 

PF APPLICANTS’ INFORMATION PACK

CHURCH/PROJECT

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5. **Introduction**

The Philippians Fund is administered by **Birmingham Methodist Circuit (BMC)** for internal projects. In other words it seeks solely to provide funds to churches, workers or projects and Mission & Ministry Teams within BMC.

**The name for the fund comes from the Philippians’ generosity to Paul** specifically highlighted in Philippians 4:14-20. This passage highlights the important relationship Paul had with the church in Philippi as a mission partner. They have sent him aid and in return Paul thanks them for supporting him in his work along with his promise of a divine accounting for their generosity. This relationship highlights what we aspire to do with our fund in the mutual blessing that comes from giving to the work that God is doing in our churches as well as the account that all involved are building up in heaven with God.

Each application must fit within the **Vision & Priority Statement of BMC** to be eligible for funding. There is a total budget of £10,000.00 available per year, September – August. Further details of how this is awarded can be found later in this document.

**The Philippians Fund Administration Team or PFA Team** will be a group of six people who will administer the money for the fund. This document is a guide for applicants to show how the fund will work. If you require any more information, contact the fund on philfund@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk.

1. **What and who the fund seeks to support**
	1. Aims

The Philippians Fund is an internal resource for Birmingham Methodist Circuit (BMC) which is specifically targeting its mission work and projects. The fund seeks to use the mission statement of BMC as a starting point for assessing the work that it funds. It aims fund the full variety of mission projects, activities or events running within the Circuit by providing monetary support for equipment or running costs. The fund is targeted at new ideas and innovation, development or growth of existing projects, or for supplying start-up costs to new ones.

* 1. Objectives
* To provide monetary support of up to £1,000.00 (for Churches/Projects) for mission projects, activities or events within BMC that are starting up, growing, or developing;
* To ensure that all projects funded fit within the BMC Vision & Priority Statement;
* To be proactive in funding a variety of different mission opportunities across the circuit;
* To assess all applications fairly and without bias;
* To monitor the use of the money provided and to record the outputs and outcomes of projects to which money is given;
* To continue to monitor the effectiveness and working methods of the fund and be proactive to review them where appropriate seeking final approval for changes from the Circuit Executive;
* To report and be accountable to BMC for all their work by reporting to the Circuit Executive regularly and to the Circuit Assembly in September each year;
* To ensure that the PFA Team works within all policies and procedures of BMC for all their work;
	1. What the fund aims to support

For any application the project brief must fit within BMC Vision & Priority Statement which is:

**Vision Statement**

Birmingham Methodist Circuit aspires to be a welcoming Christian family with inspiring worship, radical compassion and social justice at its heart. In this way and following in our Methodist tradition, we aim to share in the transformation of life made possible through God's love.

Five Priorities - As members of the Birmingham Methodist Circuit, we have agreed the following five priorities for the sharing of our God given resources:

**Transforming Life** - We aim to live in such a way as to bring about positive change in our own lives and the lives of others, to share God's love and to learn and grow as followers of Jesus both individually and in community.

**Inspiring Worship** - We aim to offer worship across the circuit which glorifies God, is inviting to all, enriches faith and inspires us to respond.

**Radical Compassion** - We aim to develop and practise a radical compassion which is welcoming, inclusive, safe and empowering.

**Social Justice** - We aim to speak out and take action against injustice in all its forms.

**A Methodist Perspective** - Working together with our ecumenical partners and many others, we aim to uphold the values and principles which arise from our Methodist heritage, including being sustainable, ethical, collaborative and connected to Methodists across our nation and around the world.

It is hoped that churches/projects and Mission & Ministry Teams will apply for funding towards the five priorities mentioned in the Vision & Priority statement. Under these banners funding will be given for a number of different things including the following:

* One off purchases or church/Mission & Ministry Team/community events;
* Running costs for a course, project or series of events;

Whichever of the above is applied for it is important that you explain how it will hit the objectives laid out within the Vision & Priority Statement. If there were more applications than funding available, this will be part of what is used to decide where funding should be allocated.

Where the funding is to start a new project or develop an existing one rather than for capital money or a one off spend, you must also explain how you will be making the project sustainable at the end of the year of funding.

* 1. What will not be supported

There are several things that the fund will not cover. These are:

* **Any form of salary:** We do not feel the amount of money being given would be sufficient to fund someone’s employment, especially due to the temporary nature of the fund.
* **Any kind of training for staff or volunteers**: Training is funded through the circuit’s training fund.
* **Covering routine running costs of an existing project**: We see this as a contribution to help both existing projects and new projects grow and develop. We are keen to help existing projects try new things or get new equipment to improve their work, however, we avoid funding routine running costs of existing projects as we feel churches should be developing sustainability of projects that are already under way.
* **Building Projects**: The Philippians Fund does not fund any building work relating to the fabric of the building. Applications will however still be accepted for renovation/upgrading of facilities where it can be shown to have a direct impact upon the growth, development or beginning of an activity run for members or visitors to that activity. E.g. Upgrading a kitchen because it is in need of repair is not valid, but upgrading a kitchen to welcome new groups and visitors into the building, is.”
* **Fundraising Projects**: The Philippians Fund will not fund projects which are then in turn fundraising for another project. E.g. if a group is fundraising for a mini-bus and have applied to the Philippians fund for money to run a fundraising activity, the running of this activity will not be supported. What would be supported in this instance might be money to go directly towards the mini-bus.”
* **Retrospectively:** We will not fund projects or activities which have already happened, a church or project must have been approved by the PFA Team prior to the spending of the money.
	1. Details of funding available

£10,000.00 is available per year to fund work within Birmingham Methodist Circuit. If you are interested in applying for money you will fall into one of the two categories described below.

