

# **Chelmsford Methodist Circuit**

## **Circuit Financial Grants Policy v. 6**

### **Introduction**

The Methodist Churches in the Chelmsford Circuit have adopted a mission strategy of concentrating on the development of new visions and ways of being church relevant for 21st Century, through continued analysis of the circuit's resources of people, property, and finance, and to use them in ways that will most effectively further the work of God and the circuit.

The Circuit holds some financial resources available to support individual churches within the Circuit to fulfil this strategic priority and to support new missional activities undertaken by local churches. Manses and investment properties are excluded from obtaining grants under this policy.

This policy sets out the criteria for the use of Circuit monies in support of projects where additional funding is beyond the means of the local church is needed.

This policy outlines the ways in which grant applications for missional projects will be received, reviewed, and administered.

The Circuit is allocating an annual amount equal to 20% of reserves available for grant funding as determined by the circuit reserves policy. The administration of grants will be ended when there are no such reserves available.

Staff required for delivery of projects must be employed through the Circuit with local project leaders being responsible for line management with oversight from Circuit Leadership Team. Salaries must be agreed with the Circuit Treasurer in advance of applications.

### **Criteria for grants**

Grant applications for work costing in excess of £1000 but subject to the maximum limits described below, will be considered for work which falls within one or more of the following categories

- Where full project funding can be demonstrated
- A detailed costing of the project has been submitted with a grant application
- Grants are limited to one application per church/individual per annum

All applications by churches must demonstrate how the church expect missional growth to be achieved over the next five to ten years.

1. Work with youth and children – up to 75% of total cost. Funding will be considered for projects expected to last for up to two years duration, after which a fresh application must be made.

2. Church energy efficiency / Eco church improvements – up to 50% of the cost up to a maximum of £15,000. An Eco strategy must be contained within the church's mission strategy.

3. Development of existing property –. Priority will be given to projects which have received District and/or Connexional approval through the Property Consents process ( i.e. schemes in excess of £20,000). Consideration will be given up to 50% of the total cost of the scheme, with a maximum funding of £50,000

4. New community based missional initiatives with a clear mission strategy and goal. Up to 50% of the total cost, with a maximum funding of £50000 may be applied for. Funding will be considered for projects up to three years duration after which a fresh application must be made and is subject to available funds.

All grant applications made must align with the current Church Mission Plan which must be submitted at the time of application and Church Council agreement is required prior to all grant applications being made.

5. Training and development – grants of up to one third of the cost(including travel and accommodation) will be considered on application from individuals on their merits for ministerial and lay training subject to agreement of the Superintendent minister.

#### 6. Exceptional Church Repairs

The responsibility for ongoing maintenance and repair lies with the individual Church Council. Keeping the local church in good order and repair is a responsibility of the Church Council. Each Church receives a quinquennial report every 5 years which outlines the priorities for maintenance in the upcoming period of time and is stated in specific timescales.

Where all other avenues of financial support (including District and Connexional grants) have been fully explored, a church may apply for a grant towards a quinquennial report priority 'A' repair up to 25% of the total cost with a maximum of £50,000.

Applications supported by a Church Council resolution can be made using the property grants application form.

In addition:

- A copy of the current and previous quinquennial report must be submitted.

- A statement of how the church has prepared for its maintenance responsibilities should be provided
  1. A plan setting out proposals for raising the total cost of the repair is required.
  2. Repair grants will not be offered for routine property maintenance

### **Timing of applications**

Prior to each meeting, applications are reviewed by the Superintendent Minister (for non-property matters) or the Circuit Property Secretary (for property-related matters). Applicants must address any identified concerns before their application is considered by the Committee. The Circuit Grants Committee convenes three times annually and reports all grants awarded to the following Circuit Meeting.

Applications will be considered at the next Grants Committee meeting following receipt at least 14 days in advance. An application form is available on the Circuit G drive or website or can be obtained from the Circuit property secretary.

In relation to any property development grants, any Conservation or Listed Building permissions required must be obtained prior to the application.

