

Community Shops in Churches



**Guidelines & best practice for the setting up of
community shops in churches and chapels**

Introduction

These guidelines are for churches/chapels considering setting up and/or providing the venue for a shop in their community.

Many are likely to be rural, although not exclusively. Making available space at a church/chapel for a community shop can enable valuable social provision. Every church must consider this option on its own merit and in the context of its own mission. These guidelines have been drawn up by the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and Plunkett Foundation, but they can apply to any other place of worship.

Obviously the setting up of a community shop should involve the whole community. It can have been initiated by the church itself or by another group in the community. A tried method of consultation is the Community Led Planning process.

http://www.acre.org.uk/communityledplanning_index.html

Community Led Plans (CLP) (sometimes called Parish Plans) give local people a way of saying what kind of changes they want for their village and to decide on what is most important to them. Rural Community Councils (RCCs) can help with the development of a Community Led Plan (CLP) which provides a way of setting the development of the shop in the wider context of needs within the community. The local RCC may have a community development worker skilled at facilitating consultation processes such as Planning for Real. A CLP is also a useful tool for a local church addressing the wider strategy for community ministry and can help set the process of setting up a community shop within the broader approach to community development and use of the church as a community facility. Experience tells us that the best chance of success comes from the whole community being consulted.

These guidelines are largely concerned with those areas which are specific to the community shop being situated within a church or chapel.

The premise is one of the most important things to get right and for this reason all the possible venues should be considered. The most suitable (and available) premises should be chosen based on the following criteria:

- Good location i.e. central position or near to other public/amenity buildings such as schools or shops
- Good physical access i.e. reasonable wheelchair and pushchair access
- Ability to open the building at the necessary times
- Sufficient space for the necessary furniture, shelving, equipment (freezers) that will need to be used during opening times and most importantly permanent storage space

One option is to purchase a suitable building or even build a new building which can then be rented out to the shop. Or the community can develop an existing community building such as one of the following venues (this is not intended as an exhaustive list):

- Village Hall
- Premises of previously closed shop
- A Place of Worship
- Other Community Buildings e.g. Scouts, WI, British Legion
- Public Houses
- Local Businesses
- Local schools

At this stage, an interested church/chapel might put itself forward for consideration. However, at this point it is important to be aware:

1. Changes to CofE church buildings will require a faculty. The Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and other denominations will have their own systems which will also require a faculty or denominational consent.

2. A shop requires a considerable amount of space for the shop itself and for storage. It could be housed in a pre-existing vestry or a unit can be built at the west of a church, or possibly even an extension.

How the Church side of things works

Providing a venue for a community shop could be the start of the development of a much wider community use for the building.

It is important when considering this option that you think through your whole future vision for your building i.e. what else do you want to do or were you already planning to do? Providing a venue for a community shop could be the start of the development of a much wider community use for the building and this needs to be fully incorporated into either existing or emerging plans.

If you do decide to go ahead, then it might be helpful to set up a special working group, incorporating representatives from the church and from the community shop committee in order to oversee the project from the church's side of things. Likewise representatives from the church should be part of the community shop committee. From an early stage representatives from key local organisations could contribute to the discussions including those from the parish council from other community facilities such as village halls, schools, and from other key businesses such as local industrial units and pubs.

It is also important to ensure especially in small communities that there is no potential duplication of provision.

In respect of any necessary physical alterations to the church building, the overall point to remember is that each church building is different and determining how to meet the space requirements will be different in every situation. Every case should be looked at within its own context.

In the case of a Church of England church building, completing a Statement of Need and a Statement of Significance would be very useful in this instance – see glossary. Guidance on this can be found on the Churchcare website:

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/legal.php?GF>

Below we set out the next stage in the process according to the different denominations:

1. The Church of England

The Church of England has over 16,200 parish churches. For each of these, it is the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) who are responsible for how they run their church and what happens inside it. For this reason, when considering providing the venue for a community shop, the incumbent and the PCC would need to discuss and reach a decision together.

They should also consult the congregation and the local community. It is vital that the PCC, congregation and the local community “own” the project and make a commitment for the long-term.

