

## **District Advance Fund Grants Policy**

This document defines the policy and procedures for making grants from the District Advance Fund.

### **1. Policy Statement**

The District Advance Fund is a resource to support growth and development of churches and circuits within the district as they seek to engage effectively in God's mission.

The district is committed to encouraging and enabling circuits, churches and district projects to grasp mission opportunities by supporting them with grant aid where it is appropriate and possible.

The district advance fund is intended primarily for development rather than maintenance and is an example of the Methodist principle of connexionalism at work, whereby resources are shared in order to help and support imaginative mission focussed projects.

Applications for district advance fund grants may be made for the support of mission projects involving people and/or property. However, the district advance fund will not fund projects that could be self-funded from church and circuit resources, nor involve maintenance work which should be covered by church and circuit funds, nor for the ongoing support of personnel on a long term basis, except in exceptional circumstances.

Applications should be submitted according to the process below and submitted to the district grants secretary at least four weeks in advance of a meeting of the district grants committee as published in the district directory or elsewhere.

The district advance fund is administered by the district grants committee on behalf of the district trustees, the resourcing mission group.

The ongoing work of the circuit is expected to be funded from the current income of the circuit, except in exceptional circumstances.

Projects are expected to receive significant grant support from the circuit advance fund before they will be considered for a district advance fund grant, although an approval of a grant in principle may be made without such support.

Applications should contain a written report of a review of the church/circuit undertaken within the three years prior to the application, which was conducted with the support of an outside facilitator, such as the district development enabler.

## 2. District priorities

When considering grant applications priority will, except in exceptional circumstances, be given to projects which meet one or more of the following:

- Projects that are part of a clear strategy directed towards fulfilling God's mission through the local church/circuit as demonstrated by church/circuit mission plans and are consistent with the district priorities as stated in the district policy documents.
- Projects that make good use of existing resources by working in an ecumenical context, or where appropriate, in partnership with other circuits or organisation.
- projects that have identified a need both in the church and the local community and are seeking to respond effectively
- Projects that encourage involvement with the gospel priority for the marginalised and poor and with those who are disadvantaged within the community
- Projects that have considered the needs of various age groups
- Projects that incorporate the potential for providing new ways of being church
- Assisting circuits and churches with insufficient resources to achieve their mission

Clear evidence should be submitted with the application in support of the above.

## 3. Criteria

**Churches or circuits must demonstrate all of the following:**

- That they have clear and specific aims for mission (under at least one of the *Our Calling* headings) that will be carried forward if this project is implemented
- How the project will seek to achieve these plans
- An innovative approach to the circuit/church strategy for mission and ministry through personnel and proerty
- That the proposal enables change and/or development
- That associated risks are properly evaluated
- That the possibility of partnership with ecumenical of other community groups has been fully explored
- If there are other factors to be taken into consideration eg demographic, social and economic, in developing the project
- That environmental issues and sustainable development have been thoroughly considered
- That the project is financially realistic, given membership and other relevant factors

#### **4. Guidelines**

- Projects involving a building project must have the approval of the circuit meeting and the district property secretary must have been consulted prior to the application being submitted, although an application in principle may be submitted prior to such approvals
- Applications must demonstrate a clear aim for the work for which grant aid is sought and include clear objectives, an action plan and details for monitoring and evaluating the work
- Evidence of the local church and/or circuit mission policy should be submitted with the application
- Both term grants (for a maximum of five years) and single grants are available.
- When appropriate a clear exit strategy from grant support should be submitted with the application

#### **5. How to apply for grants**

Please contact the district grants officer who will advise you on the most appropriate documentation to support your application.

#### **6. General information**

- The grants committee may invite the superintendent of the circuit (or a nominated substitute) from which a grant application originates to attend the district grants committee meeting at which the application is to be considered and to speak about the application and answer questions.
- No grant will be given automatically. It must not be assumed that a project will receive a grant even though it matches the grant criteria as the funds available for distribution vary from year to year
- Applicants have the right of appeal to the district resourcing mission group against a decision of the district grants committee. The decision of the resourcing mission group is final.
- In accordance with charity law the district trustees will ensure that there is sufficient money set aside for the whole of any term grants being made, including future financial commitment to the project.
- Other than in exceptional circumstances the minimum grant will be £10 000 and the maximum grant 50% of the project costs, subject to funds being available and to a maximum of 40% of the available funds in the year of the application. Smaller projects are expected to be funded from local church and circuit resources.
- Grants will not normally be paid until the Property project has been granted district consent in the case of a property project or the District lay employment secretary has given approval in the case of personnel project.

## **7. Timetable**

Applications submitted by end July, November, and February

Grants Committee meets September, January, April

Members of the grants committee are the District Grants Officer, the District property Secretary, the District Treasurer and the District Development Enabler, with the District Chair as necessary.

Advice on a possible grant application may be sought from the relevant officer/officers at any time.

RMG meets October, February and May