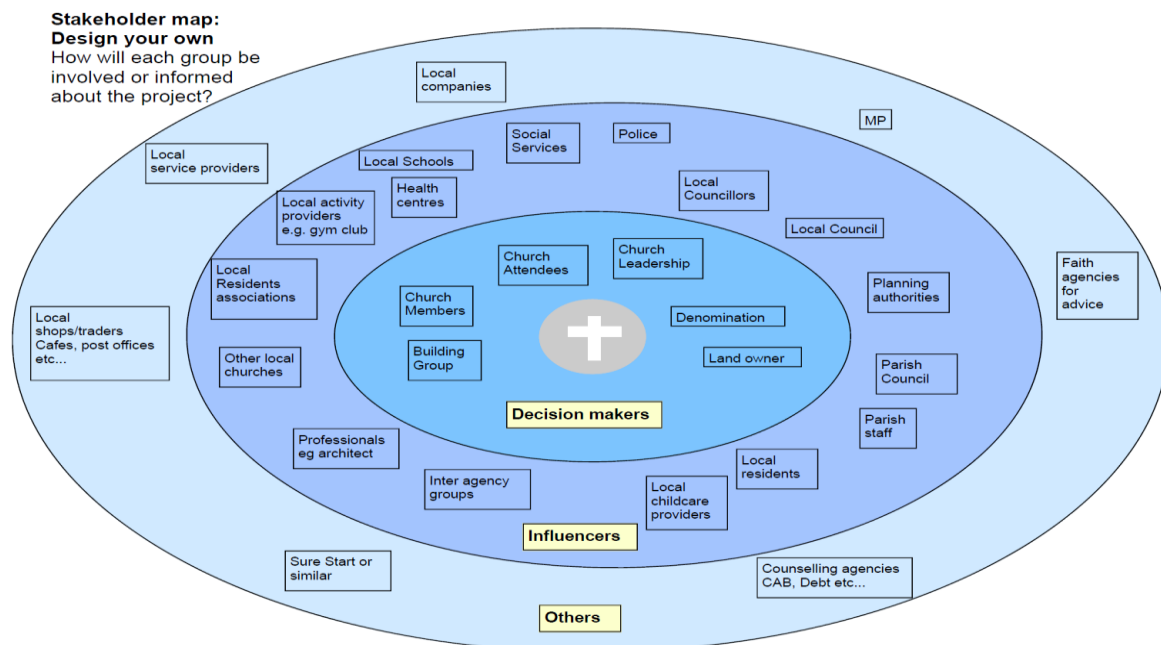


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So congratulations – you are getting ready to open! Here are some helpful ideas to get you up and running well in time for the first year of operation.

Plan the opening day a long way ahead

Often churches nominate an official open day several months after they hope the building work is finished. If you are having special guests and community leaders to the BIG day, this is a wise move as building delays do happen! Go back to your stakeholder map and make a list of who to invite. This may be a strategic way to attract new people into your building.



Invite local people within the community to your special day and gear a Sunday service to newcomers. It's your chance for a fresh opportunity to impact your community. Food afterwards is always a lure! Plan the day or weekend carefully and don't miss this opportunity to get some local press coverage to advertise all the new facilities.

Managing and staffing the new building.

A new building may require significantly more people to staff it. What mix of paid employees and volunteers will you have? What training will they need? What roles require people who are paid (and have a contract of employment) and what roles

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could be filled by volunteers who may have an agreement. Well before your open day, recruit, induct and train your staff and volunteers and allow time for them to get used to the building before any official opening. If you are setting up a café, consider some 'dummy days' with church members, to make sure everything runs smoothly. In your planning make sure you allow for time off, annual leave, sickness and statutory bank holidays in your rotas.

Plan regular reviews in the first year of operation as well as the normal annual appraisal reviews; good practice extends this process, albeit in a less formal way, to volunteers.

Develop an operating policy

Churches often worry about having to allow anyone into the building who can rent the premises and fear some groups may be incompatible with their own faith objectives. Normally for a charity that has been given charitable status on faith grounds this should not be a concern. There are exemptions that specifically cover faith groups not having to rent their premises to certain groups who would be seen by the majority of their congregation as incompatible with their governing document. (So of course that governing document needs to be well written and consistent with your aims.

