

Helpful tips for the PCC Treasurer

Enlisting Help

The role of the PCC Treasurer is an interesting and fulfilling one. The amount of work involved will depend upon the size of the parish and the nature of the activities undertaken. It is, however, possible for a PCC Treasurer to be supported by a small team. Areas of support you may wish to consider:

- Team of cashiers to handle the counting and banking of money so that the Treasurer does not handle funds. Such a team to follow Safe Cash Handling Systems.
- Parish Stewardship Promoter to assist in encouraging giving, promoting mission, manage systems of regular giving and gift aid.
- A Gift Aid Officer could be a separate role to take some of the admin away from a busy Treasurer or Stewardship Promoter

Record Keeping

The key is to record every transaction for income and expenditure and to do so frequently. To ensure accuracy, records should be updated at least once a week.

A regular reconciliation against the bank statement is a worthwhile and necessary exercise to keep the books up to date.

The Inland Revenue requires that all accounts records are kept for a minimum of six years.

Understand Accounts & Funds

PCC monies can be held in different funds, namely unrestricted, restricted and designated. It is important to appreciate the difference to avoid funds being used as unrestricted funds incorrectly or unnecessarily restricting funds, which then become inaccessible to the PCC for some time. The different funds can be explained as follows:

- **Unrestricted Funds** – these funds are made up of monies given to the church on the general understanding that it will be used at the discretion of the PCC for furthering the mission and ministry of the church.
- **Designated funds** – the PCC may decide to put some of the unrestricted fund money aside in other funds for use in the future. This money is “designated” for particular projects for administrative purposes only.

Designated funds are still unrestricted and can be moved to other general funds if the PCC decides to do so.

- **Restricted funds** – when the PCC receives money for particular purposes, such monies have been “restricted” by the donor for a particular purpose and those monies **MUST NOT** be used by the PCC for any other purpose. Income generated from assets held in a restricted fund will generally be subject to the same restrictions as the fund.

The PCC does not need separate bank accounts for each fund, and indeed, one fund could be separated across more than one bank account. For example, the PCC’s general fund could be spread across the current account and a deposit account.

Fraud Prevention and Self Protection

People often worry about handling money and working with finances. This worry can be reduced when there are well managed systems and policies to be followed. It is important that there is a Safe Cash Handling Process in place and that Self-Protective Rules are followed so that financial systems are as transparent as possible, and no individual is put at risk of accusation. Chapter 4 of the ACAT Guide for New Church Treasurers has a helpful section covering this - <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ACAT-New-Treasurers-Guide.pdf> .

Useful Resources

Treasurers are encouraged to spend time looking at the Parish Resources website <https://www.parishresources.org.uk/> as there is a wealth of helpful information and guides.

A copy of the PCC Accountability Guide (5th edition) covers ‘The Charities Act 2011 and the PCC’ with some really helpful information on preparing PCC accounts. The Diocese of Carlisle sent a copy of this book to each PCC in 2017 (and we still have a few spares) but it is also available online at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/pcc-accountability-guide>

ACAT – the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers also provide a lot of information, training and support for Church Treasurers for a small annual membership (2019 £15). For further details see their website:

<https://www.acat.uk.com/>

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