

GUIDANCE ON MANAGING CHURCH BUILDING PROJECTS

Introduction

Responsibility for Church buildings rests with each Parochial Church Council under the Constitution so PCC's will from time to time be involved in significant building projects. Such projects may be repairs or improvements to the Building's fabric or may be projects which develop the use of the building in new ways. These notes seek to help PCC's in that process.

This guidance covers the following areas:

- Project Vision
- Project Team
- Engaging professionals
- Safety
- Feasibility Studies and Business Plans
- Permissions and Consents
- Key Tips

The Starting Point

In developing a project, the Parish must be clear about its **Vision**. This means clearly defining what it is you wish to achieve. This should be a simple statement of the project which enables everybody involved to understand the common goal. It is vital that people understand what is to be achieved (and what is not) and a clear Vision statement can help in this process.

The overall vision does not go into detail – it gives the general picture and aims to inspire those who are working towards it. The detail can be expressed in a set of objectives for the project. These are the key targets that will combine to achieve the vision. Developing a project by having a written vision and objectives may seem unnecessary and obvious, but time spent considering what you aim to achieve, and broadly how you will do it, will help the PCC to focus on its task.

Consultation is vitally important and the project should be discussed with the Archdeacon at an early stage. The Diocesan Churches and Pastoral Committee should also be involved as they can give an essential overview as to the way forward and the wider context of the Diocese.

The Project Team

Having agreed what you are seeking to achieve, it is vital to form a project team. This is the group of people who will be trusted to see the project through. This group will ultimately report to the PCC, but it should be trusted and empowered to take the project forward between PCC meetings.

The precise make-up of a project team will vary with the project but there are key roles that need to be filled:

- The Project Coordinator – this person is not the decision maker on all matters but is the person that brings the team together, monitors progress and agrees actions and priorities. They have a secretarial function in keeping the team informed of agreed actions and target dates. The Project Coordinator will also act as the first point of contact between the Church and any professional advisors who might be involved in the project.
- The Finance Officer – somebody needs to monitor payments and funding for the project to ensure an appropriate cash flow. This person will usually be the PCC treasurer but need not always be so. It is vital that they have a close relationship with the PCC Treasurer.
- The Fund Raiser – Somebody should coordinate the fund raising effort. This may be the Finance Officer, but they should have sufficient time to devote to this work. Depending on the project this may involve applying to different organisations for grants.
- The Building Officer – if the project has a significant level of building work, there can be merit in having somebody dedicated to understanding the technical aspects of the building work and act as a key contact for architects etc. This role can often be combined with the Project Coordinator role.
- The Safety Officer – It is beneficial to have somebody to take a special interest in safety issues for the project. Whilst Health and Safety management will largely be through the Architect and Contractor, it is useful to have somebody take an interest in these matters.

It is important that these roles are filled by the right people. There is no reason why people from outside the PCC should not be co-opted onto the Project team to assist and it can enhance the project if expertise is drawn from the wider community. It is not automatically necessary that the incumbent is a member of the project team – members must have the time to devote to the project. However, it is useful if clear rules are established as to how the Project team will report back to the Incumbent, Churchwardens and PCC as the scheme progresses.

It is vital that the project team meets regularly and at an agreed time and place with meetings scheduled in advance. Even if there seems little to discuss, the discipline of a scheduled meeting ensures continued and effective communication.

The team should prepare a Project Plan. This should cover:

- Meetings and Communications
- Outline timescale including key dates
- Outside professional advice
- Protocols for payments including rules over procurement
- Reporting and Monitoring

Engaging Professionals

For any building project you will need an Architect or appropriately qualified surveyor to develop the project and instruct contractors on your behalf. This is vital as not only does it ensure high standards of work, but it gives protection to PCC through Professional Indemnity Insurances which will assist in the event of something going wrong.

The Architect (and that term can include an appropriately qualified Building Surveyor), will guide you through the project and advise on all aspects including the need for additional professional help e.g. engineers, Quantity Surveyors etc.

The relationship between Client (PCC) and Architect is crucial and like any relationship is built on clear and effective communication. Being clear on both sides of requirements and expectations is essential.

