

The Bishop of London's Mission Fund

Terms of reference

(as agreed at the Diocesan Bishop's Council of 2 May 2006)

Terms of Reference

1. To award grants to support mission projects within the Diocese of London, particularly "new ways of being Church"
2. To keep a watching brief over the funding of DSPs, thereby ensuring that the Church remains present in such places
3. To receive from Area Councils updated lists of DSPs
4. To act as the diocesan assessing panel for grants made by the Church Urban Fund within the rules of that fund
5. To recommend to the Diocesan Bishop's Council content of the Diocese's annual delivery plan for Church Urban Fund grants
6. To be alive to possibilities of new sources of funding for the Fund
7. To communicate its decisions throughout the Diocese.

Membership to the Mission Fund Board is:

The Bishop of London	(Chairman)
Mr Andy Brookes	(Secretary and Deputy Chairman)
Ms Moyra Murrell	(Two Cities Area Representative)
Mrs Elizabeth Marshall	(Stepney Area Representative)
Mr John Dolling	(Kensington Area Representative)
Mr Inigo Woolf	(Edmonton Area Representative)
Mr Clive Scowen	(Willesden Area Representative)

In attendance:

The Revd Jack Maple (Community Ministry Adviser)
Mrs Theresa Moses (Assistant Secretary)

In addition, each Episcopal Area has an alternate member, recommended by the relevant Area Bishop.

(The membership list has been amended to reflect membership at April 2011)

For more information about the BLMF's work, or for an application form, please go to www.london.anglican.org/BLMF.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S MISSION FUND ITS OPERATION

Approved by London Diocesan Bishop's Council, 11 October 2004.

The London Challenge

1. In January 2002 the Bishop of London launched 'The London Challenge'. Its purpose was twofold: firstly to dispel the popular myths about the Church in London, and secondly to challenge us to redefine the Church to fit 21st century London. The framework for the development of the Church has been laid and the commitments made. In particular:

"We are committed to serving London and all its people by staying present in every community, with a priority commitment to the poor and disadvantaged."

Resourcing Mission and Ministry

2. The Diocesan Bishop's Council approved the paper 'Resourcing Mission and Ministry' in May 2003. Consequently it commissioned the Mission & Ministry Group to facilitate a structural review of the Diocese. The Group, with representative membership, exists to ensure a consistent approach across the Episcopal Areas. It promotes best practice and encourages deaneries and Areas to accept full ownership of the review.
3. By March 2005 the collaboration between Area Councils and the Mission & Ministry Group will have produced a categorisation of all of the parishes in the Diocese according to the health and viability criteria set out in 'Resourcing Mission and Ministry':
 - (A) Healthy and viable
 - (B) Viable, with a recommendation for diocesan financial support
 - (C) Neither healthy nor viable.

Category (C) parishes will also be sub-divided between those unlikely to achieve (A) status and those which are to be encouraged to achieve that status over a period of time. The Mission & Ministry Group is doing further work on the definition of the various categories.

4. It is worth noting that parishes in Urban Priority Areas will not be classified automatically as Diocesan Supported Parishes ('DSPs') but will be assessed according to the health and viability criteria. Similarly, not being in a UPA will not preclude a parish being granted DSP status.

A Time for Decision

5. In his foreword to this consultation paper, also delivered in May 2003, the Bishop of London questioned what influence the Church might have in 2030's London. Instead of being satisfied with a Church ministering only to its own, the Bishop asks whether we could instead see "this same and vibrant city impacted by a leaner, fitter Church than that of 2003: one that remains committed to the whole city of London." This must still be the Church that "challenges, confronts, cherishes and encourages."
6. 'A Time for Decision' elicited many encouraging responses: the financial issues are now more widely understood, an increase in Common Fund contributions has been pledged, the current Common Fund system was broadly supported, and any expenditure reductions needed to balance the budget were accepted, provided that these were across-the-board and not confined to clergy cuts. There was a call for the establishment of a Mission Fund to direct parishes' Common Fund excess to those which need it most. There was also support for the development of both spiritually and financially supportive partnerships.

Why a Mission Fund?

