



FAITH COMMUNITY: PLACES OF WORSHIP FUND

Dear Members, Associate Members and Local Interfaith Groups

Interfaith Scotland is delighted to inform you that we are offering **funds of up to £500** to places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services (within the Government Guidelines). With discretion the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship **but are now struggling to keep up** the measures required to stay open.

Faith communities and local interfaith groups supporting the most vulnerable

Places of worship are places of familiarity, safety and connection and are vital to the well-being of diverse communities and individuals. Many faith communities have stated that they are struggling to cover the costs of all the preparation needed to safely re-open including providing PPE, deep cleansing the environment on a regular basis and **staying in regular and meaningful touch** with those who are still too vulnerable to come to the place of worship. Many faith communities have reported that they are in a difficult financial position as their main income comes from donations and as buildings and services have been closed their income has effectively dried up.

This fund will help places of worship to:

- **Re-open** safely, including deep clean premises, provide appropriate signage and ensure that all volunteers and staff have appropriate training and PPE.
- **Keep open** places of worship that are struggling with the on-going health and safety costs during the pandemic
- **Remain connected** with those still too vulnerable to come to a place of worship – this may be through regular mail outs, telephone calls or the provision of mobile devices to allow those without digital access to keep in touch

Advancing Equality and Tackling Loneliness

The funding should help to build stronger social relationships and the Scottish Government Tackling Loneliness Strategy recognises that *'the strength of our social relationships and connections has a central role in determining our quality of life.....we want to help create a Scotland where individuals and communities are more connected.'* Supporting faith communities to open the doors of their places of worship in a safe and inclusive manner will enable thousands of lonely and isolated people across Scotland to re-connect with their wider community.

FUNDING CRITERIA

The funding criteria for areas of support is primarily so that religious buildings can **re-open** safely and **stay open** during this critical stage in the pandemic and that places of worship remain **connected** to those that are still too vulnerable to come to places of worship. This could include:

- PPE equipment for staff and volunteers
- Cleaning materials for deep cleaning premises
- Training for staff and volunteers
- Hand gels and facemasks for those entering the building
- Any adaptations to the building such as floor markings, roping off areas and signage
- Additional cleaning hours
- Hiring a health and safety agency to create a risk assessment for the building
- Adaptions of services in the building
- Zoom subscription or similar to live stream services and continue to support those unable to attend worship
- Provision of mobile devices for those without digital access
- Mailouts for isolated individuals such as service sheets and producing DVDs of services
- Any additional equipment or support required subject to approval by Interfaith Scotland and within the funding criteria above

The funding will be available for faith communities and community groups that utilise places of worship only. It will be offered to faith communities that are members and associate members of Interfaith Scotland in the first instance. The funding will run for three months (mid October to mid January approximately). Prospective recipients of the funding will fill out an application form itemising equipment/training required and cost. All receipts must be retained for one year and will be subject to inspection upon request. A report of the project should be sent to Interfaith Scotland of how the funding has had a positive effect on the communities supported.

If your faith community falls within the criteria outlined above and wishes to access the Places of Worship Fund, please contact Frances Hume on frances@interfaithscotland.org to receive the application form.

Best wishes The Team at Interfaith Scotland

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