CHAPTER

3

DEVELOPING A TEAM AND ASSESSING YOUR SKILLS AND ABILITIES

TEAM PRAYER

Loving heavenly Father we come to you this hour asking for your blessing and help as we are gathered together. We pray for guidance in the matters at hand and ask that you would clearly show us how to conduct our work with a spirit of joy and enthusiasm. Give us the desire to find ways to excel in our work. Help us to work together and encourage each other to excellence. We ask that we would challenge each other to reach higher and farther to be the best we can be. We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

If you are starting a major project, you must form a group (which could be called a committee/project board/management group/ working or development group) with the necessary range of skills and knowledge to undertake the project using the appropriate professional help when necessary. Ideally, you will need people with project management, business and financial skills, and also a good Chairperson and Secretary to run the group and undertake all the necessary administration.

(Hereafter, we will refer to this group as the Group.)

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Group will largely be made up of representatives from the church (preferably including members of the PCC/Trustees). Your architect should have copies of any minutes and papers generated by the Group, but it may not be a good use of his/her time if he/she were to attend every meeting – and may well be costly to you in the long run. If you have a project manager, it may be useful for them to attend, but again, it depends on the nature of their contract and how much this may cost. You may, depending on the project, also wish to invite members of the community or from partner organisations to join the Group. This will also emphasise the message that this is a **community project**, rather than a church project.

The larger your community project team, the better, so long as everyone's tasks are clear. It is far easier for ten people to find a little bit of free time on a regular basis and **share the load** than it is for two people to find a lot of free time.

BEING PROFESSIONAL

Your Group needs to act and behave in a professional manner at all times. Potential funders and supporters, including your local community, will need to see that it is a professionally run group that is capable of managing a project from development through to completion and beyond. The National Lottery Heritage Fund's (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund) application form for its larger grant programmes specifically asks what expertise and experience your project group has which is relevant to your application.

Your organisation will need to be properly constituted and funders will expect to see how important documents, such as a business plan and other documentation have been produced, discussed and approved by reading the minutes of meetings. All of these will have to be produced to a professional standard, because if you are going to be asking for funding from public funders and local people, you will need to provide the evidence that you have developed a well thought out, workable and sustainable project.

If your project is creating a new use for the church building, then under certain circumstances that new activity may best be run by a new body with its own distinct legal existence; and if so, you should consider whether to set up the new body earlier rather than later, as funders may require this. See Chapter 4 for details.

HERE ARE THE THINGS YOU WILL NEED TO THINK ABOUT:

Setting up your organisation

In order to ensure that the money is spent on the purposes it was allocated for, grant funders prefer to deal with **properly constituted organisations**. You also need to show that you have a structure in place that will not only develop the project, but also manage it in the long term. (Choosing an appropriate organisational structure is covered in Chapter 4.)

Firstly, define the terms of reference of your Group and develop a clear set of aims and objectives. As your project develops, your vision and main objectives will become more focussed i.e. deciding what services you are going to provide and who will be the beneficiaries.

You should also agree clear lines of accountability and communication. There will be times when decisions may need to be taken quickly and everyone needs to understand the chain of command and where responsibilities for the project lie.

Every member of the Group should be aware of the terms of reference and understand how decisions are made and actions taken. You will also need to actively seek the backing of your PCC or your governing body or committee.

Skills and Abilities

Running a community/building project will require many skills. So draw up a **Resources Plan** in which you list:

- the full list of skills you think you will need;
- those you already have;
- those you hope to be able to find in the wider pool of the local community; and
- those you may have to 'buy' in or seek from outside experts.