The church should also consult with its diocesan advisory committee (DAC) at the earliest opportunity. This would be to ensure that the church is aware of the process of applying for a faculty, but also as this could involve major works to discuss what might be possible and where there would need to be discussion.

It would also be advisable for the incumbent and PCC, at an early stage, to consult with their Archdeacon and Registrar to ensure that their proposals do not conflict with any other diocesan plans and that there are no unforeseen legal problems. A faculty will always be needed so it is advisable for the incumbent and PCC to seek the advice of their Registrar to obtain specific advice on seeking faculty for the provision of facilities to a secular third party.

2. The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church in Britain has nearly 6,000 churches. For each of these, the Church Council is responsible for how the church is run and what happens inside it. It will be for the Church Council to decide whether the possibility of hosting the community shop should be pursued. It is essential to consult with the congregation and the local community. It would also be advisable to consult with the Circuit, District and the Custodian Trustee, the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

3. The United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church has over 1,600 churches in Britain. For each of these, the Church Meeting instigates the procedure. It is for this body to initially decide whether the possibility of hosting a community shop should be pursued. If it is decided to proceed, a formal resolution of the Church Meeting will be required and consultation will need to take place with the Trustees of the church premises (who are usually the relevant Synod Trust Company) who also have a part to play in the decision making process. It is essential to consult with the local community. If any work is required to the building which would substantially alter its character, appearance or value, the local church will need the approval of the Synod in accordance with the provisions of the United Reformed Church Acts.

4. Baptists and other denominations and faith groups

All other bodies would need to consult with their own appropriate organisations.

It is likely that there will be a community shop committee. It will be important to ensure that someone from the church is on this group and is responsible for coordinating the relationship between the church and the community shop committee. It may be, of course, that it is the church itself who is setting up and going to be running the shop in which case it will be important to ensure that other community interests are invited to be part of the group e.g. users, local products suppliers etc.

The church/chapel also needs to consider the following:

- What effect may it have on church/chapel's activities? Will the shop close during funerals? Have a look at the FAQs at the end of these guidelines
- Is there sufficient space for the shop itself and sufficient secure storage space?
- How much work is required to create the space and meet the needs of establishing a shop e.g. freezers, shelving, storage etc.?
- How will funds be raised and allocated for any work that may need to be undertaken?

At some point, it will be decided what form of organisation and management and legal structures will be set up to run the shop.

For advice on the different models visit the Plunkett Foundation website or refer to the Governance and Legal structures advice sheets and tools. It may be that the Church wishes to run the shop itself. If another organisation is set up then it will be with this organisation that the Church will have to reach agreement and sign any necessary contracts with. Each church must ensure that all parties within its own organisation have been consulted and the necessary permissions obtained. This will include:

1. Church of England

Church of England churches are (nearly all) consecrated buildings and therefore, as a matter of law, set apart forever for the spiritual purposes of the Church of England. Secular activity can only lawfully be carried out in the building on the authority either of a specific statutory provision or of a faculty. The use of a church for a community shop will require a faculty in all cases as would the signing of an agreement with the community shop management group/committee.

It is normal (and indeed required) practice when a faculty is sought for providing facilities to a secular third party that the petition should be in the names of the incumbent, the PCC and the third party. (If the church hall is being considered for a similar purpose, you will need to check whether it is also subject to faculty jurisdiction).

Irrespective of whether the church building is listed, any alterations or interventions (this includes installation of a telephone line, creation of storage space, and any alterations to existing fittings) to the fabric or contents of the church, and any work in the churchyard e.g. digging of service trenches, would have to receive a faculty. This would also apply to any signage that is required. This will have to follow the normal faculty process which may include consultation with English Heritage (if grade I or II) and the national amenity societies. The best way to proceed would be for a church to notify its diocesan advisory committee (DAC) at the earliest opportunity. This early consultation is the time to discuss the intended use of the church building and the signing of agreements etc. A detailed application describing what is intended, with the necessary drawings and photographs, would then have to be submitted.

If the church is listed, then it is important to think about the best place to locate the shop and storage which will not conflict with the special interest of the building or its use for worship. Any installations or units must also be designed so that they are of good quality and sympathetic to the building. This is where completing a Statement of Need and a Statement of Significance is essential to determining this part of the process. These two documents will ensure that everyone is aware of those existing fixtures and fittings that are important and cannot be changed. It usually takes a little time to obtain a faculty. Whether or not it would be possible to obtain a temporary faculty will depend on the type of building and degree of alteration that will be necessary.

