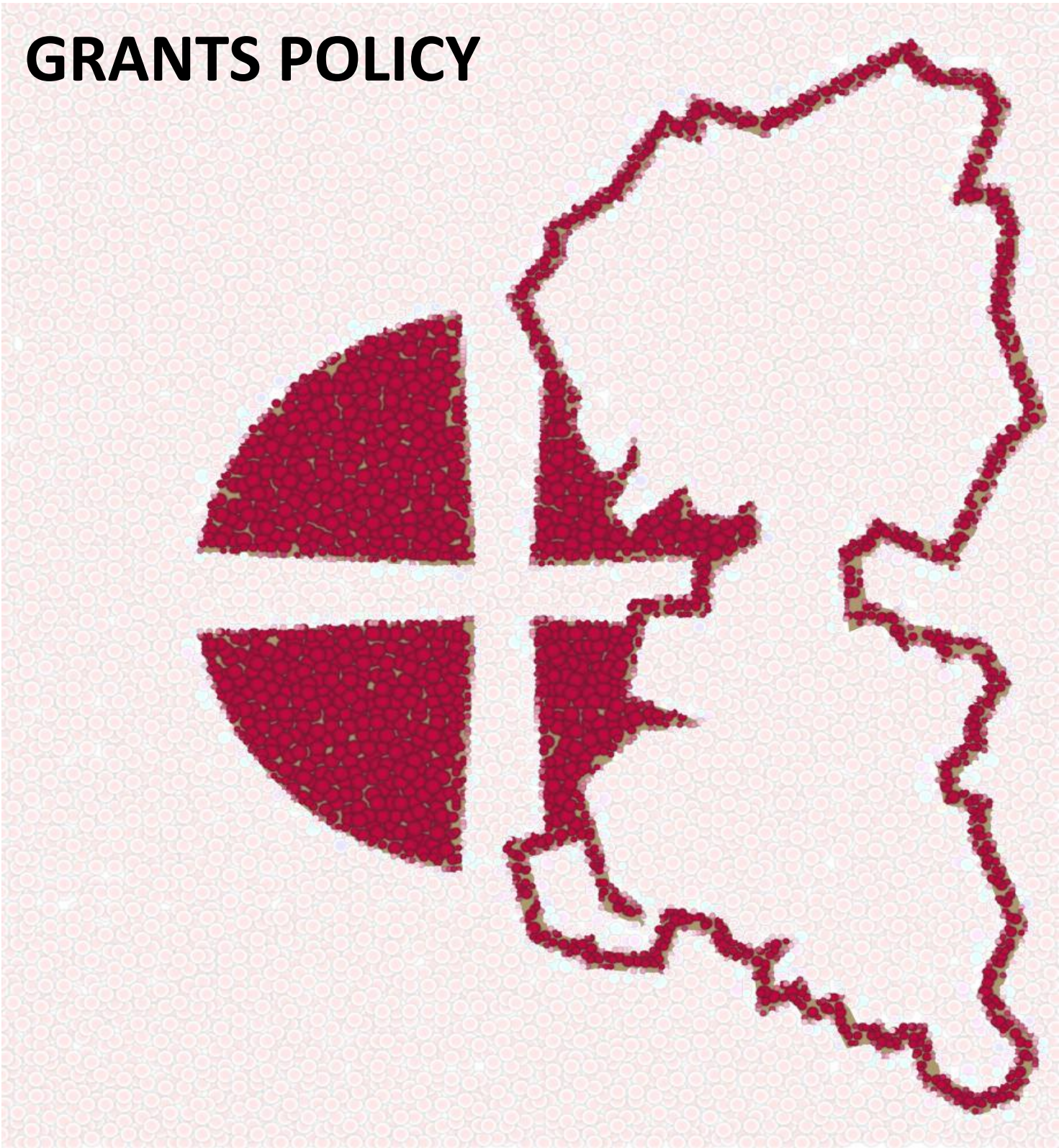
NORTH WEST ENGLAND
METHODIST DISTRICT

GRANTS POLICY



Document Control

This document has been approved for operation within:		NWED	
Status:		NWED requirement	
Owner:		District Policy Committee and District Grants Committee	
Date effective from:	January 2025	Date of next review:	July 2027
Review period:	1 year (following first review)	Version:	5

