

**REPORT FROM THE GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY GROUP RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE
CONNEXIONAL GRANTS COMMITTEE
TOUCHSTONE: FUNDING PACKAGE OFFERED BY SRC IN MARCH 2008**

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	The Council 1. confirms the SRC's decisions in March 2008 and February 2010 to provide grant funding to Touchstone for four years from Sept 2009 to August 2013; 2. directs that this commitment be fulfilled from the Mission in Britain Fund unless more appropriate funds are available; 3. permits the Connexional Grants Committee to reschedule the payments (without changing the total amount over the four years) if that proves appropriate.
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To ensure proper authorities are given for the making of a particular grant.
Main Points	An omission in due process needs to be amended.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Relevant documents are quoted in the appendix
Consultations	

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	
Faith and Order	
Financial	Commits substantial funding for 4 years
Personnel	
Legal	
Wider Connexional	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	
Risk	(a) Improperly authorised allocation of funds (b) Financial collapse of Touchstone project.

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The Governance Scrutiny Group appointed to relate to the work of the Connexional Grants Committee brings to the attention of Methodist Council the decision of the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) who at the March 2008 meeting promised a grant of £550,000 from the Fund for Home Mission (now Mission in Britain Fund) to be paid: £102k (2008/09) £106k (09/10) £110k (10/11) £114k (11/12) and £118k (12/13). To date only the first year's grant has been paid (08/09).

An oversight occurred at that time whereby the funding for the commitment was not allocated within the Mission in Britain Fund.

Touchstone has been informed of the grant, so a moral obligation exists to meet the commitment.

The matter was referred to the CGC by SRC and discussed at the CGC meeting on the 23 March 2010 (see narrative of events: pages 1: 32 & 1:33 in the CGC Meeting Agenda) who requested that the GSG raise the matter with Methodist Council.

[A narrative setting out the story up to this point is set out in the appendices to this paper]

Since the CGC reports to the Methodist Council, any error or mistake made by SRC that requires action must be corrected by the Methodist Council, who are overseers of both the SRC and CGC. The GSG confirm that the CGC should not ratify the decision of the SRC on their own, but only on the direction of the Council.

The GSG asks Methodist Council to confirm where payment should be made from in subsequent years – assuming they are happy to endorse the original agreement. The CGC have advised that funds are available in the 2009/10 financial year to commit the outstanding obligation from the Mission In Britain Fund.

The GSG feels that the initial agreement is not totally appropriate and seek permission from the Methodist Council to restructure the payments so that they reduce over each of the years still to be paid (this would not adjust the total amount paid merely alter the structure of the payments).

Due to the funding position of Touchstone the CGC took the decision to make the 2009-10 payment of £106k immediately as Touchstone was borrowing funds whilst awaiting the payment.

The Methodist Council is asked to respond to SRC and CGC advising them of their decision in this matter.

APPENDIX : A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

Summary

As will be seen from the following extracts of minutes and papers , a request came for substantial connexional funding for the Touchstone project in Bradford to the then Resourcing Mission Grants Committee in November 2007. The RMGC referred the matter to the January 08 meeting of the SRC, and as an interim measure agreed to cover the costs of the first year [i.e. 2008-9] of the proposed funding from funds that were then at RMGC's disposal. The January 08 meeting of SRC agreed that the Touchstone project should count as one that had "connexional significance" (which was being developed at that time as a new criterion for assessing whether connexional grants should be made). The SRC asked for further investigations into whether other sources of funding would be available, and into clarifying the expected outcomes from the project. At its following meeting in March 2008 the SRC received the outcomes of those investigations and agreed to fund the project for four years beyond the time of the original single year's funding committed by the RMGC. This was one item amongst a series of matters in which the SRC agreed to commit funding to various projects. The SRC was due to return to the matter of the Touchstone project at its meeting in May 08, but due to other pressures of business this did not happen. Nor, at a time of change not only in Connexional Team structures but also from the Resourcing Mission Grants Committee to the new Connexional Grants Committee, was the commitment for the four year's funding for Touchstone after the RMGC grant ended in August 2009 built into connexional budgets for those years. This matter came to light in the current connexional year (after the one year grant from the now disbanded RMGC ended). The issue was brought to the February 2010 meeting of the SRC, which confirmed the grant. The matter then returned to the Connexional Grants Committee which in turn referred it to the Governance Scrutiny Group appointed to relate to its work. This narrative is appended to the Scrutiny Group's subsequent report.

Extracts from relevant Minutes and Papers

1. SRC Paper SRC/08/06 January 2008

PRIORITY ALLOCATIONS TO MAJOR PROJECTS – TOUCHSTONE

The Resourcing Mission Grants Committee at its meeting in November 07 received a request for substantial connexional funding of the Touchstone Project in Bradford for a 5 year period. The Committee recognised that this request fell outside its previous parameters for grant funding; that it might well be a case of a project with the criterion of "connexional significance" that was being developed for the new processes of funding; and that should funding be agreed in principle there were still questions to be answered about which sources of funds should be used. RMGC also recognised that the SRC was looking at a series of similar issues at its meeting in January 08, and so remitted the matter to it.

....

The request is for connexional funding of £102,000 in the first year rising to £118,000 in the fifth year, a total commitment over the five years of £550,000. If the principle is followed through of things being funded either from "connexional" budgets or from district budgets, but not both, a further £125,000 would have to be found over the same period (£23,000 in the first year rising to £27,000 in the fifth).

The questions for SRC are

- Does/could Touchstone have "connexional significance"?

