



## **Circuit Grant Policy 2024/25**

### **Introduction and Context:**

The Circuit is dedicated to helping churches, groups, and individuals undertake mission opportunities and training, providing them with grants whenever feasible and appropriate. The Circuit ringfences a fund within its budget to help support projects which focus on 'development' activities rather than 'maintenance', reflecting the Methodist emphasis on mission. This principle is upheld through the availability of grants to help those with more limited resources of their own who need to engage in activities of strategic missional importance.

### **Eligibility and Scope:**

There are two separate funds available:

- Training and Development grants may be applied for by those employed or in voluntary service of the Circuit or its local churches, to develop their skills and practices for ministry and missional purposes. (This fund is also used to help meet the cost of mandatory training of circuit staff and others in specific circumstances.)
- Mission Grants may be applied for by churches, or associated groups wishing to engage in specific activities or events which align with strategic mission priorities, as described in church or circuit mission plans.

### **Funding Limits and Availability:**

- **Variable Funding:** The total available funds and individual grant limits may change each year, subject to approval by the Circuit Meeting as part of the Circuit's overall budget.

The current allowances are:

- Training and Development grants: £5000
- Mission grants: £20,000
- Individual grant limit of £2000 per church, group, or individual.

At the end of the year any unspent budget is returned to the circuit's operational fund and is not carried over.

- **Utilising Resources:** Churches and individuals are encouraged to use their own financial resources and explore other sources of funding in addition to applying for Circuit grants.

- **Application limit:** Each Church is limited to one supported application per Connexional year. Any application from a group or individual associated with a local church would constitute this limited application. Circuit grants are normally limited to one third of the overall cost of any project.
- **Grant Validity:** Grants not utilised within 12 months of approval will normally lapse, although in the case of a long-running projects or training courses grants can be split into annual instalments for up to 5 years.
- **Payment Conditions:** Grant payments are made following Circuit meeting approval. An annual update may be requested at subsequent Circuit Meetings, and a final report is to be brought to the Meeting, once the project has concluded.
- **Other Conditions:** Certain conditions may be applied to employees undertaking training and development. For example, if the grant is awarded to develop skills that lead to the employee successfully gaining another job within 12 months, the employee may be asked to repay the initial grant allocation.

## Grant Criteria

Priority is given to applications that:

- Align with the Church or Circuit Mission Plan and have a meaningful missional impact.
- Demonstrate ecumenical collaboration and partnerships with other organisations.
- Address the needs of diverse or under-represented groups.
- Introduce innovative approaches to church practices or significantly improve existing ones.
- Showcase potential for long-term sustainability.

Applications are not usually considered for:

- Church building maintenance.
- Individuals or groups unconnected with the Circuit or its local churches unless the project or activity contributes directly to the objectives of circuit or local church mission plans.

Meeting the criteria does not automatically ensure a grant will be forthcoming due to variations in available funds and application numbers.

## Application Process

1. **Application Form:** Applications must be submitted using the application form available from the Circuit Office or on the Derbyshire North-East Methodist website.
2. **Application Submission:** Completed applications should be sent preferably by email or alternatively as hard copy to The Circuit Office.

3. **Application Review:** A member of the Circuit Leadership Team will arrange a meeting with representatives from the local Church Council, the individual, and/or representative from the associated group to discuss the missional aspects of any grant application after which the application will be considered at the next Team meeting.
4. **Application Recommendation:** Subject to the approval of the Circuit Leadership Team, including a financial review, grant proposals will then be recommended to the Circuit Meeting for fund allocation. If the application is not regarded favourably by the CLT, it will still be notified to the Circuit Meeting with the reasons for recommending its rejection. In either case, the decision of the Circuit Meeting shall be final.

### **Application Deadlines**

Grant applications will be received three times a year, but a decision cannot be reached until both the Circuit Leadership Team and the Circuit Meeting have met. Practically, this means that submissions should be received by the Circuit Office by the end of January, April, or August to be considered by the Circuit Meeting in March, June, or September. In the case of the September Circuit Meeting, any funds granted then would come from the budget agreed for the new Connexional year.

### **Policy Review and Updates**

This policy is subject to annual review and may be updated to reflect new church and community needs or changes to funding availability. Any updates will be adopted by the September Circuit Meeting, except for budget changes which are considered by the Circuit Meeting in March.

Policy reviewed and agreed by the Circuit Meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2025