

Consultation to establish a Devon Good Stewards Trust (DGST) for the Gospel in the Diocese of Exeter and the County of Devon

Background

At the request of several incumbents, five lay members of C of E Evangelical churches in Devon (St. Andrew, Plymouth; PPT, Bovey Tracey; Trinity, Exeter and St. Leonard, Exeter) met in a series of on-line meetings as a 'working team' to consider the formation of a Good Steward's Trust, to support the advancement and defence of the Gospel across the Diocese of Exeter.

Following a preliminary presentation at the AGM of the Exeter Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship (EDEF, 18.07.2023), that meeting agreed to endorse the continuing work towards the establishment of a Trust.

We are indebted to the Chair of the Oxford Good Stewards Trust who has shared their experience and offered invaluable advice.

Purpose

People who give money in our churches give voluntarily and often sacrificially: students, older people, those with young families. They need people in church leadership roles to use their money well and wisely. There is a significant number of people in the Church of England who are very unhappy with the current direction of the Church. They wish to be distinctive, standing for clear gospel ministry and so put their money into a place where the focus is on a 'gospel ministry, creating new disciples'.

Proposal

The aim of the Devon Good Stewards Trust (DGST) is to support churches and individuals in the Diocese of Exeter in their work of preaching and teaching the Christian Gospel, making new disciples who become followers of Jesus Christ and grow in HIS likeness. The Trust will do this by encouraging PCCs to contribute some or all of their Common Fund to a restricted fund within the DGST from which grants will be made by DGST to the Exeter-Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF). Therefore, the proposal is:

- i) To establish a Devon Good Stewards Trust to help churches and individuals in the Diocese of Exeter to:
 - a) steward their money well
 - b) enable parishes to make their contribution to Diocesan work and ministry collectively with like-minded churches, rather than directly to the Diocese, through a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
- ii) Promote and display unity between like-minded churches and individuals by enabling them to make donations to DGST and then have them paid directly to the Diocese of Exeter Board of Finance.
- iii) Additionally, over time it is intended that the DGST will enable local churches to collectively support (financially and prayerfully) gospel ministry projects that have been approved for funding by the DGST Trustees in line with the trust's charitable objectives.

Timeline 2023

- September – Devon Good Steward's Trust new charity briefing paper (this document), plus a Q&A sent to the DEF membership and the Wardens, PCC Secretaries and Incumbents of churches who have presently paused their giving to the diocese - for consultation inviting comments and 'in principal support' with feedback, by the end of 31 October 2023 to DevonGSTrust@gmail.com.
- Early November – Paper finalised after taking into consideration feedback received.
- November - Document returned to Incumbents/PCCs explaining next steps.

Comments please to DevonGSTrust@gmail.com by midnight 31 October 2023

Note:

- 1) A Q&A Paper is attached with this outline proposal to set up the Trust.