A SUGGESTED SKILLS AUDIT – *you may not need all of these*

Leadership - bringing people together; achieving consensus to reach decisions – Chair

Financial - keeping control of the budget – Treasurer

Project Management - co-ordinating the PCC/Trustees side of the project to keep everyone on track and managing communications between architect, contractors and PCC

Technical/building – an understanding of building issues so as to be able to work effectively with professional advisers. This could be combined with the project manager role

Communications - writing, newsletters, social media (publicity)

IT - completing online forms, designing spreadsheets and creating a website

Administrative - organisational, keeping records, writing minutes

Education - understanding learning environments e.g. schools, adult learning

Local knowledge - knows the community and community leaders well

History – knowledge of local history, research sources and methods

Fundraising – knowledge and experience of fundraising

Creative/social – organising events and activities some of which may be fundraising

Practical – other volunteers to help with events, moving furniture, clearing up!

(Taken from the Ambassadors' Training Notes supported and delivered by Historic England and the Diocese of Norwich.)

Ask your volunteers what skills they have. Some may have been the Treasurer of another community group, while others through current or previous employment may have a financial, IT or communications background, have experience of project management or of giving presentations to groups of people.

Look within your own congregation and the local community. You may be lucky enough to have a retired architect in your congregation who can help with writing briefs, or a solicitor living nearby who can advise on writing legal agreements, but be very clear on what basis they are being asked to help, as retired professionals tend not to keep up to date with current practice or indeed may not have kept up any form of professional indemnity insurance. Other useful people could include a local historian who can help with research and understanding the historical and architectural significance of your building.

You may also need people with other specialist skills depending on the project e.g. if it's about creating learning activities whether for schools or the community, then see if there are any retired teachers in your congregation/community.

People may have other skills that have nothing to do with buildings or community hubs. Those who have had managerial jobs will have transferable skills such as leading on complex projects and managing change.

Ask people if they would like to be involved. They may not be aware of your project – and people always liked to be asked. This can be your opportunity to bring new people on board with new skills and fresh energy!

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

A Resources Plan will **also** demonstrate what training requirements you may need. Volunteers need to be trained – they must know what they are doing, not only in the pre-capital phase but after the building work is completed. For example, a project running a lunch club with food prepared in your new kitchen will need volunteers trained in food hygiene and preparation skills. Do any volunteers need First Aid training? They should be as qualified as a paid person. Volunteer does **not** mean for free and it is usually not inferior either – many highly skilled people choose to volunteer but it is also true that some people will need some support. Identify the standard of quality that your project must achieve and then ensure that all your volunteers are adequately trained to meet those standards.

Organising appropriate training for your group can be added to your list of objectives (see further on in this Chapter.)

RUNNING YOUR MEETINGS

It is valuable to spend some time discussing as a Group how you will run your meetings. Will you make decisions by taking a vote or trying to reach a consensus through discussion? Crucial to achieving this is having:

- an experienced/skilled Chairperson;
- an experienced/skilled Secretary to take the minutes and record the decisions taken, the agreed actions and who has agreed to undertake them. The minutes need to be produced and circulated quickly and at every meeting actions should be reported on;
- an experienced/skilled Treasurer/finance person to keep control of the budget.

You might also want to agree a set of values. A suggested list could include:

- be positive
- be respectful
- speak succinctly and let everyone have their say
- aim to agree by consensus
- be responsible for actions you agreed to undertake and be honest if you need to ask for help
- listen to hear

Learn to appreciate other's contributions. People can contribute in different ways i.e. some may say little, but they will have been listening and will provide crucial input just when it is needed most. Others may talk a lot because that it how they do their thinking.

Take into account the needs of the Group as well as the building – not everyone will be able to come to every event or meeting so don't worry if they don't. On the other hand, it is probably good to agree how often people need to come to meetings for the project to work well.

Ensure everyone feels they have a role, while at the same time, don't overburden anyone by giving them a job without ensuring they feel confident to take it on, and make sure you offer support.

Get regular meetings scheduled in the diary to keep your project moving forward. Make sure you meet somewhere comfortable and practical. Meeting in the pub may be a good idea, but if it is in the public bar, it may be difficult to hear if you are competing with a quiz or football match on the TV. Meeting in a cold church, with no heating or toilets or kitchen facilities, may demonstrate the need for your project, but may not be conducive to comfortable, productive meetings.

