

Priorities for Mission in Britain Grants

Contact Name and Details	Dr Daleep Mukarji, Chair of the Review Group, daleepmukarji@googlemail.com
Resolution	36/1. The Council adopts the report of the Review Group.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To assist the work of the Connexional Grants Committee by providing clearer priorities for Mission in Britain (MiB) grants, to take effect from the connexional year 2019/20.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent experience of difficulties in the MiB grants process and expectation of tighter funding in the future; • Requirement to ensure that the grants process fully supports Reaffirming <i>Our Calling</i>; • Outline of new priorities and criteria for grant-making after consultation with the Strategy and Resources Committee and more widely in the Church.
Background Documents	Connexional Grants Committee Policy MC/17/98
Consultations	A survey consultation with various people in Church was undertaken. The Strategy and Resources Committee.

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	Potential requirement to amend SO 213B, specifically 213B(3) which refers to connexional significance
Financial	No direct financial impact. Tighter prioritisation of grant-making may improve the Church's overall management of finance through the better allocation of resources.

Priorities for Mission in Britain Grants

Introduction

1. In July 2018 a small group was formed to review Church priorities for connexional grants within Mission and Ministry in Britain (MMiB). This review is in the context of the recent reaffirmation of the *Our Calling* statement by the Church to provide a direction for the future of the Methodist Church in Britain. There have been some problems with grant giving in the last year, and questions that have arisen:
 - a) There are more applications for both MMiB grants and Fund for Property (FfP) grants than funds available. The Connexional Grants Committee (CGC) cannot meet the demand. Both funds have seen a deliberate reduction in reserve levels.
 - b) When applications have been refused, especially after encouragement and support in the application from connexional staff, there has been unhappiness and sometimes anger from the applicants.
 - c) Given a commitment to reaffirming *Our Calling*, are the priorities clear and appropriate for making decisions? The Chair of the CGC has requested clear direction from the Council on priorities for the coming years.
 - d) Are the procedures and processes fit for purpose today?
 - e) After decisions are made, is the feedback, especially for grants not approved, communicated well and clearly?
2. Members of the Working Group: Dr Daleep Mukarji (Chair), the Revd Sue Keegan von Allmen (member of SRC), the Revd Nick Oborski, the Revd Charity Nzegwu, and Dr Yasmin Finch.

Background

3. The role and responsibilities for the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC) are set out in SO 213B. The CGC is to implement the grants policy adopted by the Methodist Council. It is the Council that each year appoints the CGC, its subcommittees and bodies subsidiary to the subcommittees known as grant streams. Standing Orders also prescribes the much-debated concept of connexional significance but this is only a criterion for the Mission and Ministry Stream of grants (excluding chaplaincy, MAPJ and property grants from this).
4. In October 2017 the Methodist Council agreed a Connexional Grants Committee policy for missional grants in Britain (MC/17/98).
5. Grants are made from specific funds (Mission in Britain, Property, Connexional Priority, Epworth, Barratt and Luton). Grants are made using the following four tailored application forms but considered under three streams only (MAPJ is included in the Mission and Ministry stream):
 - Mission and Ministry
 - Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPJ)
 - Chaplaincy
 - Property
6. It is to be remembered that connexional funds represent a small fraction of those held across the Church. Circuit and district reserves beyond those funds already used for mission could be released to support grant applications for mission in Britain. A key objective of the CGC, given limited resources available to it, must be to ensure that connexional grant funds are used for maximum impact to supplement whatever resources can be raised locally and not just as a convenient

alternative to the use of local reserves. CGC grants cannot just top up local funds for regular work of circuits or churches.

Our Calling

7. “The Calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God’s love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. The Church exists to:
 - Increase the awareness of God’s presence and celebrate God’s love (**Worship**)
 - Help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care (**Learning & Caring**)
 - Be good neighbours to people in need and to challenge injustice (**Service**)
 - Make more followers of Christ (**Evangelism**)”(2000 Conference adopted *Our Calling* statement)
8. Since the presentation of the Statistics for Mission to the 2017 Conference, the Church has realised that urgent and important action needs to be taken by the whole Church to reform and to respond to the situation of declining membership. Discussions have taken place during 2017-2018 at the Connexional Leaders’ Forum, the Methodist Council, the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) and the 2018 Conference where there has been a reaffirmation of *Our Calling* to set the future directions of the work of the Methodist Church.
9. The four headings of *Our Calling* set an overall strategic context for grant making but more specific priorities and criteria are still needed (see paragraphs 13-16 below).

Methodology of Review

10. The review group met a few times and invited the Chair of the CGC and the Grants Team Leader and others in to help them understand the issues and the process of giving grants. It shared a discussion paper at the November 2018 meeting of the SRC to check their approach to the task and to ask for some advice on a few points. After that an email consultation survey was initiated within the Church sent to over 400 people, with 156 people responses received. This response is considered good feedback from a survey such as this. There is a summary of the findings available electronically from Jane Bates (batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk).

