

St. John the Baptist, Crowthorne
General Hardship Fund Policy

Purpose

Coronavirus restrictions and the Cost of Living Crisis have had and are having an adverse effect on the finances of many and this fund is available to help alleviate both this hardship and hardship of a more general nature. The purpose of the fund is to provide immediate assistance to individuals and families who have a ‘meaningful connection’* with St. John’s to prevent them from falling into new debt directly associated with a change of circumstances which has an impact on their finances. This change of circumstances might be a lost job, bereavement, illness, relationship breakdown, cost of living crisis, covid, benefits delay etc.

Examples of things which may be funded

- The cost of special food or medical aids or equipment
- Electricity and Gas
- A council tax payment
- Medicines – to pay prescription charges – if exemptions can’t be claimed
- Travel expenses – to attend hospital, doctor or other medical appointments or for visiting purposes
- Emergency car repairs where car use is essential
- Payment of fees for a course or travelling expenses to assist people to earn a living
- Replacing essential broken household items such as a washing machine
- Mobile and broadband where costs are essential
- The cost of essential personal items such as school uniform or shoes
- Other items which, in the applicant’s circumstances, are considered essential

What is unlikely to be funded

- Food (Crowthorne Foodbank is available for this. Vouchers can be obtained from either Rev. Laura Wheatley Downs or Julia Norton via the Church Office). However, if for some reason the Foodbank cannot fulfil a food need then those administering the Hardship Fund will consider assistance with emergency food
- Mortgage payment – The mortgagor should be asked to provide a capital and interest payment holiday
- Rent
- Any costs associated with people running their own business

How do we help?

- We can award grants to pay, or part pay, for items, services or facilities that help alleviate hardship and need
- Grants will be given for specific purposes. We cannot commit to providing long term or regular grants
- We cannot award grants for services that should be provided by the Local Authority or the Government

Grants will only be made based on the funds we have accumulated for this purpose. If the Fund is empty, then no further grants can be made.

How can a grant be applied for?

Please supply the information on the attached application form and email it to Rev. Laura Wheatley Downs - Vicar@crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk or post it through the church letter box marked 'Hardship Fund' and for the attention of Rev. Laura Wheatley Downs. The application will then be assessed, and someone will get back to the applicant. We will need to be made aware of the applicant's financial circumstances before making grants as we need to ensure that we are being good stewards of the funds that we hold.

Once a grant has been agreed the applicant will need to supply their bank details for the grant to be paid directly into their bank account. In exceptional circumstances, an alternative method of payment, covered by a receipt, may be agreed.

Who can we help?

Anyone who has a 'meaningful connection'* to St. John's who is suffering hardship and is in need.

* 'meaningful connection' with St. John's is anyone who attends the Church in any way whether as a regular attendee, or as a participant in a regular Church related group for example Minus 5s, Mothers' Union. Housebound Parishioners receiving Home Communion and/or the Weekly News are also eligible.

All applications will be treated in confidence and should, wherever possible, be made by the person in need.