reality by summarising the activities, systems and resources needed. Read 'Project Business Plan' for advice on to how to write a plan, available from www.elydiocese.org.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising Plan

- Work out a fundraising strategy – who you are applying to and when. Read all the guidance notes from potential grant giving bodies – twice!
- Plan plenty of time to write applications and get someone not connected to the bid to read it through. Be sure to check the numbers add up.
- Think of other fundraising opportunities and keep them separate from existing parish fundraising methods.
- Do not start actively fundraising until you know how much your project will cost. Some funders require you to have permissions in place before applying.

The following guidance documents are available to download from www.elydiocese.org:

- ~ A Quick Guide to Fundraising
- ~ Community Fundraising
- ~ Crowdfunding
- ~ A Guide to the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- ~ Top Ten Funding Application Errors
- ~ Fundraising Plan Spreadsheet

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Develop and test your ideas, run some events, recruit volunteers and keep gathering your evidence.

Appoint an Architect. Your project architect does not have to be the same as your Quinquennial Inspecting architect, however, out of courtesy you should ask whether they are interested in tendering. Your architect will take the lead on appointing the **Wider Design Team**.

Options Appraisal. If there are a range of possibilities in front of you, it is useful to undertake a detailed objective assessment of them before too much work has been done. It may well be that the proposed idea is a good one but is it the best solution to the problem? A SWOT analysis can help – an exercise where you look at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for each idea. If appropriate test out ideas and run some events to gather feedback.

Feasibility Study – this is a formal written document which evaluates the potential of a proposed project. This is not usually necessary for smaller projects, but the more complex a project the greater the likelihood that the DAC and funders will expect it.

CONSENT

- Drawings, plans, specifications
- Final costs
- Finalise and implement your **Fundraising Strategy**
- Consult with the DAC and other bodies – *this can take time. Make sure you ask at an early stage about timeframes and DAC meeting dates*
- Obtain Faculty Consent and any other permissions required.

PROJECT DELIVERY

- Your architect will lead the building works through the RIBA stages, but keep a close eye on the **works schedule and timetable, health and safety and cash flow** (GANTT charts can be useful).
- Monitor progress and report as and when necessary.
- Remember to keep your community up to date with what is happening. Organise community days, if possible, with hard hat tours.
- Keep all invoices and receipts and **reclaim VAT** – get your first application in early as it can take time to process.
- Plan the official launch/opening.

PROJECT COMPLETION

- Sign-off work
- Launch/open and celebrate. Remember to thank everyone involved – funders, volunteers, partners, the community etc...

EVALUATION

Evaluation should occur throughout the project; this is called formative evaluation. All projects must be evaluated at the end; this is known as summative evaluation.

- How did it go? Any unexpected developments?
- Did you achieve your project outcomes? How has the funding made a difference?
- How many events did you run?
- How many people came?
- Volunteer hours and numbers?

Remember.....

- Some ducks swim alongside others such as basics, community engagement and evidence gathering.
- Are there ways to become more involved with the wider community and the expanding tourism economy?
- Don't start applying for funding too soon.
- Keep details of EVERYTHING! Meetings, community events, publicity with funders logo on it, where the project has been promoted etc...
- Release the project team when its finished - they may be a fabulous team of people, but they really will need a break.
- Keep on top of the basics and make sure the outcomes of your project, your vision, continue.

Further Information

The Diocese of Ely's website contains a range of downloadable documents and links to guidance on other websites which have been approved by the DAC. Please visit www.elydiocese.org and use the search bar to search for a keyword. If you have any problems, please contact the Church Buildings Team directly.

Caring for God's Acre – churchyard habitats – <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>

Churchcare - maintaining your church building - <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare>

Crossing the Threshold Toolkit: a step-by-step guide to managing a church building project - <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/Crossingthethresholdtoolkit/>

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme - advice on VAT - <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

Maintenance Booker - <https://www.maintenancebooker.org.uk/>

Parish Resources - <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/>

SPAB Maintenance Resources - <https://www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operatives-project/mcp-fim-resources>

Many thanks to Mrs Fran Bell, Church Development Officer, Diocese of Lincoln for sharing her notes on this subject and for the 'ducks' analogy.