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Researching possible donors and funders

Successful fundraising and grant applications begin with research into possible donors and funders. There are a number of factors to consider when looking for funders, so we have developed some simple tips and a template to help you organise your research. The table below explains the types of information you will need to consider when researching possible donors and funders. To illustrate this, we have provided a couple of examples on the table on the next page.

Useful information to collect when researching possible donors and funders

Name	Name of potential funder or donor.
Type	Think about the type of potential funder that you want to approach. There are several types of potential funders including trusts, foundations, corporate funders, statutory bodies and philanthropic individuals who may be able to support your activities.
Area of interest	Understand the potential funder's areas of interest, the fit with your church and the projects/activities which need funding. For example, the funder may be interested in the restoration of church buildings, promoting Christianity or reaching marginalised community groups.
Past giving	Consider the kind of charities, projects or organisations that a funder has supported in the past, and what kind of grants they have awarded. The funder may have a particular track record in reaching out to the community or supporting the restoration of church buildings. Understanding what a funder likes, or has a tendency to support, will help you to work out if they are a good match and if there is potential for them to support your church. Knowing about relevant past grants or gifts, including the amount, will also help you gain a sense of what level of gift to request.
Key people	Try to find a list of trustees, key executives or administrative staff (such as a grants manager) of a given trust, foundation or funder. These should be listed on their annual reports or provided on the given funder's Charities Commission website listing **www.gov.uk/government/ organisations/charity-commision**. Try to map a route to any of these through your networks to effect an introduction or letter of endorsement.
Procedure	Funders have different application procedures, so it is important to note any key elements in their process including deadlines, and any financial information or supporting materials that they require. Some may wish you to complete a paper application form (rather than online) while others have an online quiz to assess your suitability for their grants. Some funders have several deadlines per year so think about which deadline ties in best with your church's governance process.
Important to note	Think about any special considerations relating to your approach to this funder or donor for a grant or gift. For example, some funders prefer to support community projects rather than religious activities while others exclude capital projects or ongoing costs.
Target amount	Think about the target amount that you will be seeking from this donor, taking their areas of interest and track record into consideration.
Next steps	Consider what your church needs to do next to approach this donor or funder. This could be setting up a phone or video meeting with the grants manager or drafting an application for funding.

Top tip: You can also colour code each of the possible funders/donors to show their potential to give a gift or grant to your church. This can be according to their likelihood to give or the possible size of their financial contribution to your church. Colour coding can help you to prioritise your approaches and applications. An example could be: green – most likely to give to your church; amber – may give to your church; red – unlikely to give to your church.

Example research template

Name of funder	Types	Area(s) of interest	Past giving	Key people	Procedure	Important to note	Target amount	Next steps
Name of potential funder or donor.	*Individual, trust/ foundation, corporate, or statutory funder.*	*What is the funder's area of philanthropic interest, as relevant to your church?*	*The kind of projects and organisations that a funder has supported in the past.*	*A list of trustees, key executives or administrative staff (such as a grants manager) of a given trust, foundation or funder.*	*The application procedure of the potential funder.*	*Any special considerations relating to your approach.*	*Proposed target grant or gift amount.*	*E.g. set up meeting or draft application.*
AN other Trust	Family trust.	Community projects, deprived areas.	£3k to local charity supporting families in poverty.	Chair/Trustee Ms E.	By email, confirm eligibility first.	The Grants Manager is a local resident.	£5k	Email their grants manager to confirm eligibility.
The XYZ Trust	Grant-making trust.	Heritage buildings and arts education.	£25k to X Cathedral. £10k to XYZ Castle Learning centre.	CEO: Mr X; Trustees: Mr A, Mrs B, Mr C, Mrs D.	Send an application in writing to the address provided on the charity commission website.	Mr A (Trustee) lives in the next village and is a school governor.	£25k	See if Sally knows Mr A through school and can introduce. Prepare application.

Useful sources for your research into possible donors and funders

As it can be difficult to know where to look for funders, we have collected a handful of sources that could be helpful for your research. Some of these databases charge subscription fees, so you can check with your church's organisational body or administration team to see if they can help you with access to those particular databases. These sources include:

✓ Baptist's list of grant funders for churches
www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/documents/emergency-grant-funders.pdf

✓ Online databases with details of trusts and foundations including:
- Church Grants – subscription **www.churchgrants.co.uk**
- Funds Online – subscription **www.fundsonline.org.uk**
- Grants Online - free and subscription **www.grantsonline.org.uk**
- Heritage Funding Directory – free **www.heritagefundingdirectoryuk.org**

✓ Some denominations have detailed resources available that can help with your research.

✓ The Charity Commission
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission has information on all UK-registered trusts and foundations, including annual reports, names and contact details of Trustees

✓ Websites of other churches for information on their current or recent projects or fundraising campaigns, as this may include a list that names their supporters.

Research template

Name of funder	Types	Area(s) of interest	Past giving	Key people	Procedure	Important to note	Target amount	Next steps
Name of potential funder or donor.	Individual, trust/ foundation, corporate, or statutory funder.	What is the funder's area of philanthropic interest, as relevant to your church?	The kind of projects and organisations that a funder has supported in the past.	A list of trustees, key executives or administrative staff (such as a grants manager) of a given trust, foundation or funder.	The application procedure of the potential funder.	Any special considerations relating to your approach.	Proposed target grant or gift amount.	Such as: set up meeting or draft application.

Want to find out more?

To find out more or for further advice visit the fundraising hub.

www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/church-fundraising

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