



Conflict mediation church dispute case study

Conflict mediation was required for a local church, who had managed to secure funds from various sources to refurbish its church centre which housed several organisations who provided an array of voluntary and community services.

A private funder promised to commit a significant amount of shortfall in their fundraising efforts and thus the refurbishment could go ahead, on his insistence a contract was signed to this effect.

At the time that the funds were requested, they were not given, the explanation for which was a simple change of mind, the church respectfully advised the donor this would not have been an issue had he have told them earlier, equally they had committed themselves and were now unable to back out, without his contribution building work would need to halt, equally this could rise in an action being brought against them by the contractor and other funders.

Finally there was a legally binding contract between them, upon his insistence, to which committed him to the monies. The church had no choice but to instigate proceedings, to which the Court suggested mediation.

The donor advised he had overcommitted himself and was unable to offer the full amount required, the church insisted that he needed to, discussions followed and options were generated whereby the donor offered half of the amount originally promised, the church advised they would still need to secure a shortfall, but this could possibly buy them sometime to secure the remainder.

The donor had a number of businesses one of which needed new premises, the church suggested that they could house this business and provide a reduced rental compared to other commercial organisations.

The parties agreed that the donor would provide 70% of the original sum agreed in four instalments, and the church would house his business at a reduced rent which would save him on funds in the long run. With 70% of the agreed sum, the churches plans could go ahead with minor adjustments.

Facts & figures

- **The mediation took 1 day compared to the 10 months this conflict mediation had already gone on.**
- **The mediation cost each party £650.00 each compared to the thousands they had already spent on legal fees and the thousands they would have had to spend had they continued with Court action.**