Agree how you are going to communicate between meetings. There may be decisions that need to be taken quickly. And if it's by email, then ensure all your members have access to the internet. Online facilities such as Dropbox or Google Drive allow you to share documents and open them for editing by several people simultaneously. Again ensure everyone knows how to use these facilities and provide training for those who can't, to ensure that everyone can access this and no one is excluded.

It is a good idea to ensure that people are willing to take responsibility for specific aspects of the project. This does **not** mean they have to do it all, but that they will take charge of making sure that the actions in that area get done.

OBJECTIVES

As soon as you have your overall aim, you can start agreeing your objectives, which will be more detailed and should explain how you will make your project happen. These are the actions that you tick off as you progress on your journey. Objectives need to be 'SMART':

- **Specific** – Something detailed (e.g. the opening of a bank account.)

- **Measurable** – Quantifiable. You need to know when you have achieved something. This helps with project monitoring. If your objective is to recruit 20 volunteers within 6 weeks, and you've recruited 10 volunteers in 3 weeks, then you know exactly how much more of this objective is left to achieve and when you need to achieve it by.

- **Achievable** – Don't set objectives that only Superman or Wonder Woman can achieve! Be realistic with your targets and allow yourselves enough time.

- **Relevant** – The objective needs to be relevant to your project.

- **Timely** – There will be some objectives that you can't start until you have completed others. Being aware of when certain objectives need to be completed will help you with your project management.

FINANCIAL CONTROLS

If you're opening up a bank account, most banks will insist on a minimum of two signatories, and usually suggest that all cheques should be signed by at least two from a pool of three signatories. Signatories at different addresses offer better financial security.

Think about who will pay the invoices and what your procedure for approving expenditure will be. A lot depends upon the financial size of your project. What about financial limits? Should work of more than £20,000 be authorised by the whole Group and not just the Treasurer, for example?

Who should act as the co-ordinator for these payments? A treasurer is the sensible option, but the project finances are not the responsibility of one person – it's the responsibility of the whole Group. How will the Treasurer know when an invoice should be paid? Has the work by contractors been carried out to a satisfactory standard? If so, how will the Treasurer know? Who in your group has financial monitoring skills?

Your bank and also your church treasurer will be able to give you advice on this.

COMMUNICATION/PR

If you've worked hard to consult the local community about what they'd like to see, then it is important to maintain their support, so you must keep them informed as the project progresses. Funders will want to see that the community is involved throughout.

You also need to feedback to your own congregation; you don't want them to feel they are being kept out of the loop.

Write a simple plan to clarify how you will do this. This could include:

- setting up a website or a new section on the existing church website. Keep it up to date and always include plenty of photos. Create a link to and from the village/community website;

- sending out a regular newsletter;

- setting up a Facebook page or posting items about the project onto an existing Facebook page. Twitter is useful for highlighting big news items such as obtaining a grant or advertising events;

- putting updates on public notice boards;

- organising events to celebrate project milestones;

- organising project talks, tours and exhibitions.

Your website/newsletter should set out your vision and your objectives as well as providing relevant information such as costs and proposed plans and results of surveys etc. Provide details on how people can get involved. You may also have someone in your congregation or local community who has experience of writing press releases, or who can write a blog, create a Facebook page and uses Twitter. Facebook is one of the most effective ways of communicating updates about your project and the information can be shared and posted on other local pages. Find someone who enjoys Facebook – or train someone up – but it is a really important way of getting your message out on a very local level.

