

Acceptance and Refusal of Donations Policy

1. Background

- 1.1 St Christopher's Trustees have overall legal responsibility for decisions relating to whether a donation is accepted or refused. Trustees must be able to demonstrate that they have acted in the best interest of the charity. Trustees have a duty to consider carefully, on the basis of the evidence made available to them, whether the charity's interests will be better served by accepting or refusing the donation and to act accordingly. These judgments must not promote any Trustee or employee's personal moral agenda or interest and the Trustees must not allow individual or collective personal, political or ethical issues, which are not directly related to the interests of the charity, to affect their judgment. Trustees must derive no personal benefit (individually or collectively) from donations, loans or other material support offered to the charity.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contracted fundraisers at St Christopher's Fellowship, and provides a guide to the checks to apply to donations where accepting them could pose a risk to St Christopher's Fellowship. It also serves as a public guide to how St Christopher's Fellowship makes decisions on accepting and refusing donations and the procedures they follow.

2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Trustees, staff and volunteers will act in the best interests of St Christopher's and do their utmost to solicit and accept funds to further its charitable objectives, with the presumption that donations are given in good faith and that refusal must be only on the strongest grounds. In soliciting donations from individuals or organisations, St Christopher's will act with honesty and integrity, will not put undue influence or pressure on donors and will not mislead or knowingly give false information.
- 2.2 Where there is doubt St Christopher's will seek guidance or approval from the Charity Commission as to the best interests of the charity due to negative publicity, moral grounds, or the possibility of a challenge in the courts.
- 2.3 St Christopher's Fellowship **will refuse donations** in the following circumstances:
- Where St Christopher's Fellowship suspects that the gift has been donated to facilitate money laundering or other criminal activity.

- Where it can be clearly shown that the cost to St Christopher's of accepting a donation will be greater than the value of the donation itself, and that acceptance of the donation will directly lead to a net decline in the assets of St Christopher's.
- Where the activities of a donor are directly contrary to the objectives or policies of St Christopher's Fellowship.
- Where an offer of support, whilst reflecting St Christopher's objectives, is untenable. For example, if St Christopher's does not have the resources to maintain the running costs associated with the donation.
- Where the support consists of goods, services or property which St Christopher's cannot lawfully use, convert, exchange or sell in direct support of its charitable objectives.
- Where the offer of support is dependent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions placed upon St Christopher's, and these conditions:
 - are contrary to the objectives of St Christopher's
 - requires an unreasonable level of support from St Christopher's especially in relation to the size or impact the donation will have on St Christopher's charitable activities
 - will divert St Christopher's from pursuing its current objectives, policies or work priorities.

2.4 St Christopher's Fellowship **will take great care and consideration** in deciding whether to accept or refuse a donation where an offer of support is dependent upon St Christopher's first spending its own money or resources in order to facilitate the conditions of the donation, as this might place the charity's assets under undue and inappropriate risk. Donations should preferably be given in full up-front or alternatively in instalments linked to an agreed contract and work plan.

3. Donations from people in vulnerable circumstances

3.1 If a fundraiser has reasonable grounds for believing that a supporter lacks the capacity to make a decision then a donation will not be taken.

3.2 If a donation has already been made and at the time of donating the individual lacked capacity (and St Christopher's receives evidence of this) then we will return the donation, since the original donation was invalid.

4. Donations from companies

4.1 Before accepting a donation from a company, their nature of business should be ascertained and judgement taken on whether acceptance could cause reputational risk. St Christopher's does not accept donations from companies whose primary focus is; tobacco, alcohol, armaments, fossil fuels, or from individuals or organisations subject to financial sanctions.

4.2 As a charity, it is important to maintain our independence. We value our corporate partners and our donors, but cannot allow funders and corporate partnerships to affect our reputation or unduly influence our charitable activities. Accepting support from companies will not prevent us calling their actions into question or expressing our views. We also cannot endorse or approve products, services, commercial initiatives, companies or industries.

5. Returning donations

5.1 Donations will only be repaid in exceptional circumstances and with explicit consent from Trustees and the Charity Commission.