7. The concept of a Mission Fund is not universally accepted. There are those who say that the Common Fund is itself a Mission Fund and no additional fund is needed. Some go further and argue that for larger churches to want to see more clearly where their donations go is to demonstrate a lack of trust in those who administer the Common Fund. Some also say that to attach "strings" to donations is unwholesome and should not be encouraged.
8. There are important counter-arguments:
 - (a) If the only way of releasing further funds for the mission of the Diocese from some larger parishes is through a Mission Fund, it makes pragmatic sense to form such a fund
 - (b) The Common Fund, being the principal income stream of the Diocese, is inevitably used to fund some expenditure which is not front-line mission
 - (c) The Mission Fund is not to be used solely for supporting parishes; it is also to be used to fund "start up" and more risky ventures, some of which will fall outside the parochial structure. Such schemes would not be able to get off the ground without some kind of mission fund. Some church plants would fall under this heading.

The Bishop of London's Mission Fund

9. The Bishop of London's Mission Fund ('BLMF') has now been established. It is intended that it will provide a method whereby parishes can donate excess (over costs) Common Fund specifically to the mission

work of the Diocese and also to consolidate income from other sources which is available for mission. It will enable mission projects, “new ways of being Church”, and similar projects to receive initial financial support. It will also meet the demand from some larger parishes for more transparency.

10. It will be the responsibility of the Board to ensure that DSPs, in particular, are adequately funded in accordance with ‘The London Challenge’. Given the timescale, however, there will need to be some transitional arrangements. These are discussed later in the paper.

Identification of DSPs

11. DSPs will be the major beneficiaries of the Mission Fund. The Board will receive an initial list of DSPs, prepared by deaneries and agreed by Area Councils. The Board itself will be responsible for ensuring that this list is regularly reviewed and updated.

Targeted donations to the Mission Fund

12. It is likely that there will be a desire for parishes to donate to specific parishes through the Mission Fund. The Board will in most cases respond favourably to such requests but will need to be vigilant lest the donating parish imposes conditions which are unduly restrictive or unhealthy.
13. A way of doing this is through Parish Partnership agreements brokered through the bishops and Area Councils. Such agreements will be designed to ensure mutual partnerships, involving two-way sharing of fellowship, ministry, prayer and other spiritual riches in addition to providing for financial support from one parish to another, and will ensure that the financial contributions are used either to meet Common Fund contributions or mission initiatives identified by the *recipient parish*. Where there is no partnership agreement in place the BLMF will normally accept targeted donations only if they are unconditional donations to meet a specified DSP's Common Fund or to enable the BLMF to fund mission initiatives which the BLMF wishes to fund in the specified DSP.

Mission Projects

14. Other candidates for financial support from the BLMF will be considered provided they meet certain criteria (set out below) and are accompanied by the relevant documentation. The need to keep bureaucracy to a minimum has been acknowledged. However, fairness of decision-making is equally important. Applications will be made via a form (Appendix A) and should be supported by the relevant Archdeacon. The Archdeacon will need to take appropriate steps, including consultation with the relevant Area Dean, to ensure that his Area supports the application. It will be up to each Area to devise such steps. The Episcopal Area's

representative will generally present the proposal to the Board, which is ultimately responsible for the allocation of funds.

15. The set of eligibility criteria is not concrete but applications must:
 - (a) Be in accordance with 'The London Challenge'
 - (b) Be for expenditure of at least £10,000 in aggregate (otherwise it will be referred to the Area Council or the Diocesan Loans Group)
 - (c) Be for revenue expenditure only and not be applied to any capital element in a mission project
 - (d) Give due attention to the promotion of new forms of Church and to projects which help to redefine the Church of the 21st century.

Income

16. Income to the Fund will be received from a variety of sources:
 - (a) Some historical unspent reserves
 - (b) Balance from Mission Initiatives Fund money from the Church Commissioners and amounts to be received over the next three years (whilst still honouring current commitments)
 - (c) Donations from parishes.

Whilst up to 2004 the Church Commissioners' money was shared equally between the Episcopal Areas, this will now be given over to the Mission Fund for distribution. This source is unlikely to provide any income beyond 2007.

Legal Matters

17. The process of transferring assets etc. to this Fund is a matter for consideration by the Diocesan Registrar, and is outside the scope of this paper.

Transitional Arrangements

18. In the first instance, i.e. for 2004 and the first quarter of 2005, the Mission Fund is in business to direct funds to mission projects, using its inherited funds – (a) and (b) in 16 above. The funding of DSPs through the Mission Fund must await the work of deaneries, Area Councils, and the Mission & Ministry Group: a crucial aspect of which is the identification of DSPs. The Mission Fund will be in a position to receive donations from parishes from Easter 2005. However, parishes which are in a position to do so may wish to make a specific arrangement with another parish provided that this is referred to and approved by the archdeacon. Alternatively, a parish may set aside sums for the BLMF in their accounts, providing the parish has committed to paying its 2005 costs in full.