You may also want to get wider publicity such as when you start community consultations, launch your fundraising campaign or when the project is completed. You may want to speak to local press and your local radio station. Every Diocese and denomination will have a **Director of Communication** or **Communications Officer** and they can help you with this.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Developing, implementing and monitoring a project means creating many plans and policies along the way. Collect them all together into one big project file document. This becomes your project 'bible' – the document containing all of your policies on equal opportunities, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. It's where you can keep your community group's vision and aims, skills lists, objectives, action plan and communication strategy. All of these documents should be **regularly reviewed**. Whenever a change happens, go through this project file and see what impact it has on your other policies and procedures.

If you are running a project that involves building work and providing facilities and activities for people, there will be several areas of policy and procedures that you will need to have in place (see below.) It is not only better to have thought about these issues in advance rather than having to do so when a situation crops up, but funders may also ask to see them.

There is support out there and you may find that another group's (including your own church) policies and procedures can be adapted to suit your needs. Don't re-invent the wheel if you don't have to.

Policies that you may want to consider including are:

Environmental sustainability

Nowadays, sustainability should be included in everything that goes on in your building from heating to lighting to the transportation of your congregation and other users. Funders will often expect you to demonstrate how the project is environmentally sustainable.

If your project involves making alterations to the building, think about appropriate sustainable materials, techniques and design. For example, do you want to source labour and materials from within a 20-mile radius to reduce the carbon footprint of your project? What will you do with the old materials and can you re-purpose what you have?

Thinking about this early on can help create a more comfortable and efficient building which is cheaper to run as well as having less environmental impact.

The Church of England's Environmental Campaign has guidance on audits, developing action plans and what sort of changes you can make including guidance on heating and lighting.
www.churchofengland.org/environment

Most Church of England Dioceses will have an Environmental Officer and most denominations have information on their websites. (There is more about this in Chapter 9)

Access for Everyone

Access comes under the **Equality Act 2010** which under the duty to make reasonable adjustments requires:

- all employers, large and small, to make reasonable adjustments to avoid substantial disadvantage to disabled employees. This duty is not speculative, but relates to the actual needs of a specific individual who is disabled. It may, however, be more cost-effective to consider access improvements as part of a programme of planned refurbishment, thereby allowing for disabled people to be employed in the future without the need for further alterations. It will also enable you to welcome disabled volunteers; and

- service providers to take positive steps to ensure that disabled people can access services at a standard that is as close as possible to that offered to the public. Unlike the duty imposed on employers,

this is an anticipatory duty; service providers are required to anticipate the needs of disabled people and to accommodate them in a wide variety of ways. *www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance*

You will want to ensure that you are taking into account the needs of your users which will include the elderly and mothers with pushchairs and toddlers. So take this opportunity to not only ensure your project is fully accessible, but look again at current access to all your activities, including worship. Maybe this project can improve access to the whole building. Increased accessibility doesn't always require major physical adaptations and much can be achieved by improved signage and better lighting.

Important: The Equality Act does not override other legislation such as listed building or planning legislation and the need to obtain appropriate approvals under Ecclesiastical Exemption still applies in the case of changes made to improve access. However as Christians, we should always be striving to be as inclusive as possible and not use our listing as an excuse not to make our buildings as accessible as possible.

There is plenty of guidance on the internet on how to undertake an access audit. All the denominational websites have information on this.

Your church management group (e.g. PCC, Trustees) should have the following policies, at least, already in place. Your project Group may wish to use these versions as a template for their own policies.

Child Protection/Vulnerable User

This will vary from project to project, but it is something that should be considered. If you're creating a community space in the church that will be used by groups of children or vulnerable people, will you only let out the space to adults who are registered with the Independent Safeguard Authority? What steps will you take when new users wish to use your project, to ensure that all users are protected accordingly? Your Diocese or Denomination will have a Safeguarding Officer who will be more than happy to provide you with information or advice on any aspect of the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Equal Opportunities

What steps will you take to ensure that anyone can get involved and volunteer with your project, or use your project facilities once they are up and running? This can raises issues as some people may feel uncomfortable allowing certain groups to use a church for specific activities. However, equal opportunities apply to everyone. A public funder may refuse to give you public money, if there are some members of the public that you wouldn't allow to use your church or get involved with your project. If you think this may become an issue then you should seek advice.

