

Business in Church Premises – a check list



Providing space for appropriate business development enables local churches to support employment, can enhance facilities for local people, widen access to the church and be another expression of ministry and mission.

This sort of project takes thought and planning.

Below is a list of things to be considered. If the answers to 1 and 2 are 'no' or 'not sure' you should not go any further. The list may seem daunting but much of it can be dealt with in an ordinary conversation.

1. Do you trust them? You may not know this immediately. It takes time to get to know people and if you work together there will inevitably be times of conflicting interests
2. Is the nature of their business in line with the churches' ethos?
3. How will the idea be introduced to the congregation, church authorities or other stakeholders? How will any concerns be recognised and, where possible, addressed?
4. What is the business track record? – ask to see financial records, hear their story – if not available because the business is new try to assess how the people involved are viewed by others.
5. Do they have insurance? Check out with your own insurers.
6. Are there taxation implications for the church – if you are charging rent?
7. Take legal advice / use a legal template for a written agreement.
8. How long will they want to be with you? A minimum of 6 months is a good place to start as it shows commitment without tying anyone in to the arrangement.
9. How much of the building will they need to access – toilets, kitchen, own space?
10. How will they enter the building: do they need keys?
11. What are the hours – how might that effect other users?
12. Is the space to be for their sole use? Some businesses can share space or put equipment away when others are using the space.

13. Are they allowed to sub-let any of the space?
14. What equipment would be needed? Who will provide that?
15. Does the church need to spend money to bring the church premises up to spec.? Would the business share the cost? Are there grants etc?
16. How much should you charge? A low early rent rising over time? A percentage of takings? What utilities are included?
17. Are you willing for them to occupy more space if they grow?
18. Contact other churches which have businesses operating in them to hear their experience.
19. Is the business part of a wider professional body/ business group? If so, it gives some re-assurance that they will have some professional standards, possibly insurance etc – Check out what membership of the particular organisation means.

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