

## Church Grants 20 Minute Masterclass: 23 February 2021



**Speakers Notes:** What is a Community Audit

Click the links on the left to see additional organisational information



**Top Tips can be found at the end of these notes**

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## Presentation

### Slide 1: Churchgrants 20 Minute Masterclass - holding slide

What is a Community Audit?

### Slide 2: Welcome

- Introduce yourselves using the chat box
- Use the Q&A box to ask questions to the panellists
- Slides and video will be available at <https://www.london.anglican.org/kb/request-fundraising-information/>

### Slide 3: Who are we?

- Carol Ward. MCIOF
- Sarah Reilly. MCIOF
- Matthew Lagden. MCIOF
- Andrew Clark. MCIOF (Cert)

### Slide 4: What you will learn today

- What is meant by a Community Audit
- The reasons for, and benefits of, carrying out a Community Audit
- Understanding how a Community Audit can help you fundraise effectively.

### Slide 5: What is a Community Audit:

In brief, a community audit is a systematic study of what your community really needs

This talk will not tell you how to carry out a community audit. For that, tune in to the next session.

My objective today is to:

- outline why you might want to do a community audit,
- explain the thought processes involved,
- highlight the pitfalls you need to avoid

### Slide 6: Why do a Community Audit?

There are three main purposes to a community audit:

- To ensure that you are genuinely meeting your communities needs and wants,
- To ensure that you are not offering services which are available, possibly better, elsewhere
- To be able to provide evidence of the above to potential funders

**All three are equally important!**

### **Slide 7: Meeting the communities needs and wants**

We know you want to meet your community's needs, but sadly many churches are not completely successful in doing this. Despite the best intentions, they can fail to identify real needs, and offer services that generate a 'feel good' atmosphere amongst volunteers without truly meeting the needs of the local community.

### **Slide 8: Avoiding service duplication**

As the state retreats, more and more local charities and other community organisations are stepping into the gap. In some ways this is good: but it does create the risk that they will offer services that are also available, possibly better, from another service.

To give an example, you might identify that many of the people who visit your foodbank could really use advice on money management. It is better to offer space to a specialist money management advice charity than to try and meet this need directly.

Churches can sometimes operate more effectively as a safe convening space than delivering services directly. The added advantage here is that many funders love a partnership approach. This can be a great asset when applying for grants.

### **Slide 9: Evidencing your work for funders**

Funders are now overwhelmed with applications. If they want to support work with say, drug addicts, and this is the project you want funding for - they need to be certain that, from the hundreds of applications they are receiving, yours is the organisation that can best carry out this work.

All they know about you is the evidence you can provide on paper. It is far stronger to be able to say that you are offering a service because your research (Community Audit) has identified this is an area of great need – and you will do it in a certain way because this research (Community Audit) has demonstrated that this is the best possible way to do so, and then back these statements with the evidence that you have collected from your Community Audit.

Sadly, simply saying that you saw the need and rushed to meet it is no longer acceptable.

### **Slide 10: Covid!**

We all know that Covid has brought about the most seismic change to our lives in a very long time, possibly since the war.

As far as funders are concerned, any work you may have done pre-Covid in identifying community needs is now sadly, completely irrelevant. Any work you are doing **must take into account** the changes that Covid has brought to our lives (but you knew that!)

You also need to be able to demonstrate that you have adapted and developed your services to fit the new world. I am sorry to say that pretty much means starting from scratch.

### **Slide 11: Meeting actual needs**

Community Audit processes effectively have two parts:

- listening and
- evidence gathering.

I won't talk in detail about this today, but the listening part really means two things:

- passive listening
- active questioning.

In other words, there are people who fill in questionnaires and people who don't, and the people who don't have just as much to say as the people who do.

Christians tend to be very good at passive listening, and at really hearing people, and you will need to bring those skills to bear. But it is not enough, important though it is, to be listening to the people who are already coming to you for help.

You need to be reaching out to those people who are desperate for your help, but don't know that they can ask. Again this is rooted deep in Christian DNA, and simply needs to be brought into a systematic framework.

### **Slide 12: Framework**

The reason you need a framework is because all the evidence you amass will need to be brought together, analysed, and distilled into a programme of action – **your Mission Action Plan**.

It is the middle bit – the analysis - that makes the whole process work. If you are not truthfully interrogating what the audit is telling you, there is a constant risk that you will meet the needs that **you** want to meet, rather than **the real needs of your local community**.

We call it 'delivering without listening'.

If you do this – deliver without listening - good things may well follow; some people be supported and quite possibly, their lives will be transformed – however, what you are doing will **never** be as effective or as valuable as action that is being supported by a genuine, deep rooted understanding of what your community needs.

### **Slide 13: Taking the first steps**

Don't worry if all this sounds a bit daunting, there are loads of resources that can help you, and we will start to talk next time about **how** you do a brilliant community audit.

### **Slide 14: Any questions?**

- Use the Q&A box to ask questions

### **Slide 15: Good luck!**

Contact details for:

- [Parish Property Support](#)
- [Church Grants \(subscription paid by Diocese of London\)](#)
- [Parish Fundraising Support](#)

## TOP TIPS:

- Ask those that use your service to write you a 'letter of support' to use as part of your evidence for funders.
- Find out who your local MP/Community Liaison Officer is. Build up your relationship with them so they know what community services you are offering and can support you.
- Research your local authority borough plan. Is this something you can work to?
- When undertaking a paper based community audit, use different coloured paper for the different groups. This makes sorting your responses really easy 😊
- Read the report from the National Churches Trust: [House of Good](#). It's a great source of information for learning more about the benefit and impact that churches provide.
- Remember that people aren't just one dimensional. Everyone one comes with a variety of needs. The more of those needs you can meet, the greater the personal benefit.
- Think of your Community Audit as an ongoing conversation. Don't write it up and leave it parked – revisit it. Check in with those using your service how they are finding it; what's working and/or not working and re-jig as necessary. This then becomes part of your impact measurement – absolutely essential for demonstrating that needs had been met. This could lead into a future Community Audit and lead to receiving even more funding for your project.