Health and Safety

What steps will you have in place to assess whether the intended use of your project meets current health and safety guidelines? You must ensure your building is safe to visit, use and work in.

WHO CAN HELP?

There is a lot of advice and support out there. Try to find out as much as you can, as early as possible. People to consider approaching include:

- your local Diocesan or denominational Community Development Worker – if there is one. Job titles vary – they may also be called a Community Funding and Partnership Officer, Parish Development Officer or Community Outreach Officer;

- your local Historic England Support Officer, who will again go by a variety of titles;

- the Community Development Officer at your local council, or Partnership Project Officer at your local Strategic Partnership if you have one. (Search your local authority's website for 'community grants' and this will point you in the right direction.)

- your local Community Voluntary Action group or local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) who offer advice to community groups. To find groups in your area visit *www.navca.org.uk/find-a-member-1*;

- Organisations such as ACRE, Locality and the Directory of Social Change have lots of resources and advice available on their websites. Some of them are membership organisations and it may well be worth considering becoming a member to ensure access to the services only available to members.

- The Heritage Trust Network provides an invaluable platform for members by way of peer-to-peer support, knowledge sharing and skills development. Their guidance and advice helps groups throughout the lifetime of their heritage regeneration project from start-up to post-completion. *www.heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk*

TOP TIPS

- See what expertise you already have within your own congregation and local community especially people who have just retired and may be willing to help.

- When about to undertake any works - whether repairs or re-ordering or even maintenance - take the opportunity to think about access and energy efficiency and see whether it provides a chance to make improvements.

- Whenever you visit a public building have a look at its access and energy efficiency arrangements. Look at what has been achieved and how.

- Start documenting the development of your project, with formal records such as minutes and policies, but also by taking photographs which can be useful for exhibitions and the website.

- Create a **project monitoring group**, or working group to take on the day-to-day responsibility of pushing the project forward. The quicker key people can liaise with one another, the quicker problems are resolved and potential delays are eliminated.

- As a Group, it is worth taking time out to look at what is going well, what is causing difficulties and what barriers have emerged. It maybe that you might have to rethink certain aspects. This is known as a *mid-mortem*! It is better to make changes as you go than remain fixed on a path that is going nowhere!

- Make it an enjoyable process. Organise occasional social outings for the Group. Don't make every time you meet be about the project.

CHAPTER 3 CHECKLIST

Have you thought about how your Group will be organised? ☐

Have you undertaken a skills assessment of your group and matched it against the skills you need? ☐

Have you identified any immediate or future training requirements? ☐

Have you identified your Group's aims and objectives? ☐

What are your group's SMART objectives? ☐

Have you established suitable financial controls and procedures for your group? ☐

Do you need to create Environmental, Access and Communication policies? ☐

Do you need to establish, or can you use your Church's existing polices for:

- Child Protection / Vulnerable Users ☐

- Equal Opportunities ☐

- Health and Safety ☐

FURTHER RESOURCES 🔍

Loomio is a resource that provides guidance and simple tools on managing meetings, making and recording decisions at meetings and outside meetings and generally ensuring your meetings are run efficiently. It also gives advice on how to ensure decision-making is transparent. *www.loomio.org*

The Action with Rural Communities in Rural England, **the ACRE Network** (previously known as Rural Community Councils.) You can find details of your local organisation here *www.acre.org.uk/in-your-area/network-members*

The ACRE Network also provides an information service for village halls and other rural community buildings. Many of their publications, which cover governance, hiring agreements, health and safety, recruiting and managing volunteers will be relevant. *www.acre.org.uk/our-work/village-halls*

The **Church Urban Fund** provide guidance and templates for parish policies which can be downloaded here *www.parishresources.org.uk/people/employing-staff*