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NWED Policy

Introduction

1. The purpose of this policy is to:
    - Define the North West England Methodist District's (NWED) policy and procedures relating to the administration of grants from the District Advance Fund (DAF).
    - Provide guidance on the types of grants that can and cannot be applied for through NWED.
    - Provide guidance on the application process for a grant from the District.

2. This policy may be amended by the District Policy Committee (DPC) at any time following consultation with the District Grants Committee and taking into account any resolutions of the District Synod concerning the District Grants or Mission policies.

Who is responsible for the policy?

3. NWED has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with any relevant statutory or Methodist framework. The DPC has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the District Grants Committee.
4. The Grants Committee will apply the policy when considering grant applications and make recommendations accordingly to DPC.
5. The Grants Committee and senior leadership team of NWED have a specific role in the fair application of this policy and all members of the District are responsible for ensuring its success.

What is covered by the policy?

6. The prime purpose of District Grants is to encourage Mission and new initiatives. There are two types of grants available:
   Small Grants (up to £1,500)
   - Designed to cover seed funding for new projects, grants for smaller purchases and projects, low cost training, funding for warm spaces and 3Generate (or other youth residential event) attendance. The application process is designed for a quick decision based on clear information of the proposal, benefits, outcomes and cost. In some cases a decision may be deferred to the next meeting of the Grants Committee, but normally a decision will be made within 14 days where possible. Grants over £750 will require some form of contribution from the church or circuit.

   Larger Grants (up to £30,000)
   - Awarded across all areas of church life, property, mission and ministry within NWED.
7. Many churches want to respond to the climate crisis but lack the technical knowledge and financial resources to take the first steps. Early-stage interventions, such as energy audits, can provide clarity, direction and confidence enabling better long-term decisions and more effective use of limited funds. As such, a targeted fund (Eco Support Fund) sits within the

two types of grants available, specifically with the aim of supporting churches and Circuits in reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and progressing towards the Methodist Church's Net Zero 2030 target.

Small grant provision as part of the Eco Support Fund will cover energy audits - 80% or up to £1,500 (whichever is less) towards the cost of an Energy Audit can be applied for. The Energy Audit should:

- Understand current energy use and carbon footprint
- Identify practical energy efficiency measures
- Provide options for heating and insulation improvements

Larger grant provision as part of the Eco Support Fund will cover the provision of follow-on support – a grant of up to 50% or up to £30,000 (whichever is less) towards eco upgrade works can be applied for. Ordinarily, this will include implementing recommendations from the energy audit (e.g. insulation, LED lighting, heat pumps, solar PV upgrades).

8. The Methodist Church encourages churches and Circuits to respond seriously and imaginatively to issues of poverty and inequality of resources. As such, a fund (Methodist Action on Poverty & Justice (MAPJ)) exists to promote the work of the Methodist Church in support of people affected by poverty and disadvantage whether in an urban or rural setting. Projects relating to justice seeking work in the local context should work with those directly affected by poverty/injustice with the aim of breaking down the barriers to justice. Examples of projects could include providing budgeting or nutrition/cooking courses to address food poverty or advocating for relevant local government support.
   Small grant provision for MAPJ projects will align with the District's small grant criteria, allowing for applications that seek up to £1,500.
   For large grant applications in support of MAPJ projects, a grant of up to 50% or up to £30,000 (whichever is less) is able to be requested.
9. All applications will be considered in relation to the wider vision and values of the Methodist Church as set out in the *Priorities of the Methodist Church* and *Our Calling*, as well as any District Mission Policy.

Who can apply for a grant?