2. Methodist Church

In addition to normal procedures and consultations if the building is listed and alterations are required then contact should be made immediately with the Conservation Officer of the Methodist Church at the Resourcing Mission Office.

3. United Reformed Church

In addition to any approvals required, if the building is listed, the local church will need to liaise with the Synod Listed Building Advisory Committee at an early stage to ensure that all proper procedures are followed. If using the church for a community shop amounts to a change of use advice will need to be sought from the Synod Listed Buildings Advisory Committee as to whether that part of the Church premises subject to the change of use will no longer be eligible for ecclesiastical exemption and instead be dealt with under the secular system for listed building consent for any proposed alterations/works.

Change of use

All churches must also investigate whether permission for a change of use (under secular planning law) is required. Currently there appear to be no hard and fast rules on this. It is likely that the use of the church to host a community shop which is open more than 2-3 days a week would constitute a material change of use even if the building remains primarily a place of worship. This is likely if the shop and storage is taking up permanent space i.e. taking up space even when not open.

A shop which is only open for 2 or 3 sessions a week might not constitute a material change of use if degree of storage space is minimal. It is always a question of fact and degree. Church legal advisers recommend that churches consult their Local Authority Planning Department (District (Borough) Council or Unitary Authority) at the earliest opportunity. The approach taken by individual local planning authorities may vary.

Business rates

A church building is exempt from non-domestic rates (as are church halls used in connection with such buildings) only to the extent that it consists of a place of religious worship that belongs to the Church of England, the Church in Wales or is certified as a place of religious worship (which nonconformist church buildings generally are). It is always a question of fact and degree whether the grant of a lease or licence of part of a church building to a third party will have the effect that the part of the building comprised in the lease or licence becomes a separately rateable unit. It may be the case that where a shop is only occupying part of a church for e.g. one or two short periods each week under a licence and then the whole building then reverting to use as a church) the local authority may treat this as not removing any part of the building from the church exemption. Church legal advisers recommend that churches should consult the local authority.

Trading

There several different models. It is a good idea to look at several options before you decide which structure best fits with your aims and situation. Setting up a **community co-operative** is a good model especially if the need for a shop has come out of a community-led planning exercise. This is where the community as a whole 'owns and runs' the shop on behalf of the whole community. Guidance on how to set up a community co-operative can be found on the Plunkett website: www.plunkett.co.uk

Setting up an **Internal Trading Arm of the Church**: This is where the shop is owned by the church for the benefit of the community. It is probably going to be more difficult to get funding especially grant aid with this model. Remember it is always an option to start with a small and simple model and then move onto a more complex model later on when needs have changed.

Contracts between Church and Community Group

There will also need to be a formal written contract between the host place of worship and the Community Shop Committee if it is a separately constituted group. A formal document must be drawn up; it cannot be done by means of bookings using the church's ordinary hiring arrangements.

It is likely that it will be appropriate in nearly all cases for a lease rather than a licence to be granted as part of the overall agreement. This is because even if the shop is not open for more than 2-3 sessions, or days, it is likely that the shop will be taking up exclusive possession of a part of the church building even if it is in an extension.

Another reason why a lease rather than a licence may be required is that those setting up the shop will want a degree of certainty as to their tenure if they are to establish and invest in a business. It may also be that potential funders will require the applicant to have a lease.

For the Church of England, the agreement would need to be signed by the incumbent and the chairman (if a different person from the incumbent) and two other persons who were present when the resolution to enter into the agreement was passed by the PCC. (NB: the only person who can grant rights of entry etc. in respect of consecrated churches is the incumbent (with permission by faculty). If the benefice is vacant then these rights have to be granted by the faculty itself; in this case there would normally be a condition that the "licensee" or "lessee" enters into a deed of covenant with the PCC. It is advisable to check with your Registrar in such a situation.

For the Methodist Church, if a lease is to be granted and the premises are held on the Model Trusts then The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) as legal land owner and Custodian Trustee will need to be a party to the document in addition to the local managing trustee body. The lease will need to be sealed by TMCP if the length of the term is in excess of 21 years.

