

Strategic guidance for the Connexional Grants Committee

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolution	The Council adopts the proposals suggested by the Connexional Grants Steering Group set out below
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	None

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	Clarification of how the Council may offer strategic guidance to the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC).
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council will not dictate how much of the CGC's non-specific funds should be spent on each area of Church work. - The CGC will produce suggested spending guidance for Streams in tandem with the Council's budget making process. - Funding of Chaplaincy work is to follow different processes. - The CGC will not fund application-based research projects.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	It was agreed during the February 2010 meeting of the Council that a Steering Group be established and a report produced on the manner in which the Council may offer any strategic guidance to the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC). This is a report on the findings of that Steering Group.
Consultations	Council representatives, Governance Scrutiny Group representatives, Connexional Grants Committee Chair

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	None
Faith and Order	None
Financial	Implications on funding for research work available at a Connexional level.
Personnel	None
Legal	None
Wider Connexional	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None
Risk	None

Report of the Steering Group

Background

1. It was agreed during the February 2010 meeting of the Council that a Steering Group be established and a report produced on the manner in which the Council may offer strategic guidance to the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC). This is a report on the findings of that Steering Group.

Group Members in Attendance

2. General Secretary (Martyn Atkins), Secretary for Team Operations (John Ellis), Head of Support Services (Nick Moore), Representative of the Governance Scrutiny Group relating to the Connexional Grants Committee (Andrew Gibbs), Chair of the Connexional Grants Committee (Ian Harrison), Connexional Grants Officer (Richard Musto), Council Representatives (Margaret Faulkner, Stephen Cooper).

History of Connexional Grants and Introduction to the Connexional Grants Committee

3. Prior to the Team Focus review, Connexional grants were controlled by various individuals and committees across the Connexion who oversaw individual funds restricted for different purposes. Each fund received applications in different ways and assessed applications differently. Therefore, in order to apply for a grant an applicant needed to know whom to contact, which fund to enquire about and, often, how much money it contained. The resulting trend was that the people who were 'in the know' applied for funding for the same projects time after time. This created financial dependency in certain Circuits or Districts and dramatically reduced the amount of funding available for new work.

4. The Connexional Grants Committee (CGC) was created to solve this problem. It assesses all Connexional Grant applications using consistent criteria and processes. Grants will normally be time-limited and will be subject to formal reporting, including monitoring and evaluation. Two Connexional Team Members (Grants Officers) monitor the balance of funds from which Connexional Grants are given and are the only point of contact in the Connexional Team for anyone who wishes to apply for a grant. There are no 'small pots of money lying around' which people must/can hunt down. In fact, neither the applicants nor the CGC need worry which fund a grant comes from. The Connexional Grants Officers ensure that grants are taken from the appropriate fund(s).

5. A further problem that existed under the old system was the so called 'rule of thirds'. A third of a project's funding came from its Circuit, a third from the District and a third from the Connexion. This necessitated scrutiny by three sets of committees and completion of three sets of forms which often delayed the start of a project. It also meant it was unclear to whom grants recipients reported. To solve this problem Districts and Circuits now receive a higher percentage of the CPF levy and are expected to fund all local work. The CGC (from the start of the Connexional year 2010/11) will only fund work that meets the criteria previously known as 'Connexional Significance'. It will also be the main Methodist funder of any project it supports, making it clear to whom projects are accountable.

6. The CGC operates by devolving decision-making as far as possible. Grants of up to and including £30k are decided by specialist "streams" of three people, usually working by e-mail. The chairs of these streams meet as a sub-committee of the CGC to determine grants between £30k and £100k. There are two sub-committees- one for Mission & Ministry in Britain grants and one for Mission & Ministry in the World Church grants. For larger grants (>£100k) the sub-committee chairs join four independent members as the main CGC.

7. Applications are passed from the Connexional Grants Officers to the relevant Stream, then up to the Sub-committee and finally the CGC itself, depending on the amount applied for. For further information please see the diagram later in this document (Appendix A).

