

## Common Vision Programme

# Development Fund overview for Diocesan Synod, March 2019

## Background

May 2019 will see an important milestone in our Common Vision journey: a 3-day conference “Putting out into deep water” at High Leigh, for representatives from all 29 deaneries. This will embed our Common Vision deeper in our diocese, connect with the good that is already happening and engage with the new parish planning resource being developed.

We hope this will enable a shared renewal in mission and church life locally. The Development Fund supports this process by making around £3m of total return money available via grants to parishes, benefices, deaneries and other Anglican communities in the diocese such as chaplaincies.

## Aims

Emerging from our diocesan-wide listening process, the Common Vision steering group considered a number of possible titles for this fund (elsewhere we have seen ‘Growth fund’, ‘Mission fund’, ‘Life fund’, ‘Transformation fund’, etc.). Eventually we settled on ‘Development fund’, as this best describes what was felt to be the underlying purpose of Common Vision: fostering development and learning in our communities across the diocese.

The fund is designed to encourage the following (which will also be key criteria in awarding grants):

- To help us to **‘become a more Christ-like church for the sake of God’s world: contemplative, compassionate and courageous’**, offering financial support that enables things to happen that would not otherwise be possible.
- **Discernment**: our ability to see God at work in the world around us and in our own lives; discerning between ‘good ideas’ and ‘God ideas’.
- **Missional creativity**: finding imaginative solutions to missional challenges.
- **Learning together**: as parishes and deaneries, sharing our learning with each other wherever we can across our diocese.
- **Diverse experimentation**: a variety of ideas that will lead to a broad range of learning and potentially benefit others’ churches.
- **Sustainability**: encourage planning which balances realistic levels of input (people, resources, time and money) with reasonable expectations of hoped-for outcomes and an ongoing legacy after the Development Funding ceases.

## Support and resourcing

There will be a 'Development Fund Administrator': this role will be incorporated into the Common Vision Programme Manager role.

Support will be offered to those making applications to the Development Fund, in particular to encourage those parishes which are less able to make an application. Two levels of support are anticipated:

- **Practical support** to make a good quality application. This will be achieved through the Development Fund Administrator, FAQs which will be made available on the diocesan website, and from Area Deans, Lay Chairs, diocesan staff and members of deaneries.
- **Developmental support** to support parishes in the planning and discernment activity, out of which grant applications may come. This will be achieved through Archdeacons, PDAs and others to be identified.

To support the aim of 'learning together' we are exploring the idea of Learning Groups: informal gatherings where we share what has been learned as a result of development funded work. Part of their purpose would be to share learning with and from those who have not received Development Fund money.

## How the Development Fund works

### Fund structure

There are two tiers of grant funding:

- **Tier 1 for grants up to £2,500**
- **Tier 2 for grants over £2,500 and any grant involving the employment of staff**

Following the practice in recent years, where deaneries have received Mission Development Fund grants, there is provision for Deaneries to apply for Tier 1 grants to allocate the grant money to parishes as they see fit. The only additional requirements are that deaneries inform Church House Oxford of how much money was given to which parishes, and that recipient parishes, like all other recipients of Development Fund money, return an 'End of Project report form' (see below).

### Application process

There is an application form for each Tier: broadly similar but the Tier 2 application asks for more details, particularly where employment is involved (to encourage best practice recruitment). Along with each form, guidelines are available to help applicants complete it.

Grant applications may be submitted for a wide range of projects which meet the above aims. The fund is not intended to support routine repairs to buildings, payment of regular running costs (utility bills, insurance, parish share etc.) and activity which is already deemed to be funded by current financial arrangements. The Fund may not be able to grant all of the money requested; applications for projects where other grant funding may be available may be viewed less favourably.

There follows a brief summary of some of the points of the application process:

- Applications will need endorsement from the Incumbent (or Area Dean / Lay Chair in the case of a deanery). Grants will be paid to a PCC, benefice or deanery account. Applications for projects linked to schools must apply via the local incumbent/PCC, with headteacher support.
- Match funding will be expected at Tier 2 (although exceptions may apply), also at Tier 1 the application form asks what other resources the applicant will contribute to the project.
- Larger grants may be phased over two to five years (and longer in exceptional cases).
- Parish finances will be taken into account. Difficulty in paying parish share will not necessarily be a barrier to applying, although the application will ask to see plans in place to overcome financial difficulties and the Archdeacon's support will be sought before a grant is agreed.
- Applications must state what the grant will be spent on: any grant awarded can only be used for that purpose. Any unspent grant money must be returned to the diocese.

### Decision-making process

There will be three application cycles per year, with submission deadlines on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 31<sup>st</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> September. Grant awards will notified within 6-8 weeks. Applications will be reviewed and decisions made by a panel including a bishop, an archdeacon, a senior member of diocesan staff and 2-4 parish level reviewers (lay and clergy). A Development Fund Administrator will coordinate the administration of applications, correspondence etc. The diocesan Finance team will also be closely involved. The panel will review applications, looking for:

- their potential to help the local church become a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world (guidance, based on Bishop Steven's teaching, is available to help with this);
- evidence/expectation of discernment, missional creativity, learning and experimentation;
- signs of good planning and a sustainable programme of work: realistic estimates of input against hoped-for outcomes and an ongoing legacy after the Development funding ceases.

It is anticipated that the first application cycles will grant £500k, reducing to £300k by January 2021. Any unused funding will be rolled forward to subsequent cycles. If the fund is oversubscribed the review panel may not be able to support all applications, some applications may be offered only part of their requested amount. Since it is not possible to predict the number and size of grant applications, some details of the fund may be adjusted after the first grant-making cycles, to maintain a fair and reasonable allocation of grants.

### After grants are awarded

Every project supported by a Development Fund grant commits to provide an End of Project Report. Long (over 6 months) projects will also be asked to provide regular Monitoring Feedback. This allows for reporting back to Bishop's Council (and others) of the overall impact of funded projects; monitoring allows control over staged payments for larger/long-term projects.

All recipients of Development fund grants will be asked to share their learning in some way: in particular with parishes facing similar challenges, who may not have been in receipt of Development funding.