If the local managing trustee body decide that they would like to host a community shop then the support of the Circuit and District will be needed to the lease which can be obtained via the on-line Property Consents website. A new project will need to be logged and the number generated by the system used in all correspondence with TMCP.

TMCP will issue standard precedent clauses to managing trustees or their solicitors so that they can be incorporated into the lease agreement to ensure that Methodist Trust and Charity Law is complied with.

For the United Reformed Church any licence or lease would need to be signed by the Trustee of the Church premises (usually the relevant Synod Trust Company) and may also need to be signed by the Local Church. The Synod will need be consulted and formal Synod approval will also be needed if a lease is to be granted.

For all venues, a standard contract should include, but not be limited to the following:

- Details of opening hours and the products and services that will be offered
- The space that will be taken up by the shop and specified if whether permanent or whether only at certain times e.g. when shop is open
- Specify a minimum notice period of three months
- Any charges e.g. rental and other costs (e.g. heating and lighting) to be paid by the group to the host
- Detail responsibility for taking out and maintaining insurance
- Warranties and indemnities on the part of the Host place of worship
- Provisions relating to use of intellectual property belonging to the group
- Health and safety compliance provisions
- Provisions confirming that the group will retain ownership of all equipment etc.
- Confidentiality provisions
- Other terms and conditions which will include those items which the group will be responsible for
- Those items which the Host place of worship will be responsible for
- Who is responsible for removing equipment at end of contract
- Who is responsible for keeping the area clean and maintained to a good standard, and provided with adequate lighting and heating - (This does not mean the whole church – just the area used by the shop)
- Rights for both parties and the group to enforce the terms of the agreement against each other

NB: If this contract is a licence rather than a lease (and only if) then a final clause should be added, as follows: that this is a licence agreement and it does not confer an interest in any land.

Before any formal agreement is entered into, the church should ensure that it complies with the relevant requirements of its church institutions:

- In the Church of England, entering into a licence or lease would need faculty
- Other denominations and faiths would need to check with the appropriate part of their organisation

Pastoral (Amendment) Measure 2006

In January 2007, new legislation came into force which enables the leasing of part of a Church of England church. The Pastoral (Amendment) Measure 2006 provides a mechanism through which a lease may be granted of part of a church building, provided that, taken as a whole, the building continues to be used primarily as a place of worship. Guidance has been produced which explains the background to the 2006 Measure. It includes what a parish has to do if it wishes to proceed under it, how to assess whether the new provisions will be of value to it and how to carry out the consultation required. It should help the parish decide whether this is an appropriate path to follow in this situation. It also gives examples of successful alternative uses.

This can be found at:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchlawlegis/measures/pamguide.rtf>

You can also see some other examples of where churches have made use of a lease by looking at the case studies on Churchcare at:

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/develop.php?FE>

Funding and Other Resources

In terms of set-up costs, Plunkett Foundation sometimes has funding available through some of its programmes, so it's worth contacting them as early as possible to find out if your community is eligible. They also have a range of information, advice and toolkits available on their website at www.plunkett.co.uk

The church may be able to apply for other grants for other necessary works from a variety of sources such as:

- Those Local Authorities which have a specific grant scheme to enable community shops to be established in particular rural areas

- Rural Community Councils (RCCs) are a very good source of advice on funding in rural matters and even may also have a shops/business adviser who may be able to help. The website for Action with Rural Communities (ACRE) <http://www.acre.org.uk/> lists all 38 RCCs contacts. Or you can go direct to: http://www.acre.org.uk/aboutthenetwork_index.html

Implications for charitable status

Section 36 of the Charities Act 1993 deals with restrictions on dispositions of land "held by or in trust for a charity". However Section 96 of the Act provides that the expression "charity" in the Act does not apply to any ecclesiastical corporation (including a corporation sole) or to any trust of property for purposes for which the property has been consecrated. Church of England churches are vested in the incumbent as a corporation sole; they are also consecrated. The Act therefore does not apply to them.

