

Guidance for PCCs on their duty to state that they are a registered charity

Introduction

Section 5 of The Charities Act 1993¹ (unamended by the Charities Act 2006) requires registered charities to state that they ARE registered charities on much of their official literature and financial documentation.

In *The Essential Trustee (CC3)*, the Charity Commission summarises this requirement as follows: *'Letterheads etc: Every registered charity ... must state that it is a registered charity on any appeal documents and on many of its financial documents, such as cheques, invoices and receipts. It is not a requirement to state the charity's registration number, but many charities do so.'*

Recommended Good Practice

Since the detailed requirements set out in Section 5 of the 1993 Act are very wide indeed, it is advisable to follow this simple rule of thumb: **wherever you print the PCC's name or contact details, add its registered charity number too!**

This rule of thumb will see you putting the number on your letterhead, cheque book, email-footer, appeal literature, leaflets, Annual Report and Accounts etc. You probably already have a standard template in your preferred font/style giving your church's name, address, phone number and website too. It is worth simply adding your registered charity number to that template so that wherever you give the church's official contact details, you give its registered charity status too.

Although the law requires you to state that the PCC is a registered charity; you are not required to give the PCC's registered charity number. However, it is just as easy to give the number as not, and it is common and much more helpful to the general public to give the number. We therefore recommend that you do so.

Why is it in your interests to state your registered charity number on all written communications?

- It gives the public confidence that you are *bona fide*. With so many scams and abuses of trust around, many potential donors will take confidence from the fact that you are properly registered and regulated. Using the number should increase the public trust in the Church and may encourage more people to give, whether regularly or in response to one-off appeals.
- Proof that you are registered may make it easier to be awarded grants from trusts and other grantmaking bodies.
- It makes you easier to identify; each PCC has a unique charity number so using it should avoid the sort of confusion that can arise if someone leaves a legacy to 'St John's' rather than to St John's, Holyville, Registered Charity Number 1234567.
- It ensures you comply with Section 5 of the Charities Act, 1993.

You were a charity before you registered with the Charity Commission; having a registered charity number simply makes it much easier to prove it!

Conclusion

All PCCs which are registered charities are advised to print their registered charity number on all written communications, including on their letterhead, email-footer, website, leaflets and cheques.

Disclaimer

Please note that this is intended as guidance only. If in doubt, seek professional advice from your Diocesan Registrar, lawyer, accountant or from the Charity Commission itself (T: 0845 3000 218).

¹ Available at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1993/Ukpga_19930010_en_1.htm