Other Christian groups may take the view that their building is a tool to use to build relationships with people of other faiths and see it as a new opportunity. Either way, it's helpful to establish a written operating policy. This will cover group rentals, charges, use of the building in terms of alcohol sales, noise levels, opening and lock up times (often these are stipulated as part of the planning permission application, so check there), staffing levels, and health and safety policy. Draft a policy and check with other churches to help you refine this.

Planning and monitoring the finances

We will deal more with budgeting elsewhere, and there is a budget template in Excel format in the section. This sample template can be adjusted to suit your context, but includes cashflow forecasts for the running costs of a new build or major church building extension. Consider the income and expenditure of items such as a café, room rental income, special events, insurance, Council tax (and your exemptions which will usually range between 80-100%), additional staff costs, utility bills, legal and accounting costs and maintenance.



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EXAMPLE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP)

By combining real tasks and costs of Regular Maintenance with projected tasks and costs of Capital Repairs, Improvements & New Works, the AMP produces annual and long term budgets for the building, enabling both preventative maintenance and saving for large capital items.

	KNOWN CYCLE	COST per CYCLE	ANNUAL COST	Year Intervals								COST over 30 YEARS
				2	5	10	15	20	25	30	other	
REGULAR MAINTENANCE												
Clean Gutters and Downpipes	3 months	200	800									24,000
Clean Gullies and drains	3 months	50	200									6,000
Boiler Service	annual	200	200									6,000
Ventilation Service	annual	200	200									6,000
Portable Electric Appliances Test	annual	125	125									3,750
Vermin and Rodent Control	3 months	70	280									8,400
Cleaning window glass	2 yr	500	250	*								7,500
Lightning Conductor Test	2 yr	100	50	*								1,500
Fire Extinguisher Test/replacement	annual	150	150									4,500
Electrical Installation Test	5 yr	3,000	600		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	18,000
Painting Exterior metal/wood	5 yr	5,000	1,000		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	30,000
Churchyard Grass-mower service, fuel	annual	300	300									9,000
Churchyard Landscape/Trees	annual	500	500									15,000
Churchyard walls pointing & clear ivy	5 yr	1,000	200		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	6,000
Repointing Various Areas	2 yr	3,000	1,500	*								45,000
Total			6,355									190,650

CAPITAL REPAIRS				When work will be required								
Churchyard Paths	10 yr	5,000	500		*		*			*		15,000
Felt roofs to boiler roof and organ loft	20 yr	10,000	666			*					*	20,000
Repair/replace window feramenta	as & when	3,000	300			*		*			*	9,000
North Aisle Mullions	100+ yr	25,000	834			*						25,000
Pinnacles to tower	100+ yr	60,000	2,000				*					60,000
High Level Internal Cleaning	10 yr	3,000	300		*		*			*		9,000
Lead Roofs patch repair	10 yr	3,000	300			*		*		*		9,000
Lead roof replace (100 years old)	150 yr	150,000	3,000								50	90,000
Electric Lighting upgrade	25 yr	25,000	833							*		25,000
Electric Power upgrade	25yr	15,000	500							*		15,000
Heating & Boiler upgrade	25 yr	35,000	1,166							*		35,000
Kitchen & Toilets upgrade	15 yr	12,000	800			*					*	24,000
Ventilation System Replace	20 yr	18,000	600					*				18,000
Total			11,799									354,000

IMPROVEMENTS & NEW WORKS				Project Target Completion								
Fire Alarm & Emergency lights install	one off	18,000	3,600		*							
Re-ordering, new rooms & office	one off	130,000	13,000			*						
New Mower	one off	500	100		*							
Total			16,700									

AMP annual total (£) to be raised:	34,854
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Have a nominated person (perhaps in addition to your church treasurer) who can manage these additional finances. Train staff to manage budgets. You may have cross payments between a charitable company and a trading company to have to make and managing your bank accounts may be a significantly bigger task now than before the opening. Gear up ready for the extra work and don't be afraid to pay professionals to help with the workload, they may be able to save you some money as well.

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Keeping the vision

At the start of the journey you set up a clear written vision of what you were hoping the building project would deliver. Keep this at the forefront of your mind. Don't let the 'tool' of the building ever take over from the vision. The tail must never wag the dog! The building is there to serve the vision, not the other way round. When the maintenance team become too precious about the new carpets, blinds or equipment, then it may be time to re-examine the vision and ensure you are still on track. It's good for the church leader to keep reminding their congregation of the original vision!