

## **POLICY FOR DISTRICT ADVANCE FUND**

### Introduction

Standing Order 963 requires Synods to establish an advance fund and to make grants for schemes that require approval (SO930 and 931). It allows grants for personnel and property schemes, as well as mission.

### The purpose of the District's mission

The Darlington District exists to support and enable the work of the Churches and Circuits in the District to fulfil Our Calling as understood by the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

The District's vision/mission is to support and encourage Christian Communities to develop in ways that

- attract people to Jesus Christ
- reflect God's presence in the world
- explore and demonstrate ways to follow Christ and promote God's rule in contemporary society by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The District also has a role in relation to the region, addressing issues of concern in public life across the District, enabling partnerships with other agencies and Churches, and as part of the wider Connexion.

### District Grants Criteria

Circuits and/or Churches must demonstrate:

- that they have clear and specific plans 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/local Church strategy for mission and ministry through personnel and property, thus providing pump-priming money for new work – Circuits and Churches are encouraged to find ways of funding this work once it becomes established
- that the proposal enables change.
- that associated risks are assessed.
- that the possibility of partnership with ecumenical or other community organisations has been fully explored.
- if there are other factors to be taken into consideration eg demographic, social and economic, in developing the project.
- that 'Carbon Footprints' and other environmental issues have been considered.
- that the project is financially realistic, given membership and other relevant factors.

Additional Notes:

1. Sustaining the work of the Circuit on a self-financing basis is generally expected to be a circuit objective. Therefore DAF grants will not as a rule support the replacement of current circuit personnel even where the job description is different.
2. Applications for increases in previous grant levels will usually only be considered where there is an increase in the work to be funded.
3. The Church/Circuit's willingness and ability to share in the cost will be taken into consideration when assessing the scale of the grant.
4. A realistic budget of income and expenditure for the year(s) in question is required. For specific appointments/projects a particular budget will be required as well as details of Circuit/Church finances.
5. Term grant applications are generally expected to be on a diminishing basis.
6. The setting of Circuit/Church aims and objectives and a process of monitoring and evaluation are required. In cases where grant aid is offered a report is required at the end of the first year. If the funding term is longer than one year further reports may be required by the Grants Committee – a report will always be required at the end of the term summarising the outcome of the project.
7. Grants for new appointments are not normally awarded where the contract of employment has already been entered into (ie retrospective applications will not normally be considered).
8. Grants are not as a rule available for the ongoing repair and maintenance of property. Grants for building works will not in general be given where building works have already commenced before approval of the project and grant.
9. Property grants will not normally exceed 5% of the cost of the project.
10. Applications in respect of posts that are involved with children or young people should have the written endorsement of the District Chair or her/his representative.

11. Should there be any material change in the project during the period of the grant, such change should be reported to the District Grants Committee who may wish to review the terms of the award, for the remainder of the grant period.

12 Grants are not normally available for a period exceeding 5 years. If, prior to the conclusion of the grant period, the applicant can demonstrate that:

The project work is progressing or developing into new and/or additional areas and all other sources of funding have been explored and the project would cease without further grant support and there are special and/or external circumstances why the project should continue and the project continues to meet the District Grants Criteria,

then a further grant application for a period of up to three further years may be submitted.

13 In considering grant applications the Committee normally expects that the resources of constituent Churches are pooled and that one or two are not retaining excessive reserves.

13 The District Resourcing Mission Officer may be able to offer advice regarding your scheme.

### Timetable

The District Grants Committee will consider applications three times in each year. The deadlines for applications to be received will be 21 days before the date of the District Grants Committee Meeting. The dates of the Meetings are to be found on the Darlington District website. Applications must be made on the approved form or in a submission that includes the information requested on the form.

September 2015