

BETHANY CHURCH

Financial Management Policy

Church Details

CIO Charity number: 1178517

Church address: Lightburn Road, Ulverston, LA12 0BX

Church Treasurer: Tony Pridmore

Church Trustees: Matt Rich, Chris Bantoft

This policy first adopted / last reviewed: March 2025 / May 2026

This policy should be reviewed annually. The next review is due on: May 2027

1. General Statement of Principles

It is the policy of the church to operate its finances with openness and transparency. The trustees will always, as far as reasonable, provide church members with the information that they require to understand the operation of the church's finances. To facilitate this, they will provide annual budgets, reports and other updates on the church's financial position.

This document sets out the financial policy and procedures. It is also the trustees' intention that this policy reflects the requirements of charity legislation and the good practice recommended by the Charity Commission. If there is any conflict between these policies and legislative or professional advice received, then that advice will take precedence.

2. Responsibilities and Authority Limits

a. Trustees

The trustees will manage risks and liabilities within the terms of the governing documents, charity and other legislation and the latest Charity Commission guidance. They will act independently taking account of any advice they have received and will always act in the best interests of the church.

b. Treasurer

The Treasurer will be appointed by the trustees and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the church's finances, including ensuring that income and expenditure are recorded, and appropriate financial records are kept.

The Treasurer along with the trustees will create an annual budget to present to the church and the treasurer and trustees will seek to manage it diligently. As and when required by charity law an appropriate person will be appointed to inspect the church's annual accounts.

Church members can refer any concerns or complaints about the operation of the church's finances to either the treasurer or the Trustees. If necessary, the Treasurer may convene a meeting of the trustees who will investigate any such concern or complaint.

3. Conflict of Interest

The trustees of Bethany Church have a legal responsibility to act in the best interests of the charity; conflicts of interest will be managed appropriately.

4. Operation of Bank Accounts

- a. The trustees or Treasurer may open bank accounts with reputable financial institutions to hold the funds of the church.

- b. The principal location for the church's day-to-day funds will be in a current account held at the present time at Lloyds Bank.
- c. All bank transactions – cheques, standing orders, direct debit, online payments – must be authorised by two people. Blank cheques must not be pre-signed by any signatory in any circumstance.
- d. Each payment must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation and recorded in the church's financial management system.
- e. The church's reserves can be held in interest-bearing deposit accounts with a recognised bank. Such reserves will be held in cash or other liquid investments realisable within a period of no more than twelve months. The level of reserves required is set at a minimum of 6 months.
- f. There will be up to four signatories to the church's bank accounts who have been appointed by the Trustees and any two of these signing together will be adequate authority. For online facilities, there are two required authorisers: one to action the payment and the second to approve the payment. A list of signatories is at the end of this document.
- g. No person may approve a payment to either themselves or a person connected to them. A connected person is defined as a spouse or partner, child, siblings, a brother- or sister-in-law, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, or business partner.

5. Gifts and Handling of Cash

- a. Two people will always be present when the collection box is to be emptied and, if it appears there may be more than £50 in the box, then the money should be counted and verified by two people.
- b. All new regular givers or large one-off gifts will be reviewed by the Treasurer who will consider if there is anything unusual or suspicious in such activity. Any activity that is considered unusual will be informally investigated by the Treasurer and any concerns brought to the Trustees.
- c. It is the church policy to maximise the reclaiming of Gift Aid on donations wherever possible. A database of donor records will be held securely. All donors will be asked if they are UK taxpayers and encouraged to complete a Gift Aid declaration. Donors will be made aware that it is their responsibility to inform the Treasurer of any change in their taxation status that may affect Gift Aid. A summary of total gift aid donations will be sent to each donor at the end of the financial year.
- d. Expense payments by cash are to be avoided where possible.

6. Expenses

a. Staff expenses

- i. The church shall reimburse all reasonable expenses which have been necessarily incurred by staff in the proper performance of their duties provided that they fully comply with this policy.
- ii. Expenses (with the exception of mileage payments) should be reclaimed by passing receipts to the Treasurer (this can be done electronically).

b. Volunteer expenses

- i. Costs will be reimbursed to volunteers when incurred on behalf of the church. Such claims should be made by passing receipts to the Treasurer (this can be done electronically). Prior approval in principle (from the Treasurer or one of the Trustees) is required for expense claims above £25.
- ii. The church does not, without prior agreement, reimburse travel expenses for volunteers.

c. General information

- i. If staff or volunteers are uncertain as to whether an expense will be reimbursed, clarification should be sought in advance from the Treasurer or one of the Trustees.
- ii. Claims for expenses must be submitted monthly after the expense has been incurred. Expenses should be submitted no later than the end of the month following the one in which the expense was incurred.
- iii. Expense claims must include a receipt, not just a total. Where the receipt has been mislaid, the Treasurer may accept an image showing a card payment of the total and the merchant, but this will not be accepted on a regular basis. Up to £50 a self certified receipt may also be acceptable.
- iv. The Treasurer may only process their own expenses claim by BACS Payment as this requires approval by another Account Signatory - who should see a receipt before approving the payment.
- v. Any attempt to knowingly claim expenses in breach of this policy could result in disciplinary action.
- vi. Visiting speakers are not paid but an appropriate gift is given to say thank you for serving the church.

7. Hospitality, Donations and Bribery

If anyone suspects that an act of bribery or attempted bribery has taken place, please report it to the Treasurer or one of the trustees. They may be asked to give a written account of events. Bethany Church realises that the giving and receiving of small gifts and occasional hospitality as a reflection of friendship or appreciation, where nothing is expected in return, may occur. This does not constitute bribery where it is proportionate. However, all personal gifts with a value of more than £100 must be reported to the trustees and recorded for transparency.

8. List of Account Signatories

Tony Pridmore (Treasurer) - Cheques and online

David Ingles (ex-Elder) - Cheques and online

John Pople (ex-Elder) - Cheques and online

Chris Bantoft (Trustee) - Cheques and online

General

It is the policy of the church to operate its finances with openness and transparency.

Budget

The Treasurer along with the trustees will create an annual budget to present to the church and the treasurer and trustees will seek to manage it diligently.

General payments

All bank transactions are authorised by two people

Tony Pridmore (Treasurer) - Cheques and online

David Ingles (ex-Elder) - Cheques and online

John Pople (ex-Elder) - Cheques and online

Chris Bantoft (Trustee) - Cheques and online

Collection Box

Two people will always be present when the collection box is to be emptied and, if it appears there may be more than £50 in the box, then the money should be counted and verified by two people.

Gift Aid

It is our policy to maximise the reclaiming of Gift Aid on donations wherever possible

Expenses

Costs can be claimed back from the treasurer when incurred on behalf of the church.

Claims should be made by passing receipts to the Treasurer (can be electronically).

- Prior approval (from the Treasurer or one of the Trustees) is required for expense claims above £25. If you are uncertain whether an expense will be reimbursed, ask the Treasurer or one of the Trustees first.