

Your Net-zero Carbon Appeal Needs a Case for Support!

Here's why, and what to do about it!

The Case for Support

- A strong **case for support** is the *inspiration* and the *backbone* for your fundraising appeal.
- **Inspiration:** It seeks to draw potential donors towards your cause in such a way that they ask – not *whether* to give, but *how much*?
- **Backbone:** It holds your appeal together, structuring your communications around your vision for change.

The Case for Support - Foundations

- There are two foundational approaches to a successful Case for Support:
 1. Start with "*why?*" ("*How?*", follows later).
 2. It's not about you. It's about the donor.

Start here!

- To achieve your project, you're going to need to answer a lot of questions.
 - How?
 - Who?
 - When?
 - What?
 - Where?
 - *HOW MUCH???*
- Some will be easier to answer than others. Some will seem more important than others at different times. Some will keep you awake at night more than others!

Start here!

- Your Case for Support needs to start with the most important question – Why?(!) Other vital questions follow that “why”:
 - **Why** – why this project?
 - **Why** now?
 - **Why** us?
 - **What** will we achieve?
 - **How** much do we need?
 - **Why** should the funder or donor care?
- Grab a piece of paper/your laptop and have a go at writing down your answers.

Stop! Check! Rethink!

- What's behind your *why*?
 - Be honest - have you answered those questions with a focus on the needs of the physical building? On the needs of your congregation or community? On the need to hit the 2030 goal of the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon (NZC) strategy?
- From speaking to funders and donors, we've learned that "decarbonising buildings" is not (on its own) likely to be all that convincing in their funding decisions.

Serving your Missional Vision

- Instead, much more persuasive to donors and funders is a Case for Support with focusses on *positive impact for the lives of people in your community* - through having access to a range of activities in a building which is welcoming, warm and environmentally sustainable (i.e. *their local church building*).
- A strong NZC Case for Support will need to demonstrate how a reduction in carbon emissions and a more *eco-friendly* building serves your *missional* vision.

Serving your Missional Vision

- A church that cannot easily express and communicate its missional vision is most likely not yet ready to pursue a successful NZC fundraising appeal.
- But that's not you! So have another go at writing down your answers to those key *why, what, how?* questions. The next slide has a link to our free *Case for Support* builder template.

And here's one we made earlier...

- To download your Case for Support template and Church Information document, please find them here: <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/our-faith/environment/resources-for-my-church/funding2/>
- Try out a few different angles emphasising ecological impact, community impact, sustainability impact – but in a way which serves your missional vision.
- How would you answer these questions differently if speaking to one funder whose primary interest is community facilities versus another whose primary interest is preserving historic buildings? (More on this later).

(Re-)Start here!

- As a reminder of those key questions:
 - **Why** – why this project?
 - **Why** now?
 - **Why** us?
 - **What** will we achieve?
 - **How** much do we need?
 - **Why** should the funder or donor care?
- Test out your answers on your family, friends, neighbours, the postal delivery person – in fact anyone with an opinion (and even better if they are outside of your current ‘supporter base’).
- Ask them what it would take to convince *them* of *why* they might donate to your vision. What do you learn from this?

It's not about you!

- Now we can start to see the connection between the first foundation (start with “why?”) and the second foundation:
 2. It's not about you. It's about the donor.
- It's easy to focus on why *you* need your net-zero carbon project to happen.
 - So you don't need convincing!
- Instead, you need to convince **your prospective donors**. Have them in mind all the time when compiling your Case for Support.

Who is my prospective donor?

- The money for your appeal is going to come from a mix of the following:
- **People!**
 - Your congregation – they already know you and love you. Do they love this project? Do they understand why it's important?
 - Your neighbours – those whom you love to love as much as yourself, right? Do they love *you* enough to give to your appeal?
 - Your fans(!) – they may not be on the inside of your community, but they value your church, your presence in the community, and have potential to support your appeal. How will you appeal to them?

Who is my prospective donor?

- **Grant-makers**

- These institutions (many of them charities themselves) exist to distribute money to projects like yours. How will you make your application stand out among the stiff competition?