10. Local Methodist churches (and Local Ecumenical Partnerships with a Methodist element) and Circuits within the North West England Methodist District are eligible to apply for a District grant (subject normally to their assessment responsibilities having been met).
11. Methodist churches with an affiliated school within the District may apply for a grant to be used in partnership with the church and school for mission purposes.

NWED Grants Policy – Principles and Priorities

General Principles for the provision of grants

12. When considering grant applications, priority will normally be given to projects which meet one or more of the following criteria:
    - Projects that demonstrate a clear–development of existing church, circuit and/or connexional or District strategic priorities, with reference to the relevant mission plans.
    - Projects that make effective use of existing resources both within the local context and within the wider ecumenical scene and, where appropriate, show evidence of working in partnership with other churches, community and charity organisations as appropriate to the context and project being proposed.
    - Projects that arise from a defined and clear need within the local context and to which the church or circuit is seeking to respond appropriately and effectively.
    - Projects that encourage engagement with those who are marginalised or disadvantaged within the community.
    - Projects that take account of their local context by focussing on relevant age groups.
    - Projects that recognise and develop the potential for providing new ways of being church.
    - Projects that clearly aim to make evangelism and the making of new disciples a priority.
    - Projects that take an innovative approach to mission and Spirit led risk taking.
    - Projects that enable NWED to support churches and Circuits to pursue opportunities within their own localities which would not be possible purely through their own financial resources at the current time.
    - Churches/Circuits applying for funding through the Eco Support Fund must have an eco-policy showing that they have engaged in thinking around Action for Hope principles. They should also be registered with the Eco-Church programmes.
    - (Please see the larger grants section in this policy for any additional principles relating to specific projects (property, personnel, training & development, eco support).
13. If funding has been sought from elsewhere, applicants are required to provide detail to demonstrate how the awarding of this funding would impact the funding required from the NWED and to comment on how dependent other funding sources will be on a successful application for a District grant. Applicants are required to provide details of other funding sources agreed or applied for and any relevant conditions or timescales linked to these.
14. All applications over £750 will normally be expected to be match funded in some way (unless a clear rationale is provided as to why this is not possible):

    Small grants

    - Churches/Circuits should expect to contribute (financially or in some other way such as through the provision of volunteer time or other resource) to all projects over £750, and will be asked to detail how this may occur in the application form.

    Larger grants

    - Churches/Circuits will be expected to detail all funding sources recognising the normal maximum of a third contribution (50% for eco support) or £30,000 (whichever is lower) from the District.

15. Applicants will need to identify clearly the aims, objectives, outcomes, key milestones and any consultation that has fed into the project within a project action plan. This information should reflect the size of the project and will be used as the basis for reports, monitoring and evaluation purposes.
16. Where it is indicated that a project is part of an ecumenical partnership, applicants will be required to explain what partners' contributions will be.
17. Detail will need to be provided relating to the expected start/end dates or anticipated duration of each project. It is expected that grants will be used in a timely manner.
18. As part of the assessment process, the District may request supporting information appropriate to the size and nature of the application. This may include annual accounts, management accounts, details of unrestricted reserves, reserves policy, safeguarding policies, environmental policies, quotations, project plans, or other information required to assist the Grants Committee in undertaking appropriate due diligence and ensuring responsible stewardship of District funds. The District may request copies of policies as part of the grant application and assessment process.
19. Recipients of grants will be asked to provide a report (of a length and complexity that is proportionate to the size of the grant, and if a grant is over more than one year, usually on an annual basis) confirming the use of the grant as outlined in the application and the impact of this on the church, circuit or community. The funds are expected to be managed as part of the local accounts in the normal way and the District reserves the right to request receipts or other appropriate records.
20. An annual review of committed funds (via in-principle agreements or approved funds not yet drawn down) will be conducted in June each year.
21. Any unspent funding is expected to be returned.

