

Guidance on Fund-Raising and Sales

The objective of this paper is to make clear how the church leadership will make decisions about whether or not to hold a fund-raising event or a sale so that the leadership make consistent decisions based on clear criteria.

Sales and Fund-Raising Events

This guidance only covers events that have the specific purpose of fund-raising, not events that have another primary purpose but where people attending from the community might want to make a donation e.g. the Bicentenary weekend where money was taken for the Bicentenary appeal, but the central purpose was to invite others to celebrate the event free of charge. The guidance only covers events on our premises or events outside officially organised in the name of MRBC.

The key principle on which the guidance is based is that the general work of MRBC should be funded by the Christians that attend the church and as part of our mission as a church and to support Christian organisations which reach others for Christ.

We look to involve the community if we are supporting a community-benefiting activity. There are two aims in this: firstly to emphasise that we are not after their money but desire to offer them something far more priceless and secondly to underline to the community that part of our Christian witness is our generosity in helping others in the community and beyond irrespective of who they are.

Here are some examples to illustrate the principle:

Would NOT hold fund-raising event involving the community for	Would support holding/being part of community fund-raising event for
Church general fund is over budget and we can't pay the heating bill/ministers stipend	Disaster relief
Bibles for C-Kers	Parish Nursing
Wednesday C-Kers	Baby exchange library
Holiday club	initiative by Walton community or community organisations
An organisation which is not compatible with our faith and Christian ethos e.g. gay pride, political organisation, other religion	Nationally or locally known charities, Christian or otherwise with activities compatible with our faith and Christian ethos
Bring and Buy Sale for Bicentenary Appeal	A tombola organised by a community organisation at an MRBC organised community day.

Fund-Raising through Organisations and Individuals

As with the previous section, the primary responsibility for financing the church is in the hands of its members. However, with large capital projects, or funding for special projects such as Parish Nursing, it may be necessary to seek funds from outside the church. In all cases the church meeting would need to be consulted at some stage before funds are received and may need to give formal approval. The following are guidelines to help those who seek to raise funds.

1. We will seek firstly to try to raise funds from "the household of faith" e.g. the BU, EBA or another Christian Trust.
2. When seeking funds from a secular body, the aims of that body must not conflict with the Church's Christian faith and ethos. Consult the Leadership if there are any doubts.

3. We will not accept funding for a Church activity or capital need, whether from an individual or corporate source, if it is conditional on altering our Christian aims. Where funding is conditional upon the way a project is organised and managed by the church, the church and funder must be in agreement as to the terms before funds are received. Any conditions regarding partnership and control by an outside organisation must be agreed by the church meeting before entering into negotiation, so as not to waste anybody's time.
4. We will not seek or accept funds that are the proceeds of gambling or may come from an unethical source. If there is any question that the source may not be ethical, the leadership and church meeting must be consulted before it goes forward.
5. It is the Church's policy to not create new restricted funds unless the Church Meeting deems it necessary. Therefore any gift given for a specific purpose will only be accepted on the understanding that unless it is targeted at an existing restricted fund e.g. Parish Nursing, it will be allocated to the church's unrestricted funds where its use for a specific purpose cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

General Points

- ◆ Before going down any fund-raising avenue, prayer is an essential pre-requisite: remember, that God's bank is bigger than ours or anybody else's. Consult Him first.
- ◆ If, in an unsolicited way, we are offered funds by someone from outside the Church fellowship e.g. a legacy or a large gift, we should always be prepared to thankfully receive it. We may feel difficult about asking the wider community for money for church funds, but sometimes this sort of unsolicited giving is an important part of someone's spiritual journey.
- ◆ Although we should aim to make events free, it should not preclude us charging for something to cover costs with the extra going to a charitable cause. Sometimes the community value an event far more if it has a price attached to it than if it is free. It is a prayerful judgement call on whoever organises such an event to decide whether to charge or not, and the leadership should be consulted as part of this.

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