Specific Areas Discussed by the Steering Group

8. **Ministry and Mission in the World Church Grants.** Discussion took place regarding grant-giving within the World Church. CGC requested that a brief written statement of our support strategy for each partner church be produced in order that streams making key decisions should do so in full knowledge of our aims and objectives. Various papers relating to this topic were discussed at the February Council and the Secretary for External Relationships has collated a report of these discussions and circulated them to Council Members. This work will inform the way in which Partner Churches are consulted at the Re-imagining Future Mission Consultation in June. It was agreed that the CGC would be involved in the preparation of the materials relating to grants which will be raised at this event. It was also agreed that the CGC should be involved in the annual World Mission Fund budgeting process.

Proposals recommended to the Council:

- 8.1 That a statement of strategic intent be produced for each of our World Church Partners.
- 8.2 That the Secretary for External Relationships produce material for the Re-imagining Future Mission Consultation and that the CGC be involved in producing those parts of this which relate to grants.
- 8.3 That, commencing with the budget for 2011/12, the CGC be involved in the annual budgeting process of the World Mission Fund.

9. **Mission & Ministry in Britain Grants.** Home grants tend to be more complex than World Church ones as various parts of the Connexional Team (or none) are involved. A large part of the discussions centred around the CGC's budget and whether Council should take a more active role in setting the percentage of general funds to be allocated to each category of grant-funded Church work. So far, previous years' experience has generally been a key factor in establishing streams' budgets. Specific questions which arose were: whether it was wise to set a limit on the amount available for each Stream, and, if it were, which body should do so? It was felt that an important factor in considering these questions is the change to the new Connexional Grants Criteria which will take place on 1 September 2010. This makes amounts spent in previous years largely irrelevant as an indication of future needs.

Proposals recommended to the Council:

- 9.1 that neither Council, nor the CGC, limit arbitrarily the amount of general grant funds available to individual Streams in 2010/11. The CGC, working with the Governance Scrutiny Group that relates to the Connexional Grants Committee, will seek to balance demand against available resources.
- 9.2 that the CGC reports to the Methodist Council each year the total amount of grants given through each Stream in tandem with the Council's budget making process.
- 9.3 that, at the same time, the CGC supplies suggested spending guidance for Streams in subsequent years which the Council will be asked to approve.

10. **Chaplaincy.** "Chaplaincy" is one of the specialist streams within CGC in which various issues were identified as likely to arise when assessing applications under the new Connexional Grants Criteria. The key issues were:

- Chaplaincy posts are not always time limited;

- in some instances it is difficult to see how the work of an individual chaplain could be considered to be “Connexionally Significant”;
- Chaplaincy work sometimes involves a complex ecumenical personnel process which the CGC is not in a position to oversee.

Concerns were also raised about the ability of the Governance Scrutiny Group to carry out its role effectively if there are many different ways in which grants are given. There was some discussion over whether the CGC should support Chaplaincy grants or whether these should be funded either through the general Connexional Central Services budget or by individual Districts. The idea of returning scrutiny of funding proposals to the Team was thought to be a retrograde step.

Proposals recommended to the Council:

- 10.1 that the support of grant-aided Chaplaincy remains under the auspices of the CGC.
- 10.2 that Chaplaincy grants are sufficiently different from the other grants the CGC may offer that they require different criteria and processes.
- 10.3 that revised criteria and processes be developed to accommodate these differences.
- 10.4 that the system the CGC adopts should be flexible enough to include the funding of other potentially long term work in line with Connexional Priorities.
- 10.5 that the system the CGC adopts in these cases should include a 'service level agreement' whereby the effectiveness of the individual appointed is assessed annually and the need for the post is reconsidered thoroughly no less regularly than every five years.

11. **Research Projects.** The handling of requests for CGC funding of research projects was discussed. The amount of funding already allotted to learning and research through other branches of the Church budget was highlighted and the need for research to serve strategic objectives and be acted upon was agreed.

Proposals recommended to the Council:

- 11.1 that the strategic research and learning needs of the Methodist Church should be met from within the connexional learning budget that is overseen within the Discipleship & Ministries Cluster.
- 11.2 that the CGC should not independently fund application-based research and learning projects unless as a constituent part of a wider project.

RESOLUTION.

The Council adopts the proposals of the CGC Steering Group listed in this paper.

Appendix A

Connexional Grants Making Structure

