

WELSH CHURCH FUND PRINCIPLES, POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND GRANT ALLOCATION CRITERIA – 2024-25 FUNDING YEAR

Basic Principles of the Welsh Church Fund Trust

The basic principle is that the charity needs to be independent of the local authority. This means that decisions about the administration of the charity need to be taken solely in the interests of the charity to further its charitable purposes, and for no other purpose.

There are also a number of duties the trustee must consider when making this type of decision. If these duties are met, then the trustee can be confident that the decision about how to apply the charity's income is reasonable and defensible. Therefore, again, the trustee must act only in the charity's best interest and meet the duties to:

- 1. Act within the powers conferred upon them and the established rules and procedures for dealing with issues of the kind under consideration.**
- 2. Adequately inform themselves in order to make the decision in question, where necessary making further enquiries and where appropriate considering legal or other professional advice.**
- 3. Consider any factors which they should take into account.**
- 4. Not take into consideration any factors which are not relevant.**
- 5. Act in good faith (and this includes managing conflicts of interest).**
- 6. Make a decision within the range of decisions which a reasonable body of trustees could have made.**

The decision and the reasoning must also be clearly recorded in the charity's minutes.

Policy Considerations for Charity Trustee

- 1. Make sure the trustee is clear about the objects of the charity as set out in its governing document as these dictate how any such asset may be used, in accordance with charity law.**
- 2. Make sure that the Welsh Church Fund's assets, for which the council is the trustee, are managed independently in accordance with their charitable purpose and any restrictions in the governing document.**
- 3. Recognise that the charity trustees have a duty to be prudent and to act solely in the best interests of the charity.**

4. Ensure that there are in place clear procedural guidelines for the Officers and Councillors about their roles, responsibilities and decision making in the administration of the charitable fund.

5. Ensure we have a clear process for identifying and managing any conflicts of interest that arise where the local authority is the trustee of a charity.

Allocation Criteria for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group

Groups and individuals that benefit from grant allocations

Churches and Religious Groups tend to be given higher awards as it is the Welsh Church Fund.

Church Parish's

Community Groups and Charities

Sports and Recreation Clubs

Environmental Groups

Individuals that have an identified and proven need of financial assistance

Other deemed charitable causes by the Working Group Committee

Allocation Policy and Principles

Awards are only given on the existence of a proven financial need as identified by a sponsoring Councillor in the first instance and the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Committee in the main instance.

Existing policy of no allocations to Community or Town Councils

Existing policy of no allocations to Private Business's

Existing policy of no allocations to other Public Bodies

Existing policy of not supporting the day to day running expenses except in exceptional circumstances as clubs / organisations should be self supporting and not rely on WCF money for their continued existence.

Existing policy of only Churches being allowed to re-apply every year to be maintained, though, those applications will only be considered where the application is for a different and distinct purpose.

Existing policy of restricted or no allocations for day trips or trips that will not benefit the County by an individual's subsequent personal actions

The trust currently has a policy of dropping an application if deferred for further information at the first meeting, if then subsequently that information is not received by the next meeting date. This policy will continue. Emphasis on sponsoring Councillor to ensure sufficient evidence is presented along with application.

Any assistance to schools or educational establishments that come under the general umbrella of MCC will ONLY be assessed in light of the merit and purpose of the application and in consideration and conjunction with any future Children and Young People's policy in relation to School Welfare and Support groups.

Confirm a Policy that no undergraduates will be supported as they all have access to funding from Student Finance Wales.

Confirm the Policy that the trust will continue to only pay grant awards by BACS payments in line with current MCC payment guidelines and to save the Trust from excessive and unnecessary administrative charges.

Confirm the Policy that applications will only be accepted on the current application form as currently posted on the MCC Website (The Welsh Church Fund: Monmouthshire County Council) as this will contain all the currently required information.

Confirm the Policy that the Councillor signing the application ensures that the application qualifies for funding under the Charitable Purposes of the Trust as posted on the MCC website.

Confirm the Policy that when a Councillor signs an application to the Welsh Church Fund that they are fully aware of the purpose to the application and ensure that they have seen any supporting evidence or documentation required to support the application (i.e. Accounts, Bank Statements, letters of representation etc.) and ensure that it is submitted with the application in order that the Working Group Committee can make an informed and timely decision at the first meeting.

Confirm the principle of restricted awards or no grant allocations to organisations that receive direct financial support from MCC or any other Local Authority for Administrative expenses.

Support the principle that applicants should show effort and willing in raising funds themselves as well as expecting grant aid from the Welsh Church Fund.

Principle that there is a defined financial pot that has to be shared equally between deserving applicants and throughout the financial year. Any remaining funds at the financial year end will be carried forward to the next financial year.

Continuation of the policy that the budget for the next financial year is recommended by the Section 151 Officer of Monmouthshire County Council as they are in the best possible position to assess future financial performance and financial assets available for distribution in light of the Charity's policy to maintain the level of investments at a level that provides sufficient annual income to fund the Charity's charitable expenditure.

For the financial year 2024/25 that there is no maximum grant award as available funding allows, imposed on all non-individual applications and that a maximum award of £500 is imposed upon applicants by individual applicants. This limit will be reviewed annually once a decision has been made on the grant distribution for the next financial year by the Trustee.

The Working Group Committee has the right to set a Policy / Principle that is binding at any Committee meeting in the future if it is regarded to be in the best interest of the Trust even if a precedent may have been set by a past decision.

The Working Group Committee will set out the Principles and Policies for each financial year at the last meeting of the previous financial year.

NO appeal procedure will be allowed against grant application decisions made by the Working Group Committee. If a sponsoring Councillor would like to resubmit an application for review on a decision that has been made by the Working Group Committee, then new material evidence that was not available at the previous meeting must be presented.

A conflicts of interest procedure has been ratified. Councilor's that are associated with any application are asked too:

- a) declare their interest,**
- b) may remain in the room and remain silent**
- c) be allowed to present the case or relevant points if requested by the chair for clarification purposes only**
- d) be part of any application re-consideration process only at the request of the chair for clarification purposes**

The Working Group Committee has the overall right to dismiss any application they feel is inappropriate for funding even though it may qualify under the Charitable Purposes to which the fund may be applied, as they feel it would not be in the best interests of the Charity.