Most building projects arise from identified problems in the Church Quinquennial Survey, and the Quinquennial Architect will generally be the best person to take the project forward given their knowledge of the building. However, you should spend some time considering which architect you would like to use. The following points may help:

- Establish the key things you need from your architect – draw up a list of key requirements:
 - ? Conservation Expertise - if yours is not a listed building this may be less important
 - ? Design Flair – are you looking for design or sympathetic restoration
 - ? Management Skills – you are likely to want somebody who is efficient and can manage your project as you wish
 - ? Enthusiasm and Personality – are they keen to do your work and sympathetic to your vision
 - ? Size of Practice – Small practices may be better on local jobs and may be more hands-on. Larger practices may be better resourced and more in touch with other bodies e.g. funders.
- Look at examples of the Architects work – this will re-assure you
- Where to find a good architect?
 - By personal recommendation
 - Contact Royal Society of Architects in Wales Tel: 029 2087 4752
 - Check websites
 - Local directories (NB Somebody offering Architectural Services is less qualified than an Architect)
- Don't be afraid to interview candidates
 - Nobody has a right to work – they must earn the commission by satisfying you the client (the PCC)
 - Interview at your church by looking at the issues – this will help you to gauge the Architects knowledge and interest
 - Take up references
 - Go and see other work they have done
 - Some funding organisations require architects to be appointed through a competitive process so try to establish a short list you are comfortable with.
 - Check who will actually be doing your work – the person that sells the services may not be the person who does the work.
- Compare the candidates against your requirements list.
 - Do not to appoint family or a friend – conflicts of interest are difficult to resolve
 - But make your architect your friend
 - Find somebody you feel you can trust

How to appoint Professionals

There are two key aspects to appointing any professional consultant: the written brief and the contract.

The Brief

This is the Client's (PCC's) statement of what they want to achieve. All too often the Architect writes his own brief having interpreted what the PCC have said to him. It is always better to define the brief yourselves to express, from the start, what you are seeking to achieve. The brief, which should be in the form of a letter, should cover:

- The Project Vision
- The Project Objectives
- The Project Team (especially who the Architect should direct communication through – one point of contact)
- Any financial considerations – budget limits cash flow etc
- Any time constraints
- Safety Issues (See CDM issues below)
- Any particular design considerations

You should then send this to the Architect, asking them to confirm their fees and terms of business for this work.

The Contract

This is the agreement over the terms and conditions of the services being provided. The Architect will respond by letter setting out details of:

- The service to be provided to fulfil the brief
- Fees and stages of payment
 - Fees can be for each hour worked based on a budget maximum
 - A lump sum for the project (usually small projects)
 - A fee based on a Percentage of the project cost (10-16% depending on level of skill needed)
 - There can be additional fees for site surveys and, of course, other professionals.
- Estimated programme
- Point of contact
- Professional Indemnity Cover – limits and duration
- Complaints procedure

You will be asked to agree and sign this letter and it will act as the contract between you.

You can expect your Architect to:

- Guide you through the complexities of Statutory Requirements, Conservations techniques, environmental issues, liturgical issues, aesthetic issues, Health and Safety, access/disability issues; sources of funding
- Set up the contract between you and the building contractor including drawing up the tender document and seeking competitive tenders (usually at least 3) and drawing up an appropriate building contract
- Check quality
- Monitor progress
- Advise on necessary changes
- Certify when and how much the builder should be paid
- Inspect work as it progresses and liaise with the builder
- Follow the Schedule of Services set out in the contract
- Use reasonable skill and care

Your architect will expect you to:

- Give them a clear brief (with his input and help)
- Appoint other professionals that the architect may require
- Comply with safety requirements
- Respond promptly to approval sought by the architect
- Pay fees etc when they are due
- Employ the building contractor under a separate contract (which the architect will draw up). The contractor is employed, like the Architect, by the PCC.

Other professionals will generally be recommended by your Architect who will brief them over the project's requirements but the PCC will need to have a contract with those professionals in a similar way to the Architect. Again this will usually be drawn up by the professional.

Procurement

Generally, work should be procured by competitive tender or quotation. As a general rule, the following approach should be adopted:

- Work under £5,000 – by quotation from a suitably qualified/experienced supplier
- £5,000 - £50,000 – at least three quotations from reputable companies capable of carrying out the work based on a schedule or specification of work
- £50,000 + - At least three formal tenders from suppliers selected by the architect and based on a detailed specification. The work would be let on a recognised contract e.g JCT.

Safety

It is vital that building projects are conducted safely. For small works you should:

- Be satisfied that your contractor holds Public Liability Insurance
- Ask your contractor to set out, in writing, his risk assessment of the work and his proposed methods of safe working for the task. This should include measures to protect visitors.