The **National Lottery Heritage Fund** (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund) is keen to encourage applications for funding to build capacity or to or achieve significant strategic change, through acquiring new skills or knowledge, exploring new models of governance, leadership, business and income – in order to improve management of heritage for the long term. *'Your project could be stand-alone or you could be incorporating activity within an application to strengthen your organisation's ability to carry out a wider project'.* *www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/organisational-resilience-guidance*

Their *Resilient Health Strength Checker* can help you identify your organisations weaknesses as well as your strengths. *www.resilientheritagechecker.org.uk*

Guidance on Environmental Policy

The **Church of England's** national environmental campaign aimed at helping the Church's 44 dioceses and 16,000 churches reduce their carbon footprint can be found here.

www.churchofengland.org/environment

The Diocese of London's **Sustainable Buildings** initiative aims to make its own building developments sustainable and low carbon. It covers both new build and alterations. Although the information is primarily intended for architects and Quinquennial Inspectors and other construction professionals working for parishes and churches, it is a useful resource showing what can be achieved. Case studies are being added all the time. *www.london.anglican.org/kb/sustainable-building*

Historic England also provides practical advice on how to make your place of worship more energy efficient. *www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/making-changes-to-your-place-of-worship/energy-efficiency*

Guidance on making your building accessible

Historic England has produced *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* (2015) which focuses on physical access issues because these often pose the greatest challenges as well as opportunities for historic buildings. The guidance also focuses on the challenges and constraints posed by buildings whose function is not directly related to their historic status - shops, offices and civic

buildings - rather than those preserved and opened to the public purely as historic attractions. It explains the requirements under current law and includes plenty of practical guidance and illustrated examples. You can download the document here *www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/ easy-access-to-historic-buildings*

There is advice on the **ChurchCare** website here *www.churchofengland.org/more/ church-resources/churchcare/advice-and- guidance-church-buildings/accessibility*

Accessible Welcome is a resource from **Germinate: The Arthur Rank Centre**, which is designed to help rural churches work towards ensuring that their church – both the building and their worship – is accessible to all. *www.germinate.net/mission/accessible- welcome*

Searching, the **National Lottery Heritage Fund** using the word 'access' will bring up advice on all the ways of making your activities and building/s more accessible *www.heritagefund.org.uk*

There is also guidance on inclusion here *www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/ inclusion-guidance*

The Centre for Accessible Environments *www.cae.org.uk*

The **Dementia Services Trust** has produced *'A guide on the implications for church buildings of intentional inclusion of the elderly and those with dementia and their carers in the buildings we use for worship'*. *www.dementiatrust.org.uk/programmes/ faith-and-dementia*

Health and Safety

There is useful guidance on the **ChurchCare** website *www.churchofengland.org/more/ church-resources/churchcare/advice-and- guidance-church-buildings/insurance- health-and-safety* and the **Ecclesiastical** website *www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/ churchguidance/churchhealthandsafety/ index.aspx*

There is also guidance on all denomination

websites.

Using Social Media

The **Near Neighbours Project** (funded by DCLG) has produced *'Social Media Toolkit: Building your Online Profile'*. This provides the ideas, information, and support that will enable you to grow your social media base as you engage with your community and publicise the work you are doing. *www.cuf.org.uk/Handlers/Download. ashx?IDMF=bf4ab799-2f8b-4422-93bb- dc9a58d11069*

You can also search the **National Churches Trust's Resource** Centre using the 'publicity' tag which will bring up guidance on all aspects of promoting your project from social media to newsletters and websites to using the local press. *www.nationalchurchestrust.org/building- advice/resource-centre*

Setting up a church website

There are a large number of websites offering guidance on how to create an effective website. A good place to start is *www.goodchurchwebsites.org.uk*. You can also make use of *www.achurchnearyou.com* which is free to all Church of England parishes.