It does, however, apply to non-conformist churches, including the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. Section 36 will also apply to church halls that are not benefice property (i.e. not vested in the incumbent) and are not situated on consecrated land (i.e. not situated on land forming part of the consecrated churchyard or annexed to the church). Some Church of England church halls may come within this latter category: this would usually be the case where the "church hall" is located away from the church and is vested in the PCC or a body of trustees who hold it for the benefit of the parish. In these latter cases, if a lease is to be taken out as opposed to a licence, advice as to the application of Section 36 will need to be sought from the diocesan registrar.

1. Church of England

As the PCC is a charity, it must act in the best interests of the charity. However, that does not mean that it must proceed on a purely financial basis, though financial outcomes will be a very important consideration for any PCC which is considering hosting a community shop. Maximising the generation of income for the PCC, which could then be spent on the PCC's religious objectives, may be the appropriate outcome in some cases.

However, one of the functions of the PCC is "cooperation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical". A PCC might therefore legitimately consider providing premises for a community shop, even if it only covered the costs incurred by the PCC, on the basis, for example, that hosting the shop assisted with the pastoral and social mission of the Church.

However, a PCC would need to give careful consideration to all relevant factors (including by informing itself of what a market rent would be) when making a decision about whether to host a community shop, and should be prepared to justify - in terms of the interests of the charity - why it took the particular decision it made. A PCC would not necessarily have to charge a market rent provided that it could justify not doing so in terms of the PCC's statutory functions and charitable duties. It would, though, be quite wrong for a PCC to make a loss as a result of hosting a shop, as that would effectively amount to subsidising an outside commercial operation.

2. Methodist Church

If the managing trustees intend to grant a lease of Methodist Model Trust property then the provisions of Section 36 of the Charities Act 1993 will need to be complied with. What this means is that if the lease is for a period in excess of seven years then a Qualified Surveyors Report will need to be prepared in accordance with the Charities (Qualified Surveyors' Reports) regulations 2002. The report needs to be sent to TMCP to be approved. The report essentially needs to advise the managing trustees that the proposed terms and rent of the letting are the best reasonably obtainable in all the circumstances.

If the proposed lease term is less than 7 years then the requirements of the Charities Act are less stringent. That is to say that the managing trustees in this case need to obtain advice from a suitably qualified professional that the proposed rent and terms are the best reasonable obtainable. Once the written advice is obtained it needs to be sent to TMCP for approval.

3. United Reformed Church

If a lease is to be entered into, as opposed to a licence, then the provisions of Section 36 of the Charities Act 1993 will need to be complied with and advice from a suitably qualified person (exactly who this is depends on the length of lease) should be sought.

In all circumstances the church should at least cover its outgoings. In addition, if the lease is for a period exceeding two years a minimum of one month's public notice will also be required.

Insurance

First and foremost, any church/chapel thinking of hosting a community shop should inform its insurance company of the proposed new activity taking place in the building.

Information provided to insurers should include; the type of goods to be sold, including the quantity; the anticipated shop opening hours; the location of the shop within the church and who will be operating the shop i.e. the church or a third party organisation.

The church must have public liability insurance and The Community Shop Committee must have employer's liability insurance for any member of staff that operates this service on their behalf. As well as its own public and products liability insurance if it is a separate legal entity to the church council.

The Community Shop Committee will, subject to some conditions, be responsible for the equipment and money they use to provide the service, and will need to take out their own insurance cover in this respect.

The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG) advice is as follows: Churches would seem to provide ideal locations for a community shop and such activity would also support our view that a busy and used Church, particularly where it is supporting a wider community activity, is a safer Church in terms of reduced break-ins and vandalism.

As regards the insurance implications there are essentially two considerations:

1. The possible increase in personal injuries (slips, trips and falls etc.) purely due to the increased activity of people on the premises. However, good risk assessment together with the introduction of appropriate control measures, as part of health and safety risk assessment process should adequately deal with this aspect and it is unlikely any additional premium would be required in respect of the churches existing Public Liability cover. However third parties organisations running the shop will need to take out their own insurance cover.

2. It will need to be made clear within the insurance policy what type of equipment and valuables will be left on the premises between opening sessions, as there may inevitably be an increased risk. It will need to be made clear as to who, whether the Community Shop Committee or the PCC, is taking responsibility (and therefore insuring) this equipment and valuables.