Other works are likely to be covered by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM). These regulations set down procedures for the planning and management of the safety issues of building projects. The PCC will be the Client in respect of these projects and is obliged to ensure management arrangements for safety are put in place. The Regulations recognise that the PCC as Client may know little about construction health and safety, so they are not expected to manage projects themselves.

You should ask your architect's advice on whether your project is likely to fall within these Regulations and, if it does, how he envisages the regulations can be complied with. Compliance involves the appointment of a competent contractor, a CDM coordinator and an appropriate designer or architect. The CDM coordinator can also be the architect, but may be a separate professional particularly if the project is complex.

The CDM coordinator will ask the PCC for information relating to health and safety issues and the PCC is obliged to provide it where they can do so.

It is recommended that a member of the project team has a particular brief for safety issues and, whilst they need not be safety professionals, should be there to ask questions of the architect and contractor on issues of safety based on common sense and observation.

Health and Safety should be a standing item at project meetings so that it is always considered at every step of the project.

Feasibility Studies and Business Plans

Feasibility studies are conducted to try and assess all the considerations relating to a particular project to ensure its practicality and viability. The feasibility study is designed to provide an overview of the primary issues related to a project. It identifies the 'make or break' issues that would prevent your project from being successful. It is different from a business plan which looks at the project in more depth and sets out the key actions that will lead to the success of your project.

Feasibility Studies are often a requirement of grant funding bodies and can be undertaken by architects, business consultants or fundraising specialists. They will be useful for community-based projects as the feasibility study will include consultations with interested parties.

The format of a feasibility study will vary with particular projects and the requirements of grant funders. A feasibility study should cover the following areas:

- Vision and objectives of the project
- Market Analysis
 - Who would use the project
 - How does it fit with existing provision
 - Identification of key stakeholders and users
 - Feedback from consultation
- Key Organisational and Structural issues
 - How should the project be organised both during the build phase and afterwards
 - How should management be organised – who will oversee and monitor?
 - Legal issues – tenure etc
 - Main practical matters
 - How will users/stakeholders be involved?
- Financial issues
 - Outline estimated capital costs of the project
 - Operating Costs – how much will it cost to run
 - Revenue – how much income can be generated
 - Sources of Finance – Capital and Revenue
 - Profit/Loss or break even analysis
 - Risk analysis – how vulnerable are these projections to change?
 - Assumptions should be clearly noted
- Overall Feasibility Evaluation
 - Summary and Conclusions
 - Recommendations/Next Steps

A business plan will develop this feasibility study further and create the template by which the project will be established and operated. It will specifically detail how each of the elements identified in the feasibility study will be managed and handled. The Business Plan is important as it sets down clearly all the thinking that has gone into a project and records decisions and priorities. It provides a roadmap for the successful completion of the project.

Permissions and Consents

Any project is likely to need a variety of permissions and consents from different authorities. Listed below are some of the main permissions but your architect will advise:

Planning Permission

Any project which changes the external appearance of a building or constitutes a material change of use is likely to require planning permission. This is granted by the Local Authority and early discussions should take place with the Planning Department over the need for consent and the likelihood of obtaining it. Planning authorities prepare a local plan which sets out the policy for a geographical area under a number of headings. The policies of this plan are a key consideration for any planning application. A fee is charged with any application and the planning application should be decided in 8 weeks but can be extended if more information is needed or the applicant agrees. In reality, planning applications take between 3 and 6 months so an appropriate timescale should be allowed in the project plan.

Listed Building Consent

Consent is required for any works to a Listed Building (other than minor repair) from the Local Authority. However, faculty replaces this consent in the case of places of worship.

Church Halls, monuments, Sunday school buildings etc which are separate from the Church itself will need Listed Building Consent. This is separate from planning permission.

Conservation Area Consent

If your building is within a Conservation Area (an area designated by the Local Authority as important for its group value), it is necessary to apply for Conservation Area consent. As for Listed Building Consent, this is not necessary for places of worship as Faculty procedure replaces it. Other buildings will need this consent.

Faculty

All works to all church buildings require a faculty. This is granted by the Diocesan Chancellor with the advice of the Diocesan Advisory Committee. A petition (application) should be made at an early stage via the Diocesan Registrar. The Diocesan Advisory Committee is able to give advice and guidance on such petitions.

Grant of faculty replaces the need for Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area consent. It does not replace the need, if it exists, for planning permission.