### **Applying for other grants to fund a project not fully covered by Circuit or District grants**

Where a church faces significant cost to enable a project to be completed and has successfully entered the project on the Methodist Consents website, consideration will be given to an advance guarantee. A guarantee will be of a sum equal to the agreed Circuit contribution and will enable the local church to make other grant applications requiring 25% or more self funding as a condition of application. The guarantee will be honoured for up to 12 months if the project proceeds with necessary consents.

### **Application process**

1. Complete the relevant Circuit Grants Application Form (either General, Property or Training) and submit to the Circuit Administrator who will arrange for its distribution to the Grants Committee.
2. Include a copy of the Church Mission Plan showing how the money applied for meets the objectives in the Mission Plan and reference to the relevant part of the Circuit Mission Plan (available on the Circuit website).
3. Include any further supporting documentation felt to be helpful in considering the grant. This may include estimates, quotations, budgets etc. which takes account of the need for Managing Trustees to obtain competitive quotations (minimum of two quotations are required).

3a. Estimates may be time limited at the time of application and therefore subject to revision. Grants will therefore take into account updated estimates and adjusted accordingly.

4 If a project requires funding for more than one financial year then a yearly breakdown of costs is to be provided

5. The Grants Committee will be circulated with all papers and documentation prior to the meeting and will consider all grants received up to 14 days prior to a meeting.

5a. A representative from the church applying for a grant (or an individual applying for personal financial support) must attend the Grants Committee where an application is to be considered.

6. Notification of the outcome of the application will be made as soon as possible after the Grants Committee has agreed.

7. The decision of the Grants Committee is final and there is no appeal process, however revised applications may be considered.

8. Payment of the grant will be made following the approval of the Circuit Grants Committee when the relevant payments and invoices are due. Applicants must contact the Circuit Finance Officer to agree a date for payment and provide the appropriate bank details.

9. If the grant is not claimed within 12 months of approval it will be withdrawn and a new application will be required.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

A report to the Grants Committee either at the end of the project, or if a project continues beyond 12 months on an annual basis, evaluating the fulfilment of the objectives in relation to the mission plan. For longer term projects second or third year grants will only be confirmed/made on acceptance of a written report.

Churches receiving grants must be willing to share their experience in a brief verbal or written report to the Circuit Meeting.

### **Other grant making bodies**

The Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire (BEH) District has a District Advance Fund to which applications can be made. Details for the District Grants Secretary can be found on the BEH website:

[https://www.behdistrict.org.uk/Groups/70756/BEH\\_District.aspx](https://www.behdistrict.org.uk/Groups/70756/BEH_District.aspx)

The District website also provides details of other grant making bodies. The website link is:

[https://www.behdistrict.org.uk/Groups/189815/BEH\\_District/District\\_Life/District\\_Grants/District\\_Grants.aspx](https://www.behdistrict.org.uk/Groups/189815/BEH_District/District_Life/District_Grants/District_Grants.aspx)

## **Composition of the Circuit Grants Committee**

The Grants Committee will be made up of the following people:

- Superintendent Minister or their designated representative will act as Chair.
- 1 Circuit Steward
- Circuit Secretary/ steward with responsibility for church Property
- The Circuit Treasurer
- 1 representative from each Circuit church appointed for 12 months on a rotation basis who must be a member of the Circuit Meeting, i.e. a Circuit Trustee.

Grants will be awarded where there is a simple majority in favour by those voting

### **Substitutes:**

Where a Church representative is unable to be present then a substitute representative will be appointed from a reserve list of church representatives who are also members of the Circuit Meeting, may attend and vote. Members of the Committee may not vote on applications made by their own church.

No proxy voting is allowed.

### **Application forms**

A copy of the application forms can be found on the Circuit website and should be Completed in accordance with the terms of this policy.

Policy version 6 accepted by Circuit Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026\_\_\_\_\_

**This policy will be reviewed by the Circuit Meeting as necessary in the light of experience**