NWED Grants Policy - Process

Process for small grant applications

22. Small grants of up to £1,500 are available through NWED and can be used for smaller purchases and projects, for seed funding, small costs relating to training and development, for the funding of the specific annual costs associated with running warm spaces, for applications to support specific projects at Methodist schools, or for the procurement of energy audits under the District Eco Support Fund allocation. Small grants are designed to support mission related smaller purchases and projects. Routine replacement, renewal or repair of existing items will not normally be eligible unless the proposal clearly represents a mission, accessibility, environmental, safety or community use upgrade beyond like for like replacement. Grants for 3Generate (or other youth residential events) are dealt with separately under paragraph 24 and are not subject to the £1,500 small grant limit.
23. For small grants, the application process is easier, and the information required is less detailed. It is designed for a quicker decision based on clear information of the proposal,

benefits, outcomes and cost. In some cases a decision may be deferred to the next Grants Committee meeting but normally a decision will be made within 14 days.

24. The Grants Committee will request a simple report confirming the use of the money by any date specified in the written approval of the grant.
25. Grants to enable groups from churches and Circuits to attend 3Generate (or other youth residential events) will be available on the basis that the District will usually provide up to one third of the costs (including tickets, transport and reasonable extras). This contribution is not subject to the £1,500 small grant limit, and the one third principle will apply to the total agreed cost. Applications for a grant to support with 3Generate attendance should be made using a small grant application form even if the amount requested from District exceeds £1,500. Groups are encouraged to consider sharing transport with other churches and Circuits where possible. If the relevant family, church or Circuit is unable sufficiently to fund the balance of costs, the District contribution may exceed one third so as to ensure that the young person is enabled to attend. It is normally expected that applications for 3Generate (or other youth residential events) are submitted ahead of the events themselves. For 3Generate, where circumstances dictate that a request for funding support prior to the event is not possible, the absolute deadline for an application is the end of November, with an accompanying rationale provided for the retrospective submission.
26. Circuits or churches applying for grants linked to the provision of warm spaces will be expected to have applied first for Local Authority funding where that is available, and to communicate the outcome to the District Grants Committee.
27. Where local authority funding for “warm spaces” is not available, the District Grants Committee will normally allocate up to £750 per year towards the running of these initiatives. Churches or Circuits applying for this type of funding after the first year will be asked to give information about the costs and impact of the warm space in previous years.

Process for larger grant applications

28. Larger grants of up to usually £30,000 per project are available to be applied for through NWED. The District will normally contribute up to one third (50% in the case of eco support) or usually £30,000 of the project costs (whichever is lower), and only make payment (or a schedule of payments if applicable) when other funding sources are confirmed.
29. These larger grants may be applied for as one-off standalone grants, potentially for property development costs, or phased over 3 years where appropriate, being the normal availability for personnel costs (either in equal or tapered amounts).
30. Funding for existing projects will not be considered unless it can be demonstrated funding is required to take a project to a new level or as a bridge to financial sustainability.
31. For multi-year grants, a report of progress against objectives and confirmation of the continuation of the project must be submitted each year before any next tranche will be released.
32. An application for multi-year support will be expected to include details on how the project will be sustainable once the grant term is completed.

33. Applications for extended grant support for projects that are continuing beyond the initial grant term may be considered if there is a clear reason why the project is unable to become self-sustaining financially (e.g. it is working with severely marginalised communities).
34. Grants of a larger scale may be used to support churches/Circuits with the appointment of paid staff, property projects to enhance mission or improve the environmental impact of the church/Circuit, and projects designed to respond to a community need that is in keeping with Connexional policy or with the District Mission Policy.
35. Churches/Circuits will be required to provide a budget for proposed expenditure, including, where appropriate, estimates and quotations, along with the submission of annual accounts and reserves policy. Applications for personnel grants should ensure that they include on-costs as well as the base salary or stipend proposed.
36. Churches/Circuits will be expected to demonstrate that they have consulted with appropriate bodies/District processes in line with their project goals (e.g. District consents panel, District Property Secretary, Lay Employment Adviser, and any designated member of the Grants Committee who is available for pre-application consultation or advice).
37. 'In-principle agreements' may be given whilst consents/paperwork/additional resources applied for/sought separately are received and confirmed. The District will agree a reasonable timeframe for this with the applicant, based on the individual context of each larger grant application.

