Inn Churches

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Ethical Fundraising Policy

Inn Churches is committed to ensuring that fundraising to support its objectives is carried out ethically, adhering to best practice guidance from the Charity Commission and the Institute of Fundraising.

We are committed to being accountable and transparent in all aspects of our fundraising, operating in line with the Institute of Fundraising's Codes of Conduct.

Telling our story

Any requests or appeals for donations will truthfully and accurately present the charity's work, and not seek to mislead or distort our activities and their impact.

Our work supports individuals and groups in difficult and challenging situations, and it is often these circumstances that best explain why our work is needed. We therefore need to present and publicise these situations in order to raise funds. In doing so we are mindful that whilst text and images explaining the difficulties faced by those we support are not in themselves harmful, we need to ensure that they are presented in a balanced way whilst not downplaying the challenges faced by those we support.

We are also mindful of the need to respect the dignity and privacy of those we support. We will therefore seek and record permission from individuals where we use their name, tell a story which might identify them, use a direct quote from them or use an identifiable image of them. Where we use images and names, we will ensure that we provide a full briefing before asking for consent, to ensure that all those identified know what to expect and are prepared for how this might impact them, both practically and emotionally.

Donors and the public are entitled to expect administrative and overhead costs to be kept to the minimum necessary for the charity to operate efficiently and effectively, but in telling our story we will always challenge the belief that services can be delivered without these costs, and seek to portray the true cost of delivering services.

In order to maximise our reach (and therefore access to potential donors), we will consider reciprocal mailings, where we send out information to our supporters about another charity, in exchange for them sending our information out to an equivalent number of their supporters. This will only be done where the other charity's objectives do not conflict or compete with ours, and by an exchange of information between the charities rather than giving access to or sharing the mailing lists (even temporarily).

Recording and reporting on donations

Our financial procedures policy outlines our processes for handling incoming cash, cheques and bank payments. In particular, we will bank donation cheques as soon as possible after receiving them.

Donors will be thanked promptly for their donations. Any questions about donations will also be responded to as soon as possible, and within 14 days.

Donors preferences relating to their donations will be respected wherever possible. In particular, where funds are donated towards a particular piece of work they will be classed as restricted funds and accounted for (and reported on) separately in our annual accounts, along with the expenditure they are used for. We will make every effort to honour donors' preferences on the frequency and type of follow-up contact they receive.

We affirm that donors and public are entitled to know how we spend funds that are donated to us. To that end, we will publish annual accounts conforming to the Charities Statement of Recommend Practice (SORP), which will include a breakdown of what our funds have been spent on. All reasonable requests for details of our expenditure will be welcomed and responded to with the information requested.

All donations worth more than 1% of our annual income (in the year in which they are received) will be declared in our annual accounts.

Records of donations and donors will be stored in line with our Data Protection and Confidentiality policies, and kept confidential except where we are required to disclose them by law, or for the purposes of reclaiming Gift Aid. We are committed to respecting the privacy of donors, and allow donations to be made anonymously.

The cost of fundraising

To help prevent staff or contractors apply undue pressure on the public to donate funds, individuals or organisations providing skills or services used in, or relating to fundraising will be paid an agreed fixed or time-related fee, not a commission or percentage-based fee. Any employed staff engaged in fundraising will not be paid performance-related pay.

Fundraising costs will be separated and monitored in management and annual accounts.

Ethical considerations in accepting donations

In deciding whether to accept or refuse donations, Trustees (and those acting on their behalf) have a responsibility to maximise the charity's resources. Therefore they must be able to demonstrate to the Charity Commission that any decision to refuse a donation is in line with the charity's objectives.

Any decision relating to a potentially controversial donor or donation must be made by considering whether the charity's objects are affected by association with the donor or donation, and not by aggregating the personal beliefs of trustees, staff or volunteers.

There are usually three grounds for refusing a donation:

- The donation is believed to be associated with criminality or illegality.
- The donor's objectives are opposed to those of the charity.
- The donation would reduce support for the charity, and could therefore be shown to result in a decrease to the resources available to the charity.

Where none of these apply, there would normally be no reason to refuse the donation and therefore it should be accepted, to maximise the resources available to the charity.

The main matter of judgement which arises is therefore when association with a donor would negatively affect Inn Churches' reputation, for example where the donor's reputation or public image would alienate other donors, supporters or volunteers (or potential donors, supporters or volunteers). If the Trustees consider that accepting the donation would weaken the charity more than the funds would strengthen it, the donation should be refused.

In making such judgements, consideration should also be given to the form of the donation and the benefits to the donor of association with Inn Churches. For example, an un-publicised donation from the charitable arm of a contentious donor brings different benefits to the donor (and potential risks or harms to Inn Churches) than a high-profile corporate sponsorship.