Building Regulations

Building work is covered by a system of building control administered through local authorities. Obtaining approval involves the submission of drawings of new work prior to commencement and ongoing site monitoring by the Building Officer during works. A certificate is issued at completion. Your architect will handle the details of this.

Owner's Consent

Legal ownership of most Church in Wales buildings rests with the Representative Body or sometimes the Diocese (mainly schools and halls). Any project which involves granting rights in the property (leases, licences etc) will need the consent of the owner. Any such arrangement is a disposal of land and covered by Charity Commission rules of best value. Early consultation with the Representative Body or diocese is recommended to ensure a satisfactory arrangement is put in place.

Some funders will not give money to religious projects but will fund community activities. In the past, separate groups from the PCC have been formed to operate these projects and

have occupied the Church's buildings on a lease for a rent (with a suitable credit arrangement for church usages). It can be possible to construct arrangements via a User Group representing the users of the facility which ensures adequate secular participation whilst avoiding the need for a lease.

It is important to understand the timescales for each of these consents and plan these into your project accordingly. Be realistic about how quickly these will come through as getting permission tends to be the most common cause of project delay.

The Project Process – Some key tips

Forming the Project Vision

This is in some ways the most important step in the process of delivering a project. This is the step which focuses priorities and effort. The following are key elements of this step:

- Consider what is driving change and where pressure for change comes from
- Work as a PCC to develop ideas – it is vital that everybody is signed up to the project
- Spend some time gathering data and information to act as an initial feasibility. This will help answer some of the obvious early-stage concerns
- Research what has been done elsewhere – it helps to know what can be done and to learn from the experience of others
- Define what you wish to achieve and how you will do it (in outline)
- Involve the local community. Even with humble repair projects it is important that the wider community is made aware of what the church is planning. This may release volunteer assistance. Clearly, projects with a community focus will depend completely on community support and engagement. Do not go to the wider community with fully worked up plans – consider how you can discuss the ideas with others.
- Be flexible and be open to ideas. It is easy to get excited and inspired by a vision and de-motivated when the original vision is amended or altered. At the early stages, focus on the principle of the project, not the precise means by which it will be achieved.

Developing the Project

- Form your project team and try to get the right people for the jobs even if they are not within the PCC or immediate church community
- Particularly if engaging professional advice, work up a clear Project Brief. This is the public statement of the shared vision and the outline plan of how it will be accomplished.
- Feasibility Studies – spend time and money working on this. This is your check that the idea is a good one.
- The Business Plan – a vital document as it is your roadmap to success
- Spend time choosing the right professionals to help you. Make sure they share your vision and are not seeking to develop their own version of it.
- Research the consents you will need and realistically plan for these from the start

Resourcing the Project – Funding

- Think ahead – grant applications take time to prepare, time to be considered and time to be paid. Build this into your project plan from the start.
- Identify your main funding sources and get to know what the key priorities of the organisations are. Funding has certain objectives which may not be identical to your own. Look at how you can get the objectives as close together as possible. Think laterally!
- Discuss your project with the officers of the grant body. They are there to help and want to ensure their annual grant budget is spent each year.
- Many grants will seek to assist communities in the widest sense. Make sure your application has a community and not a religious focus. Show how your project will benefit the widest cross section of the community especially the most in need – youth, elderly, disabled etc
- Forms are daunting but do not be scared. The questions are not traps but a means by which the funder can assess whether the application meets their objectives. Answer every question with the grant funder's objectives in mind.
- Fundraising – any project will involve local fundraising. Your Diocesan Office should be able to help you with ideas for developing a fundraising plan. Talk to other churches about their experiences over fundraising
- Always be honest about your project
- Be persistent as a funder may be oversubscribed in one year but not the next
- Consider undertaking your project in stages to benefit from regular lower levels of grant
- Make sure your project is sustainable. Of primary importance is showing that the project is financially sound so that the investment of grant will produce the expected benefits in the long term.
- Contact the RB property department at an early stage if you are applying for:
 - Heritage Lottery Fund Grants
 - Grants involving community use/partnership arrangements
 - Grants that come with strict time limits or claw back arrangements

Keeping it going – viability and sustainability

- At an early stage give careful thought to the operating costs of your project and the sources of funding that will meet those costs. Make sure the project can stand on its own and does not depend on a few vulnerable sources of aid.
- Allow your vision to evolve with time and with experience – do not rigidly stick to one model.
- Think about your Project team. The best people to deliver the project may not be the best people to keep the project going.
- Build in green measures from the start – consider your carbon footprint.
- Share your experiences and knowledge with others.