38. **Property applications:**
    - Applications for property projects will be expected to demonstrate how the work on the property assists the mission of the local church and/or Circuit in growing the Kingdom.
    - Applications for property projects will be expected to explain how the project planning has taken into account environmental impact and considerations.
    - Property project applications will need to demonstrate appropriate approval/request for approval and consents, and to include comments from the District Property Secretary.
    - Payment of the property grant will only be made when full funding for the project and completion of all appropriate consents can be demonstrated.
    - Projects specifically for building repair and maintenance will not normally be considered eligible for a District grant. Churches/Circuits are instead advised to contact the District Property Secretary regarding asset management matters.

39. **Eco Support Fund applications:**
    - Whilst the procurement and installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points at churches may be covered under this policy, EV charging points at manses are not eligible through District funding, and Circuits are encouraged to seek alternative funding opportunities for this (such as by applying to the Connexion for manse upgrade works).
40. **Personnel funding applications:**
    - Personnel funding grant applications will not generally be considered for roles that have already started or been advertised.
    - Personnel funding grants will normally be considered for up to 33% of the costs of the post over a maximum of three years.

- Applications will be considered for personnel funding both of workers directly engaged in the mission of the church and administrative support roles. The grant application will be expected to demonstrate how the proposed post enhances the mission of the church and/or Circuit.
- Applications should include any necessary confirmation of approval from a District Lay Employment Adviser relating to recruitment paperwork (such as job description and person specification) and that the grant application is consistent with the approved post.
- In exceptional circumstances, grants for the continuance of existing posts (including those already supported by NWED funding) will be considered. In these cases, the application will be expected to include evidence of the impact of the funded post and why further funding is required. The Committee may ask appropriate representatives to attend a meeting to discuss the scheme in more detail.

41. **Training and development applications:**
    - Grants for training and development can be awarded to support the cost of training that demonstrates the ability to enhance the mission of the local church and Circuit, and will normally fund up to 33% of the cost.
    - Individuals applying for NWED funding must demonstrate that they have discussed the training or development opportunity with an appropriate person or committee (such as, but not limited to a superintendent, Mission Area Lead, supervisor [work or reflective supervisor or through Ministerial Development Review], circuit steward or District hub lead) in making this application.
    - Applicants will be expected to provide details of how the grant will be spent (e.g. course fees, books, travel, other resources).

NWED Grants Policy – Administration and Support

Administration of grants

42. District grants are administered by the District Grants Committee on behalf of the DPC (being the District Trustees).
43. The Committee normally meets three times per year (generally Autumn, Spring, Summer) to consider applications . The schedule for each year will be published on the NWED website.
44. Grant applications for larger grants must be received by the District as soon as possible and normally at least 21 days before the next scheduled Committee meeting.
45. However, it is recognised that some issues may benefit from a more timely intervention, and therefore, small grant applications may be submitted for consideration outside of the published Committee meeting times. In these instances, the group will consult via electronic means and normally provide a response within 14 days.
46. Provided that this policy has been ratified by the Synod, small grant applications from local churches do not need the prior approval of their Circuit meeting before submission to the District Grants Committee, although a representative of the Circuit will need to sign the application to acknowledge their awareness of the project. Larger grant applications do

require the approval of their circuit meeting before submission to the District Grants Committee. Forms that are not signed properly will be sent back, pending the necessary signatures.

47. On request, a church or circuit representative in respect of a larger grant application may attend the relevant grants committee that is reviewing the application to present the project. Details will be arranged directly with the named person making the application. There may be instances where a representative is requested to attend by the grants committee, and contact will be made with the named applicant.

Support with submitting a grant application

48. Support at District level linked to the submission of a grant application is available.
49. In the first instance, please contact Heather Fergusson, District Secretary: Administration & Compliance via email: grants@nwedmethodists.org.uk