- **Statutory bodies**

- Councillor discretionary funds, Community Infrastructure Levy, grants – the approaches may vary, but their interest lies in enabling work which transforms communities for good. How will you connect with their agenda?

- **Private business**

- Whether a branch of a national company, a major employer in your community, or a single Director local business, what's in it for them?

Who is my prospective donor?

- **Communities**

- Ok, so fundraising from communities is really about gathering support from lots of individuals (see: **people**).
- The power of community fundraising is that you unleash the enthusiasm, creativity and networks of others who will do the work with and for you.
- Community fundraising should raise support *and* money. It's likely to require quite a lot of work and often results in more modest sums, but community fundraising demonstrates local support.
- Appealing to local communities is usually about drawing out the “fun” in *fund*raising, but you still want these opportunities to be singing from the same appeal hymn-sheet (yes...we went with *that* pun!)

“Why, donor...WHY?”

- Hopefully you can start to picture how different types of donor might contribute to your project. Which are likely to be more important audiences to reach with your appeal.
- Your *Case for Support* needs to address the motivations of your prospective donors, and convince them of *why* they should give to *your* appeal.
- You will need to convince the donor's *heart* (through emotive stories focused on *why* there is a need for positive change) and their *head* (through factual information about what needs to happen, when and how).

Stop...Research Time!

- This resource is focussed on compiling your Case for Support.
- There is a missing, but important, piece of the puzzle which is worth mentioning here.
- You need to work out which of those donor types/audiences is going to be relevant for your project.
- That piece of work is often called a Fundraising Feasibility Study. It seeks to answer the questions “where will the money come from and how can we access it?”
- Speak to your Diocese about how to access support with this aspect.

Fundamentals? Check!

- You've now got the foundations in place, focussing on the fundamental "*missional why*" of your NZC appeal.
- But your prospective donors are going to have other questions.
- LOTS of other questions!
- Your Case for Support plays a role in anticipating those questions and preparing you to answer them through your fundraising communications – be that an application form, a leaflet, a website, or a witty and engaging after dinner speech!

Questions, questions...

- Our free Case for Support and Information Template (which can be found on this page: <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/our-faith/environment/resources-for-my-church/funding2/>) will help you to anticipate and prepare to answer many of those questions.
- It's likely to take time and the input of others to compile this information, so don't worry if it doesn't all come together in one go.
- Remember to try and avoid jargon (words or phrases that mean something to people in the know, but might confuse those not in the know).

Questions, questions...

- What is the problem your project will solve?
- Why is it a problem and for whom?
- How does the problem impact people's lives?
 - Is it about physical access? Is it about barriers to involvement?
 - Have you asked them and what did they say? Funders might ask when and how you asked them, as well as how their answers influenced your plans.

More questions, questions...

- How does your project solve these problems?
 - How do you know that your project will solve these problems for everyone they affect?
- What difference or positive impact will this make in the short term? The long term? In what ways?
- How will you evidence that difference/impact?
 - What evidence will you be able to collect before, during and after the project to 'prove' to funders that your project has solved the problem you set out to?

Yet more questions, questions...

- What other solutions have you considered?
 - What was good and bad about those? Why did you settle on this project as the best option?
 - Is this a next step on a longer journey? If so, what actions does it follow on from, and what will you do after this project?
- Will the project create additional burdens or resource requirements, such as a need to employ a building manager, or additional running costs, such as cleaning?
 - How will you fund this? How will you continue to be financially sustainable?
 - Perhaps it will save you money in the long term? How and how much? Tell them!

Questions...

–What will it cost?

- Many funders ask for 3 competitive quotes and an indication/justification of your preferred provider. If you don't have these in place now, when will you?

–Where (do you plan/expect) will the money come from?

- How much is already in place and from where, including savings, reserves, assets you might sell, congregational giving and grants? What is your plan to raise all the remaining funds?

Detailed answers, answers...

