

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS 2024 - 2025

BACKGROUND

1. The district has an established District Resourcing for Mission Group (DRMG) to consider all requests from circuits and churches for District grant funding, whether for property schemes or mission and ministry (people-based) projects. The membership of the DRMG is given in the Synod Directory. This process enables all requests for District grants to be considered formally and equitably by a committee responsible to the Synod.
2. The district has an established District Training Fund for assisting individuals (both lay and ordained), churches, and circuits in their learning and discipleship. The grants will normally be for up to 50 percent of the cost of the training and normally up to a maximum of £100 per grant. Applications to Training Grants should in the first instance be referred to Mr Lloyd Cooke, Chief Executive, Saltbox Christian Centre. Grants applications that exceed the normal 50% / £100 limits will be referred to the DRMG for consideration and grant funds may be allocated from either the District Training Fund or District Advance Fund or both.
3. The District Training Fund will also normally be used to wholly fund District CDiM events and District ministerial retreats.
4. The DRMG reports its activities to the Synod via the District Policy Committee as required.

GUIDELINES

1. Applications to the District Advance Fund (DAF) grants can be made by the District, a Circuit, or a local Church with Circuit backing (usually in the form of a grant from the Circuit Model Trust Fund). These applications can be for work or projects within the body making the application or for ecumenical work and projects where the District, Circuit or local Church are significant players and other denominations are also offering financial support.
2. Circuits and churches are asked to submit all requests for District funds to the DRMG via the District Administrator.
3. Fisher Fund: the district allocates up to £20,000 per annum in total for Small Grants (up to £500 per application), which are available to churches/circuits to fund experimental outreach activities. These grants are available by emailing the District Administrator with an explanation of the project. The Administrator will consult a small panel for agreement. These will have a quick turnaround so that momentum is maintained for the idea. If the experiment is successful, this may (or not) lead to a further expanded application from the District Advance Fund which will be assessed against the criteria below. It is a condition of Fisher Fund grants that feedback on learning is provided on completion of the experiment to the DRMG so that others may learn from the experience.
4. The DAF supports several ongoing projects; requests for ongoing funding require a report and a written request each year.

5. The district offers small grants for Youth and Children's activities; further information can be obtained from the District Administrator.
6. Where other district funds are being requested the district form must be used.
7. The available District funds are the District Advance Fund and the J Michael Eaton Memorial Fund. Applications do not need to specify from which of these they seek a grant.
8. Applications can be made in certain circumstances (see their website) to the Joseph Rank Trust. The requests must be signed off by the Synod Secretary and need to be received at least 21 days prior to submission.
9. The DRMG will meet four times a year – October, January, March and June. The dates for each meeting are shown in the Synod Directory and are listed below.
10. An emailed copy of the application must be received by District Administrator by:
 - Wednesday 2 October 2024 for decision on Wednesday 16 October 2024;
 - Tuesday 31 December 2024 for decision on Tuesday 14 January 2025;
 - Wednesday 5 March 2025 for decision on Wednesday 19 March 2025;
 - Tuesday 20 May 2025 for decision on Tuesday 3 June 2025.

This schedule gives time for your application to received full and proper consideration by the DRMG.

11. Applications received after the deadlines for receipt, unless by prior agreement, will be deferred to the subsequent meeting.
12. The district gives greater priority to mission and ministry projects. The list below gives areas of mission priority as currently perceived by the district, and applicants for grants are asked to note these in preparing their forms.

Growing Lay Leaders

We are committed to the role of lay leaders in the life of the church. We will seek intentionally to enable individuals to discern their calling to this ministry and to nurture and equip them for service.

The Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District:

- will support churches & circuits to develop lay leadership through vocational discernment, recruitment, and management;
- will explore how the role of Lay Pastor, recognized at Conference 2021, will be enabled throughout the district;
- will work in partnership with the Learning Network and Connexion to provide appropriate training for lay people.

Nurturing New Ways of being Church

We are committed to resourcing and enabling the development of new ways of being Church across the District where it is discerned the Holy Spirit is prompting.

The Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District:

- has recruited Revd David Willis as a mission enabler to lead on this priority;
- will encourage the creation of missional hubs and communities of practice to share ideas and resource and imaginative spaces to envision and discern
- will work in Co-ordination with the Connexional 'God For All strategy' in ways appropriate to local contexts within the District.

Cultivating Diverse and Just Communities

We are committed to social and climate justice, and we will work in partnership with others to promote justice and celebrate diversity.

The Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District:

- will commit to becoming a carbon neutral district
- will resource the implementation of the Methodist Church's strategy for Justice, Solidarity and Dignity across the District.
- will value and support the church on the margins
- will encourage churches to "work with" rather than "working for" their communities.

All these priorities will be underpinned by prayer and good governance.

13. Districts grants are normally not considered for terms exceeding three years, though continuity funding can extend that period. The Project would be expected to become self-sustaining after this period.
14. The DRMG will welcome applications to support developments of church property, however modest, which are geared to mission and ministry opportunities e.g. the upgrading of premises and facilities to provide mission-based activities. We recognise that mission and ministry and property are complementary. The application should identify how these fit with a reduction of climate impact.
15. The Project is required to provide updates on learning to the DRMG. Criteria should be established at the outset against which such achievement could be measured. For example, the criteria could include a timescale for the establishment of clubs, average number of users, increased income from new facilities or in weekly offertory etc. This feedback will usually be required to trigger payment of the following year's grant, if appropriate.
16. The DRMG will only awards grant funds when all the correct processes of the Church have been fulfilled. The DRMG requires that for all applications:
 - Latest Circuit Standard Form of Accounts is held by the District Treasurer.
 - The District Treasurer has a copy of the latest Reserves Policy (local church and Circuit).
 - Safeguarding Policy has been received by the District Safeguarding Officer.
 - Church and/or Circuit Mission Policy have been received by the District Office.
 - Current Statistics for Mission and Property details have been fully entered on the Methodist Online web site.
 - Property Returns are up to date.
 - For Property projects – applicants have discussed the project with the District Property Secretary.
 - For Ministry projects – applicants have received advice from District Lay Employment Secretary.

The Methodist Church has significant funds available to support mission and ministry projects and property schemes. The district processes are set out to enable churches, circuits and the district to be able to fund new and imaginative projects, even when their local funds seem inadequate. Please do think and pray about opportunities in your local situation and see what you can do.