Strategic Purpose of Connexional Grants for Mission and Ministry in Britain

11. The CGC acts to support and promote the mission of the Church throughout the Connexion by assisting and resourcing, where possible, the Local Churches, Circuits and Districts in implementing their mission plans. The strategic “purpose of awarding grant funding is to encourage new ideas in mission, the taking of risks, the development of capacity, leadership and infrastructure for mission” “The overall intention of the CGC, on behalf of the Church, is to use limited funds for high quality exceptional projects (for Mission and Ministry in Britain) at the cutting edge of mission that have influence or set an example to others” (quotes from MC/17/98).
12. The essential principle is that connexional funding is not used to subsidise local ministry, and related mission work, that should be undertaken by all Circuits and Districts; but rather to help ‘make a difference’ by supporting exceptional projects that are deemed to be of missional significance and enabling the Church to fulfil its calling.

Priorities for Grants

13. Within the overall context of *Our Calling*, and reflecting on other statements made over time by the Church, the following are proposed as priorities for mission in Britain for the next few years and to be borne in mind through the grants approval process:

- a) To support the Church to make followers of Jesus Christ and to enable such activities that allow church growth, church planting and encouraging more people to become disciples of Christ.
 - b) To equip, train and give confidence to the Methodist people to share the Gospel of Christ with people in local communities.
 - c) To equip and support the Church to be a good neighbour to people in need, especially marginalised and vulnerable people, and to challenge injustice wherever we see it.
 - d) To transform societies and communities by reaching and empowering people experiencing poverty and inequality of resources whether in an urban or rural setting.
14. Accepting these priorities for Mission in Britain grants implies that other applications for grants, outside these priorities, should not normally be considered. The priorities can be reviewed after five years.

A new set of criteria for Grants

15. Starting from the general shared sense of where we want to go (*Our Calling*), and the priorities in paragraph 13, the Working Group has established specific criteria on which to base a more robust process for making grant decisions. The Working Group reached a degree of consensus on the following:
- a) All applications must demonstrate a clear link to *Our Calling*, covering one or more areas but not necessarily all four.
 - b) All grant applications from Local Churches, Circuits and Districts should be related to the Mission Plans developed by them. Circuits and Districts must have mission plans before applying for grant funds. The need being dealt with and through the project should be explicit. Applications for property grants should also be linked to a circuit/district property strategy as required by the Connexional Property Strategy (MC/18/74).
 - c) Funding from local reserves, District Advance Funds and other wider sources should be used where possible. The applicants and their Circuits and Districts must make clear their commitment to, contributions and involvement in the project.
 - d) There needs to be an element of 'means testing' to be developed to ensure that funds are directed where the 'need' is greatest.
 - e) Applications from bodies outside MCB should not be considered. However, applications from other bodies where Methodists have an equal partnership and involvement in the programme may be considered. It would be expected that the application is made by the Methodist Church component of the partnership.
 - f) The concept of 'connexional significance' should be dropped as it is unhelpful. Instead it is suggested that a criterion of missional significance or intent be developed and applied to all streams and all grants. Missional significance should be demonstrated by reference to:
 - *Impact*: the work has measurable deliverables expressed in terms of the numbers of people reached or benefitting from the project.
 - *New work*: start-ups will take priority over the maintenance of existing projects.
 - *Kingdom risks*: priority for work that is truly bold, innovative and exciting.
 - *Local commitment*: some evidence of 'sacrificial service' and involvement of those promoting the project beyond purely local financial support.
 - *Leverage*: where funding from us will unlock other resources.
 - *Scalability*: projects from which others can learn or which can be replicated elsewhere. Projects which speak to the wider world.
 - *Cooperation*: Potential to involve several Districts or other players.
 It is expected that project applications should specifically refer to two more of the above points to make clear what missional significance their application has for connexional grants.
 - g) Where the applicant has a track record of applying for grants and implementing projects this will be taken into consideration as an indication of their ability to deliver successful outcomes.

- h) The applicant should set out clearly the sustainability plan; how the work will continue when the grant runs out.
- i) Where Districts themselves wish to indicate a priority between several project applications from them, this should be considered in the funding decision.
- j) The process of Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Dissemination (MELD), must be used to inform grant making, ie there needs to be a 'feedback loop' that ensures lessons learned from one project are applied elsewhere.
- k) Within the context of this document all applications should appropriately fulfil the eligibility and policy criteria set out in and approved by the Council in October 2017 (MC/17/98).

Additional Points

- i. Today we have three streams and it is suggested in future there be only two: 1) Mission in Britain (including MAPJ & Chaplaincy), and 2) Property.
 - ii. In the grants approval process volunteers who have experience in evangelism, church planting and growth should be involved. Practitioners will help the process.
 - iii. Grants to Language Fellowship Groups should only be considered if they fit into the priorities agreed and it supports their integration and inclusion into the wider Methodist Church in Britain.
 - iv. Communicating these priorities with the wider Connexion and encouraging Local Churches, Circuits and Districts to apply for projects that can be considered within them will be important. Also clearly communicating the decisions of the approval process and giving feedback to applicants should be given attention.
16. The paper was shared with the SRC at its meeting in February 2019. The SRC recommends that the report of the Review Group be adopted by the Council.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

36/1. The Council adopts the report of the Review Group.