

Guidelines for Applications for grants from Circuit Funds v3

CLT Jan 19¹

Introduction

As fellow Christians we are called to share resources to help the Kingdom grow. As a Circuit we are blessed with having funds available to help churches individually and together undertake projects for buildings, people or activities that they could not fund on their own. The Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) believes these guidelines will help churches think through their visions and plans so that they can share them with CLT. CLT can then set them into the context of the Circuit's overall mission and work with the church to "work up" the proposal before it goes to the Circuit Meeting which makes final decisions on funding.

These guidelines are just that. They are not meant to put people off or to insist on a full "business case": we all know that sometimes visions and ideas develop one step at a time and that we sometimes need to launch out in faith. But faith grows as others outside the immediate situation come to understand and share the vision, and often thinking through the details of a project enable us all to better understand its potential.

So what follows are the sort of things churches might want to consider before putting in an application to the Circuit. They have been arranged in a way that leads from the vision -what is this project for and why do we need it? – through the "who" and "how" to the "when" and "what ifs?". Not all the questions will be relevant for every project but by working through the list as a church (perhaps with input from your minister or CLT) you will be able to clarify your ideas and get them across in a way that others will understand.

In summary:

Vision -> prayer and discussion at church level -> draft plan for CLT -> further detailed planning -> definitive plan ("business plan" in secular terms) -> CLT discussion -> Circuit meeting for approval -> implementation

As you will see from the flow charts what happens at each stage can be quite complex especially for the detailed planning and implementation stages and you may well have some costs to meet even before the project is approved.

To guide your thinking in the early stages you might find the following "things to think about" list helpful.

Section A –the project itself

- 1) Can you give a brief summary of the project?
- 2) Is it:
 - a) oriented towards direct outreach and evangelism?
 - b) looking to strengthen the church's work with and impact on the community ("service")?

¹ You may find these guidelines useful for any initiative you are planning even if you do not need circuit funds or other resources to carry it out.

- c) aiming to strengthen discipleship and growth within the church?
- d) needed to maintain the current ministry of the church?

(Some projects will of course do several or even all of these things.)

- 3) Who will benefit from it?

- 4) How does the project fit into your wider vision for:
 - a) the local church?
 - b) your community?
 - c) the circuit?

(Not all projects will fit all these aspects of vision, but all projects need to fit into the broader concept of building the Kingdom)

- 5) Why now? Why here?
- 6) What other ways might there be of carrying out the aims of the project and if there are, why do you think that this proposal is the best way ahead?

Section B – Who is involved?

- 1) Who is the contact person for the project?

- 2) Who is going to organize and oversee the project? (Big projects will probably need a team approach). Do they need additional training or help? If so, where will you look for it?

- 3) How widely has the project been discussed in the church and with others (including the minister, the CLT and with the local community where relevant). Is there broad support for it?

- 4) Is the project something that might work even better if shared between churches in the section or the circuit as a whole?

- 5) Are you thinking about working with other local churches, groups or the community e.g. the Lincoln Active Faith Network?

- 6) Is there anything you are doing now that you will need to stop doing in order to make the project work?

Section C – Time and money!

- 1) What sort of timescale are you looking at? Do you have at least an outline “project plan”?

- 2) What is it likely to cost? You will need to think about both capital costs (e.g. an extension of your building – which will include all the costs of professional fees, planning permission etc.) and revenue costs – the extra costs of heating an extension or the salary, national insurance and pension contributions for a paid worker

- 3) What financial resources do you have at present? How will you manage the financial demands of the project in addition to 'running costs' (including the assessment!).
- 4) What other sources of funding are you considering e.g. church reserves, the congregation through regular giving or a Gift day, other sources?
The CLT may be able to help you find advice on making grant applications to other organizations, including District and Connexion but there are strict rules about such applications including not starting any work or starting to look for potential paid workers till everything is agreed (see flow sheets).
- 5) If you are considering a paid worker you will also at some point need to think about job descriptions, person specifications, management responsibilities, payroll arrangements (will you be employing the person yourself with the national insurance and pension contributions that will go with that or will they be seconded or shared with another organisation?), professional development etc. though the details of this will probably be worked out at a later stage (see flow chart). Some of these elements (e.g. training) may have costs themselves. It is very important that you and the Circuit get input from District in this.

Section D - Risks

- 1) What are the risks that might be associated with the project? What might go wrong and what would happen if it did? Is there anything you can do to make these risks less likely or at least reduce them?
- 2) What are the risks to the church, the circuit and the community if the project does not go ahead?
- 3) If the project did go ahead could it make it more difficult to do other new things in future (as opposed to things you are doing now that will have to stop)? What might be the impact of that? One of the CLT's responsibilities will be to consider the potential impact on the wider circuit.

Making requests

- 1) Once you have thought through these issues in broad terms it will be helpful to discuss them with your minister and/or the circuit leadership team if you have not already done so. Putting something down in writing –even if it is only in draft – can be very useful in making sure you have covered all the relevant areas. You can then put this draft in to the CLT.
- 2) Your draft application does not necessarily need to be very detailed – a request for help with providing extra chairs is not going to need the same degree of business planning as a new building and for big projects you will probably not have got to the stage of working out all the details.
- 3) The CLT might ask for more details or make suggestions, which you can then include if appropriate in your definitive request. Preparing may be quite demanding in terms of time and effort and you will want to keep in touch with CLT during this stage
- 4) The definitive request can then be passed back to the circuit leadership team who will already know a lot about it. They can then put it on the agenda for the circuit meeting with a recommendation as to whether it

is accepted. It needs to be on the agenda so circuit members have time to think, pray and if necessary ask further questions about it beforehand.

Comments on the amount of financial support likely to be available

There are no hard and fast rules on this: the circuit's support will depend on the nature of the project and how it fits into overall church and circuit strategy, the size of the church's own reserves and how much is available at circuit level as well as taking account of possible grants from elsewhere. In a situation where resources were needed urgently to seize an opportunity it might be possible for the circuit to make an interest free loan to the church or facilitate such loans (or gifts) from other churches or individuals.

At present (January 2019) the Circuit does have considerable reserves available for major projects to develop our mission. This could include funding for people over some years as well as buildings.

There is also a mission fund available for grants of up to £500 per church each year to use for the running costs of outreach (e.g. paying for leaflets or funding community outreach events).

CLT is developing a simple application form for these grants.