- . What are your 'credentials' for this project?
 - . Who is on your team? What skills and experience can they offer (a short biography of key people is helpful)?
 - . Have you delivered building projects in the past, however long ago? Have you brought specialist help on board? Provide a summary.
- . Where does this project sit in relation to your wider 'green' credentials?
 - . Are you working towards, or already achieved Eco-Church? How does it contribute to the Church of England Net Zero goals?

Detailed answers, answers...

- . What do you still need?
 - . This might be gaps in your knowledge that need to be filled – by whom and by when?
 - . It might be clarity around the remaining funding that needs to be raised. Where will you find it?

Is that all?

- We know – that's a lot of detailed questions and answers!
- Your Case for Support is a compilation of information and a place to formulate and test your key arguments. You don't need to copy every piece of evidence into a single document. You might create lists of information that are available elsewhere. This might include:
 - Available pictures, plans and maps etc.
 - Technical information such as your eco audit and specifications of green technology.
 - Summary information about past capital development projects that your church has delivered.

Is that all?

- Policies including safeguarding, room hire policy and price list, environmental policy for your church, Eco Church award status.
- Letters of support, or contact details of people willing to provide an email/letter of support at the appropriate time. This might include local councillors, MP/s, existing or future room hirers, residents etc.
- Links to relevant online information which you might want to refer to in future, including information from your Local Authority about climate crisis (see also links below).

So...you're saying...?

- So, we're saying that donors will have a lot of questions. And you should anticipate how to answer them. Your Case for Support seeks to answer those questions based on why *they* should support *your* appeal.
- And of course, these are not *all* the questions they might ask. The Church of England has anticipated other questions, particularly focussed on more challenging or technical environmental funding issues. You can find those here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/fundraising-for-net-zero-carbon#na>

Are you up for the challenge?

- **You can do this!** Genuinely, anyone can write a Case for Support. If it's not you, ideally you will find someone with a good mix of the following attributes:
- **Communication skills:** we've said (above) "anyone can write a case for support..." but... whoever does, needs to be able to communicate the "*why?*" in a way which is all about the potential donor(s).
- **Time:** it's almost certainly not going to be possible to sit down for a day and complete this resource. You will have some information to hand, but there will be plenty which you need to gather from different people on your team, or which may not be available immediately. Whether it's a few hours a day for a couple of weeks, or a full day every couple of weeks, someone needs to commit to getting the job done!

Are you up for the challenge?

- **Understanding of the project:** It certainly helps if the person compiling this resource understands the key components of your project, although it may be that the person with the best understanding is not the best communicator or lacks time for getting everything down on paper. That's ok. Work as a team to ensure that you cover all the bases necessary.
- **Authority:** Since your Case for Support is going to serve as the foundation for your external fundraising communications, it needs to be factually correct! If the person compiling this resource does not have the final sign off on key decisions, they at least need access to those decision makers.

Are you up for the challenge?

- **Experience:** Whether it's marketing, report-writing, publishing, editing, teaching, bid-writing or something else, there are many types of experience that will provide the useful, transferrable skills for compiling this resource.
- **Perseverance and attention to detail:** Although the fundamental vision behind your Case for Support probably won't change, you will need to keep updating the resources that surround it, as the project and the appeal move on.

OK – I'm ready to start!

- We know there's a lot of information here so take it one step at a time.
- This resource is designed to present the fundamentals for your Case for Support and the information that underpins it.
- What you cannot find here, you can probably find on some of the following resources, starting with your friendly neighbourhood Diocese:
 - <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/how-we-can-help/dac/environmental-sustainability/>

More resources

- Case Studies are a great way to learn from others:
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/towards-net-zero-carbon-case-studies?page=0>
- The Church of England's Environment Programme has lots of useful resources:
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme>
- If you are thinking about external, professional fundraising help, your Diocesan office can offer some advice.

More resources

- Finally, here are some useful websites that can help you to evidence your local context (we are not responsible for the content provided on external and third-party websites).
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/data-services>
 - <https://cuf.org.uk/lookup-tool>
 - <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a&extent=-0.4317,51.313,0.1986,51.5945>