As regards the insurance implications, there may be a slight increase in premium if the Church authorities were asked to take responsibility (and therefore insure) certain items of equipment and valuables. If there are to be equipment and valuables left on the premises which is not the responsibility of the PCC (that is they will be insured by the Community Shop Committee), then it is unlikely we would require any increase in premium. However the PCC should review the overall security arrangements for the Church in light of the change in occupation and insurers are likely to monitor the loss experience going forward to assess the adequacy of existing arrangements.

The Church should also:

- Review existing health and safety arrangements in light of the change in use of the building e.g. review and update existing fire risk assessments
- Ensure there is adequate provision of welfare facilities for shop staff working at the church
- If the church is running the shop, and hence employing shop staff, carry out risk assessments in respect of staff activities and introduce appropriate controls to manage the risks identified.
- Determine who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the area of the church occupied as the shop • Introduce appropriate waste management controls to ensure waste generated from shop activities is cleared up and removed from the premises at the end of each day.

EIG is always happy to give advice.

Methodist Insurance (MI) has given agreement to the above comments from EIG. They stress the importance of each church referring the matter to its own insurer; Methodist Insurance will look at each case on its own merits.

Security

This should not be seen as a major problem if nothing of value is left at the Hosted Premises. Measures that will be taken and additional suggestions that can be implemented to improve security when the Hosted Service is in operation are:

- The use of a dye cash-carrying case for securing cash and stock
- The staff/volunteers will be aware of and trained in procedures to follow in case of a robbery
- Ensuring that other activities are taking place at the same time which can range from the serving of refreshments, other services being provided e.g. Borough Council Community Helpdesk; community shop; sales of other goods/produce, other groups etc.; Where there are likely to be lone workers in place a lone working risk assessment should be completed leading to the introduction of suitable controls to manage the risks identified
- Seek advice from National Churchwatch which is sponsored by EIG
www.nationalchurchwatch.com
- Provision of a suitably rated cash safe for use by the shop if significant amounts of cash are being held overnight
- Review existing security arrangements taking into account any increased risk of theft arising from the presence of the shop
- Provision of a means of communication at the church to summon assistance in an emergency
- Agree opening and locking arrangements for the shop/church
- Restrict the number of key-holders to the shop/church
- Consider the provision of an intruder alarm system, depending on the value of shop stock/contents to be held in the church
- Create a secure store facility for shop stock/contents being held in the church overnight
- Consult your insurers if Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are to be introduced. ATMs are routinely targeted by professional gangs and insurers will provide specific security advice on how to secure them
- Restrict access to unauthorised areas of the building

Publicity

There can be a real need for the opening of a Hosted Service to be publicised, especially if completely new or there has been a long gap between the closure of the previous shop and the new opening. Past customers may well have made other arrangements out of necessity and need to be brought back.

The Community Shop Committee and the church must think about how best to promote the new service to the community. The local RCC community development advice worker might be able to advise on a range of techniques for doing this.

Signage

It will be up to the Community Shop Committee and the church to decide what type of signage will be appropriate. (NB a CofE church will have to apply for a faculty for whatever signage is proposed. Other denominations will have to apply for their equivalent denominational consent - see Section 3.8 above). It may be that a sign is only placed outside/put up when the shop is actually open. Or you may want a sign that clearly gives the opening hours for the week. In addition, if appropriate, a sign can be put up in the porch saying that no valuables are left on site in connection with the shop.

Succession Planning

It is very important to ensure that you encourage new people to volunteer and/or join the management committee so that you keep the numbers constant and bring in fresh energy.

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some of the questions we've been asked by communities and churches; if you have a question that hasn't been covered here, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

1. Is there a potential clash between operating a community shop even if part-time, and running the normal business of a place of worship?

The view from current examples is that it is not a problem if the shop opening times are fixed. If the shop is to be open on a full-time basis, then there might be an issue if the church hosts/runs a lot of other activities e.g. mother and toddler groups, senior citizen lunches. This could also be a benefit as users for one service will find it beneficial to be able to make use of the shop at the same time. Good organisation should be able to work through this to ensure that activities which might 'clash' with the operation of the Hosted Service happen at other times. Providing a separate entrance can allow separate access when necessary and for deliveries. It may be decided that the shop will close in the event of funerals.

