

I'm interested in making a donation

What is your aim over the next few months? Our aim is to provide financial support to the extent of our resources in the next few months, after careful consideration of applications. We see ourselves as a 'pipeline'; some people have money and are okay; we are in a position in the Godalming community to know of some quite profound need. It is that simple.

How confidential and independent are you? The CFSF is a confidential restricted fund of Busbridge PCC. We are part of the local church. We were founded by the church but the CFSF Stewards do not share information with the church trustees regarding details of our activities such as who receives funds or gives donations nor the breakdown of amounts given to individuals. We preserve confidentiality and abide by Charity Commission rules.

When was the CFSF formed? It has existed for over 30 years. We've been a small, local grant giving fund for all that time. Previous Stewards have included those in business, the medical profession and a former senior diplomat. We've got a good track record. We know what we are doing.

Why haven't I heard of you? Because, as a church group, we've preferred to show love and care quietly. This way people are more likely to accept a gift-grant.

Why are you being more public now? Because, though we have a network of people looking out for local need, we think there is going to be more and it will not be public; people are private. We're asking for your help to look out for people in real financial need. We are also wanting to allow more people to give.

Do you want funds? This is another reason to be more public. In the past donations have only come from church members. We think that the need in the community is so great that we'd like to invite anyone local who is in a fortunate position to give to help local people.

What sort of amounts have people (church members until now) given in the past? Whatever is right for people: £50, £500, £1,000... years ago we had a very generous gift and this was invested for such a time as this but most donations to the Fund have been around £600 a year.

What % of donations are used for giving grants? 100%. No Steward is a beneficiary of grants nor draws expenses from the CFSF. All Stewards give their time voluntarily. The church covers any admin costs.

What amount do you need now? These are unprecedented times. We already know of five families where we could make a significant gift. We know one person is planning to make a donation of well over £1,000.

Can I gift aid a donation? Yes, please! We'd love that.

Is gift aid used for the same purpose as other donations? Yes. Gift aid is treated as 'restricted' and is only used by the CFSF Stewards for the fund's purposes. Everything given to CFSF stays with the CFSF.

Will someone know I gave a gift and money went to someone? No. We never give anyone any information. A gift comes to someone as a lovely surprise.

Can I give a donation via you and ask you to give it to a named person? No. You can certainly let us know about people in need and you can give a donation, but we cannot undertake to pass funds 'through' the Fund. This would be both unethical and illegal. If we felt that there were conditions to a donation then, as a church Fund, we would be in our rights to politely decline any conditional gift.

Do you accept all donations? There are some sources where, as a church Fund, we'd struggle to justify receiving donations. These are probably pretty obvious sources to most people.

Who are the Stewards who care for my donation? There are four Stewards who are appointed by the church (PCC). The CFSF Stewards operate independently of the church (PCC) but are accountable to the PCC for its actions to ensure transparency of decision making. Significant changes to the constitution must be approved by the PCC. The CFSF accounts are independently audited annually as part of the PCC accounts and are reported (ensuring confidentiality for those receiving grants) to the Charity Commission. Rev Simon Taylor (Chair), Rev Simon Willetts (Vice Chair), Rev David Preece, Mrs Jill Johnston (Secretary and Treasurer). Treasury support is also provided by Mr Martin Lambert.

Why don't you have more Stewards? For confidentiality. We ensure that those receiving grants do so with absolute confidentiality and that those recommending people for a grant are kept confidential. All we ask for is an acknowledgement for audit purposes.

If I find that you haven't given a grant to someone I recommended, can I ask for more information? We do not enter into discussion about our decisions. We take great care with each decision and try to be as generous as our funds allow. We are not profit making in any way. We exist to help people in a small way. We cannot help everyone.

What sort of grants do you give? We have a *usual* upper limit of £350 but we have reconstituted to allow ourselves much more flexibility. We can envisage some situations where a grant much higher than this may make a significant difference. We try and balance expected need with known cases. In some situations, a grant of £100 is enough to show people that they are loved, but we expect this level to be much higher in the present circumstances.

What if I give a gift to you and you cannot spend it over the next few months? We think it unlikely, but in case we have so many donations that this happens we'll keep it in the restricted fund to support deserving cases in future. The restriction is a legal status meaning that the funds can only be used for alleviating of hardship locally. The impact of this virus and the ensuing recession could go on for some time to come.

Will I know how many grants you make over the next few months? Yes. We will share general information in the wider community and place information on our website for transparency purposes. We do though need to balance transparency with confidentiality.

I am going to donate so can I be kept informed of your activity? If you would like this, then please let us know. We don't add you to any database without GDPR documentation.

Where does your money usually come from? For the past 30 years it has come from churchgoers at Busbridge&Hambleton Church and a welcome annual benefaction via the Henry Smith Charity, which is always distributed at Christmas. Several local charities receive a benefaction from Henry Smith to then pass on to those in need and we are grateful to this organisation for their support.

In the past, where have your grants gone? We do not share information about grants but we can say that they are local people. A number of people in the community who know of need have historically been able to recommend people for a grant, for example the Head Teacher of Busbridge Junior School or the Head Teacher of Hambleton Nursery. We have received recommendations from those who we can verify will have deep knowledge of needs so that we do not need to be invasive in our own consideration of situations.

I need a grant. Can I apply? We don't take applications from people for themselves or members of their families. Sorry.

What 'checks' do you make if I recommend someone? We have some basic rules: you can't recommend a member of your family, people have to live somewhere in Godalming-Hambledon because we are locally based, there has to be a known and immediate presenting need which a grant might help towards and there has to be reasonable evidence that we can recognise. We base our grants on you, the recommender. If you are known to us, or you can show us that you know someone we know; or you have an official capacity (eg Town Councillor, GP, Police) in the community, then we'll accept it.

Who decides what the need is? We'd say 'if you think there is a need, fill the form in'. Our grants are based on the number of needs, where they are, the time of year... so you might be sending something to us and be the only one doing so. Another time we might get ten requests and have to consider the two most pressing needs.

What about the Foodbank and similar? We can support these. We are talking to the council and others about how the CFSF ensures that the Foodbank in Godalming is sustainable. We know many are supportive of the Foodbank. You cannot 'direct' a donation via us to the foodbank but we can assure you that our funds are available for these sort of endeavours. We are very aware and alive to the fact that the Foodbank and similar community-resilience groups are vital at this time.

What happens if you run out of funds? Due to the once in a generation situation, we'll empty our funds.