- Should Touchstone be funded through “connexional” grants?
- If it should, at what level should it be funded?
- From what source should the funds be found? (CAPF?)

K G Howcroft
10.01.08

2. SRC Minute January 2008

Minute SRC 08.01.5(v) Touchstone [SRC/08/06]

Ken Howcroft presented SRC/08/06, the paper and budget written by Touchstone, forwarded from Resourcing Mission Grants Committee. Ken explained that for the last 4 years funding has been provided from CAPF money. This however, is a long-term piece of work that needs to be sustained. In the past CAPF monies were used for new work not for sustaining projects. The 2007 Conference had, however, directed that the purposes of the various sources of funds should be amended and the use of the various funds collated. The questions were therefore whether Touchstone should receive some connexional funding, and, if so, from what source.

SRC agreed that Touchstone could have “connexional significance’ and could be funded through ‘connexional’ grants, but not exclusively.

The first year for the connexional element of the grant application is covered by a grant from the Resourcing Mission Grants Committee. It was therefore agreed that the matter should be discussed again at the next meeting. The Touchstone management group should be asked to explore further whether there could be more funding from Bradford, from ecumenical partners or other sources. The SRC also asked for more evidence that there was a strategy in place for developing the training potential of Touchstone; and that attention was being given to ‘succession’ issues in the leadership of Touchstone. Some voting members were hopeful of arranging individual visits to Touchstone before the next meeting. Ken Howcroft was asked to communicate the tone of the conversations at SRC as positive.

3. SRC Minute March 2008

Minute SRC 08.2.7 Allocations to major projects Touchstone

An e-mail from Peter Whittaker, Chair of the West Yorkshire District, which had been received following the SRC meeting in January, was circulated.

The January SRC had asked about other sources of funding; they have sought alternative funding but the outcome is disappointing.

There was a discussion about whether the work of Touchstone was of ‘connexional significance’. If it is, work needs to be done on how the model can be translated for other settings. There are other projects undertaking similar work, and there was concern not to send the wrong signal to them. This work needs to be linked to the interfaith relations project.

It was agreed to support Touchstone, but that the point about networking across the connexion needed to be made. It is of connexional significance if it can be transferable and if it can link with the Team's work in the area of interfaith relations.

This impacts on the role of the Team Leader at Touchstone. There has been a discussion in the Stationing Committee as to whether it should be an advertised or a matched appointment. If the appointment is connexionally significant, the job description/person specification or appointment profile needs to be written with connexional input.

It was agreed that Touchstone is of connexional significance but that SRC wishes it to be of greater connexional use. The basis on which it will be funded is that the connexional significance should develop. It will be funded for four years from 2009 onwards, acknowledging that the work on the job description of the Team Leader is crucial in this. The Resourcing Mission Grants Committee has already agreed funding for 08/09 (ie the first year of original funding request).

There will be a report back to the May SRC.

4. SRC Paper SRC/10/08 February 2010

Funding for Touchstone

1 Background

1.1 The Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) agreed funding from the Connexional year 09/10 with the following allocations:

Year	£
2009/10	106,000
2010/11	110,000
2011/12	114,000
2012/13	118,000

1.2 The SRC agreed to this funding for four years on condition that:

1.2.1 Touchstone broadened its influence through effective networking between the inter-faith, community based projects throughout the connexion, ensuring that good practice and key insights are transmitted everywhere. Further that funding for each subsequent year was released following a satisfactory annual review.

1.2.2 Touchstone developed its work in full partnership with the inter-faith project that was established as part of the Team Focus process.

1.2.3 Through TSRE, the inter-faith aspects of training needed to be developed connexionally, building on the work done in Bradford. The future connexional funding can assist with this `rolling out` connexionally of what is already being developed.

1.3 It was agreed that the job description of the new Team Leader for Touchstone would incorporate these principles.

2 The Connexional Grants Officers have established new criteria for the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC) to work with, and these include points such as:

- the project will benefit the wider Connexion;
- learning outcomes benefit the wider Connexion;
- work is mission focused;

- work is ecumenical.
- 2.1 The new Monitoring and Evaluating form will be used each year by the Secretary for External Relationships during one of her regular visits to the centre.
- 2.2.1 Joy Barrow, Inter-faith Officer, has established ways of working with Touchstone using the centre for regional training events and also drawing especially on the work with women's inter-faith groups. In addition to the inter-faith aspect, the Equalities and Diversity Officer, Margaret Sawyer, has begun work with the Director of Touchstone to develop good models of valuing diversity in order to expand the influence of the project connexionally.
- 3 Despite the resolution by the SRC in 2008, the funding for Touchstone was not budgeted for. However, the funds are available in the Mission in Britain Fund (MiBF) stream.
- 4 Therefore, the SRC is requested to confirm that years 2-5 should now be endorsed as a commitment in this year's budget and subsequent budgets pending satisfactory reporting through the monitoring and evaluation process.

C.E.
Feb 2010

5. SRC Minute February 2010

Minute SRC 10.1.11 Funding for Touchstone [SRC/10/08]

Christine Elliott presented SRC/10/08 to articulate the Team's recommendation that funding for Touchstone for years 2-5 is a commitment in the Mission in Britain Fund part of CGC.

The SRC agreed that the accountability element of this agreed grant should be handled within normal procedures of the CGC remit. Ron Calver outlined the basis of a five-year commitment agreed with Touchstone which needed to be reviewed after three years. Christine has met with Barbara Glasson, they will be presenting a paper and will continue to review the work of Touchstone.

KGH
30 March 2010