2. Should a place of worship be used for financial purposes?

There is no moral or spiritual reason why a community shop cannot be hosted within a place of worship. Those places of worship which have embarked on this exercise have done so because they see it as providing a vital community facility. Most now recognise that using the church for other purposes which benefit the local community is one of the best ways of helping to sustain the building and help keep it in good repair. Thus hosting a shop can also bring huge benefits to the church and the community at one and the same time. There is huge potential to make the most of this opportunity, including:

- Serving refreshments which help people feel at home in the building and also provide a social meeting point
- Encouraging other service providers to offer their services during the opening hours of the shop. This would obviously need to be services targeted at the users of the shop e.g. elderly, young mothers, those without transport.

Such services could include local authority community helpdesk, prescription collection point, and dry cleaning collection point. Some of these can be weekly, others can be less regular or one-offs e.g. Carer's Support Services, Care and Repair Home Schemes, pension advice etc.

- The beginning of the creation of a village community space or a community hub!

3. How long will the process take?

This obviously depends on how much work is required to the church/chapel building. And also depends on the amount of money that needs to be raised. As these guidelines illustrate there are many stages that have to be gone through and there can be frustrations and delays along the way. Hopefully, it will prove worth it. The case studies below have volunteered their assistance and are willing to be contacted to share their knowledge and experience.

Case Studies

We've collected some great examples of community shops being located in church buildings; have a look and be inspired!

St. Leonard's, Yarpole, Diocese of Hereford: a small rural village with a population of only 700 people. The project involved an extensive program of re-ordering to accommodate the village shop, post office and numerous community activities in the underused Grade II* church.

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/pdf_view.php?id=81

St. Giles, Langford, Diocese of Chelmsford: is a Grade II* building in a small parish of only 290 people with no remaining local facilities. In February 2009, a community shop opened up in the vestry. The vision behind the project was to make the church more accessible, to provide a service for the village and to create a greater sense of community. http://www.churchcare.co.uk/pdf_view.php?id=80

St John the Evangelist, Moggerhanger, Diocese of St Albans: a grade II church which since 2000 has provided the premises for a shop in the vestry. The Shop is run entirely by volunteers including a shop manager on behalf of the village and, as it is non-profit making and the prices are very competitive. Breaks even and covers costs. Any profit is given to local charities. It is seen as providing a service to the village: www.moggerhangerchurch.co.

Glossary, References & Further Information

Glossary

Statements of Significance and Need (Church of England) - Since the coming into force of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000, parishes intending to submit a faculty application for significant changes to a listed church should prepare a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Need to accompany the application. It is important to note that these should be two separate documents, one balancing the other. The purpose of this is twofold:

- i) To help the parish to assess in their own words the things which comprise the special significance of their church, be they architectural features, archaeological remains, fine furnishings, a beautiful rural setting or a famous organ and choir, and to contrast and compare this with the perceived needs which are to be fulfilled through the proposal.
- ii) To enable those charged with considering the application, the DAC, Chancellor, and where appropriate the secular authorities and interest groups, to reach their decisions quickly and fairly, equipped with the basic facts, secure in the knowledge that the parish has a clear idea of its chosen direction and the consequences of this.

References & Further Information

1. ChurchCare – a website which is a ‘one-stop’ shop for anyone involved in running a church building. Managed by the Archbishops’ Council, Church of England:

www.churchcare.co.uk

2. Plunkett Foundation – the national charity that works to help communities to take control of their challenges and overcome them together. They support people, predominantly in rural areas, to set up and run life-changing community co-operatives that help them tackle issues ranging from isolation and loneliness to poverty. They provide information, advice and support to communities to help them set up a range of businesses, and the majority of the over 300 community shops in the UK today have been supported by them. www.plunkett.co.uk

3. Action with Communities in Rural England – the national umbrella body of the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN), which operates at national, regional and local level in support of rural communities across the country: <http://www.acre.org.uk>

4. Church of England website – <http://www.cofe.anglican.org>

5. Methodist Church website - <http://www.methodist.org.uk>

6. United Reformed Church website - <http://www.urc.org.uk>