

Establishing a project team

One of the most important parts of any major project is the establishment of a project team who will manage the project on behalf of the PCC. Whilst the PCC will have overall responsibility for the project, trying to manage the whole project during PCC meetings would be very difficult and prevent the PCC focussing on other aspects of church life.

One thing that needs to be established at the start of the project is what responsibilities will be delegated to the project team, what decisions are they able to make and the systems of accountability for the project team. It needs to be clear and recorded in the minutes exactly what has been delegated to the project team.

Ultimately any contracts are between architects, consultants and contractors and the PCC, so all of those decisions should be made by the PCC so that it is fully aware of its commitment financially.

Formation of the project team

The project team needs to have the skills and experience necessary to be able to drive the project forward. It is important that you decide what skills you need for the project and then find people that have those skills. Projects can be a good way of engaging some people who are perhaps on the fringes of your church community.

It is not necessary that every member needs to know lots about building work as you will probably have an architect who will have responsibility for that aspect, there are lots of other skills that a project team will need to have. Whilst having the people with the right skills is the most important, you do need to have people who have the capacity to actually be part of a team as they will need to meet / communicate with each other on a regular basis.

Below are some examples of the types of skills that you may be looking for

- Chair – someone who is able to co-ordinate the project
- Finance – someone who has a good understanding of the finances/grants etc.
- Administrator – someone who can keep documents, notes, etc. organised
- Communication – whatever the project you will need to keep the church aware of what is going on.
- Technical – someone who will be able to engage in technical conversations
- Community – someone who will be able to engage with the wider community.
- Fundraising – someone who has a passion for raising funds and can motivate others.
- Local History – someone who understands the history of the church and the local community
- Practical – someone who can plan the logistics required e.g. moving furniture, cleaning up.

The size of the project team will depend on the size of the project and may vary in size as the project develops. It may also delegate some tasks to a smaller group from time to time during the project. In general, a team of at least 5 people tends to work well and an odd number allows you to hopefully always make a decision. A team of 3 is too small to not be swayed by one strong individual. Whilst it is not essential, it is useful to have at least 2 PCC members, perhaps one of who is a churchwarden, so that you always have someone who can feedback directly to PCC meetings.

Delegation to the project team

It is difficult to outline what should be delegated to the project team as every project is different and will require different tasks to be carried out. In some projects much of the project will be delegated to your architect.

Below are some things that the PCC are likely to delegate to the project team:

- Drafting a specification for the architect / designer
- Initial meeting with the architect / designer
- Review of initial proposals for presentation to PCC
- Gathering quotes / tenders

- Review of quotes and preparation of a summary document
- Gathering funding information.
- Applying for grants
- Agreeing contracts with suppliers – within the agreed delegated budget.
- On site decisions required by the contractor

The project team may of course also want to delegate some tasks to a smaller group. Fundraising is often something that is delegated and may not require as regular feedback in the earlier stages of the project.

Frequency of meetings

The frequency of meetings of the project team will be determined by the type of project and may vary as the project develops. It is useful however to plan meetings at least monthly and at a suitable time before the PCC meeting to allow notes to be shared. Whilst many discussions may take place between meetings via email or phone it is important to summarise these at the meeting so that all members are aware of them and a record can be kept. Whilst emails can provide an effective trail of communication it is important to have written notes (not necessarily detailed minutes) from the meetings so that effective accountability can be maintained. The notes are also a way in which the PCC can be kept informed without a huge amount of meeting time being taken up simply receiving information.

Financial Delegation

It is important that the PCC make it clear about any financial commitment that they are happy to delegate to the project team. Whilst the key financial decisions will be made by the PCC, it may be necessary for some decisions to be made quickly, especially during the construction phase. For example, the contractor might discover that an existing pipe needs to be replaced that was not part of the contract. You probably wouldn't want to have to wait for the PCC just to make a minor change that may only be perhaps £50. However, if the change was going to be £5000 then you would want that agreed by the PCC. If you have a Standing Committee that meets between meetings then some smaller decisions could be passed via them, but again that would depend on what delegated spending powers have been given to the Standing Committee by the PCC.

One other way forward is to allocate the project team a budget from the overall project contingency and allow them to authorise spending within that budget. Obviously, every project is different and it is not possible to have a model that fits every project, the important thing however is that this is agreed in advance so that everyone understands what they are permitted to commit to.

Conclusion

It is important to ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities at the beginning of the project as any changes in these expectations during the project can sometimes make people feel that their work is being questioned. Having systems and agreements in place actually protects individuals from being questioned about their decisions in the future.