* + 1. *Category One: Bids £300.00 or under*

The first category is for those wanting less than £300.00 from their bid. If this is you then you can apply to the Philippians Fund at **any time** during the year, but only once during each connectional year

* + 1. *Bids from£301.00 up to £1,000.00*

The second category is for those of you wanting from £301.00 up to £1,000.00 from the Philippians Fund. For these slightly bigger pots there is a little more process involved and there are four opportunities in the year when you can apply for funding. **To find out more about timescales for applying please look at section 3**

* 1. Who can apply?

Applications are open to any Mission & Ministry Team, church, project or staff member from BMC. (For Mission & Ministry Teams see Application Information for Mission & Ministry Teams) For churches the fund will also have the ability to provide money to projects run by Local Ecumenical Partnerships or other cases where a partnership exists between part of BMC and another group. It must however be the Methodist partner that applies for the money on behalf of the partnership. This applying partner must show that they are significantly committed to supporting the work themselves.

1. **The application process**

This section covers the application process that the fund team and you the applicants will follow.

* 1. For bids £300.00 or under

For smaller applications a simple process will take place. Applications should be sent to the Philippians Fund e-mail address philfund@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk . Where e-mail is not possible and only if no other option is available, applications can send their applications to the BMC Office at Selly Oak Methodist Church.

 The PFA Chair will be notified that an application has been made and will circulate this application to the rest of the team. They will each offer feedback and thoughts and the Chair will collate these and make a recommendation for agreement. For cases where the group disagrees a vote may be needed.

* 1. For bids from £301.00 up to £1,000.00

Applications should again be sent to the Philippians Fund e-mail address, philfund@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk, or where no other options is available send paper applications to Selly Oak from where they will be sent out to the members of the PFA Team. The below timetable should be consulted for when to apply.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Application deadline | Team Meeting | Notice given to applicants | Money arrives around |
| 31st August | September | 21st September | 1st October |
| 31st October  | November | 21st November | 1st December |
| 28th February | March | 21st March | 1st April |
| 30th June | July | 21st July | 1st August |

The members of the committee will have the opportunity to study the application before they meet to discuss them.

At the meeting the assessment team will decide which applications are successful. Applications will be vetted for suitability for the funding and at this stage strictness of what can and cannot be funded will be determined by the number of applications. If there are few applications then the team may decide to help the applicant church of a weak application by suggesting changes that might make their bid acceptable. If there are a lot of applications however the aim of this stage is to cut out any applications which do not fit within the mission statement or other boundaries of the fund. If there are a large number of applications it is also possible that the assessment team may cut out some of the weaker applications that may fit within the boundaries of the fund but are not strong applications or do not meet as many of the circuit’s mission objectives.

The applicant churches who are not awarded funding will be contacted within 48 hours to explain the decision followed by a letter/email confirming this decision with some reasonable explanation.

For the potentially successful applicant where the project meets all the criteria and is seen to be a possible investment then one of two things can happen.

* For clear cut decisions the Chair or allocated member of the committee will contact the applicants to confirm the success of their application;
* For more complicated situations such as clarification, queries, or multiple applicants, one or two members of the assessment team may be sent to meet with the leader of the project to assess it further or a phone call/email may be made by a member of the team. Following this visit/call these team members will make a decision about funding which they will run by the rest of the team before confirming it with the applicant.

Visits are more likely where multiple projects have applied and there is a limited amount of money left to be allocated. Again, where they have declined an application the assessments team will provide the unsuccessful applicants with a reason their application was not successful.

The money will be released in accordance will the time-table shown

* 1. Timescales for spending of fund money

**All money allocated must be spent within a year of the date it is received.** Any money not spent at this time must be returned to BMC. As mentioned in the final bullet point of 2.4, spending must also not have started when you apply for the money as the funding doesn’t work retrospectively.

In most cases the money allocated will be paid into the bank account of one of the Methodist churches or LEPs that make up the Circuit.   **If the application comes from a partnership or group where this is not appropriate certain conditions apply.** Those conditions are that the Methodist Church/Worker in the partnership or group will be expected to sign off to say that the accounts that the money is going to go into is examined and audited on an annual basis and that it is a constituted group with adequate policies and procedures in place to govern its work.

**Each Church/Project can only apply for 1 Grant per Methodist Year**

1. **Closing comments**

The Philippians Fund is designed to fund and support innovative mission work within BMC. The objective is to release money to enable the mission that God has given to our local churches. The PFA Team is in place as the gatekeeper for this money and to seek God’s wisdom on how the money can best be spent within the Circuit. This will be done in prayer and close work with the church communities asking for money.

*Revised November 2021*