



An introduction to SEBA Church Growth Grants 2025

SEBA Church Growth Grants

Church Growth Grants are given to help Baptist churches support a Minister who will lead them forward in their mission by helping them to reach out to their local community with the love of God in whatever ways are appropriate. Although these are awarded annually, churches can continue to re-apply for help if it is needed to sustain ministry, but this cannot be guaranteed unless the Association explicitly confirms this.

Conditions and Criteria

SEBA Church Growth Grants are funded by BUGB National Home Mission and, therefore, the Association has a responsibility to make sure that this money is used wisely and for the extension of God's Kingdom in the South East of England. Consequently, there are some conditions which apply to any church / project in receipt of a grant.

A church applying for a grant must be in membership with BUGB and with SEBA.

However, an application can be made by a 'worshipping community' that has yet to be constituted as a church where the understanding is that once a church has been constituted, they will join BUGB and the Association.

A church applying for a grant should be –

- a) giving to Baptist Home Mission at least 5% of their general income
- b) able to demonstrate their commitment to the wider Baptist family – locally, regionally and nationally.
- c) able to clearly explain their mission vision and plans.

In addition, applicants should note the points below.

Notes:

- a) Grants are normally only paid in respect of one Accredited Baptist Minister (including Newly Accredited Ministers) or a Minister-in-Training at a Baptist College, in a BUGB / SEBA member church – i.e. not for second workers.
- b) All grant supported churches should pay their Minister a stipend no less, or no more, than the National Minimum Stipend agreed each year by the BUGB Trustees and adhere to the recommended Terms of Appointment agreed by the BUGB Ministries Team. Churches should also pay their minister all legitimate expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

- c) The church should ensure that giving by the church to non-Baptist causes does not normally exceed 50% of the total given by the church to Baptist Home Mission and BMS World Mission.
- d) The grant approved by SEBA will not normally exceed 50% of the recommended National Minimum Stipend. Churches are expected to reduce their grant application by at least five percentage points each year. (This means that an application for a 50% grant should normally be followed by one for a 45% grant the following year and a 40% grant the year after).
- e) Churches who are being paid a grant to help support the cost of a Minister-in-Training should not be contributing to the college fees of that Minister-in-Training.
- f) Grants will not normally be given to churches with paid staff other than the minister for whom grant support is requested.
- g) Grants are paid monthly direct to the church's own bank account for those months when a minister is in post.
- h) The church will need to complete the Church Growth Grant application paperwork each year a grant is requested. As part of the application the Association will undertake a formal process from which a report will be written and presented to SEBA for final approval by (at the very latest) the November prior to the Grant being required in the January the following year.
- i) A church cannot assume each year that because it has had a Grant in the current year that the Association will automatically award a Grant in the following year. A church cannot also assume that they will receive the Grant amount that they have actually requested.

Assessment of Applications

As part of the application process the Association will arrange a meeting with the Minister and other key church leaders (leadership = minister plus church secretary, treasurer and as many deacons, elders or leadership team members that are able to attend) at the church itself or possibly at a location elsewhere in the Association. This meeting will take place only after ALL Church Growth Grant Application documentation for the individual church has been submitted.

There are five specific objectives which SEBA are seeking to achieve:

- to give encouragement to the leadership and membership of the church / project
- to sense and report back to SEBA on the spiritual life and 'mission-heart' of the fellowship along with its mission plans for the coming year.
- to assess and report to SEBA on the financial situation of the church.
- To work in partnership and offer guidance and continued support to the church / project over the coming year

The meeting with the leadership of the church will be of sufficient length to allow time for the appointed Association visitors (usually a Regional Minister) to go through the forms asking questions of clarification. In addition, there may be specific points that the Association have asked the visitors to raise, and these will also be discussed with the leadership.

Please note:

No Church Growth Grant will be considered until ALL the required forms have been submitted to the Association, including 'examined' final Church Accounts and budgets.

The Association does not have an unlimited supply of money coming from the Baptist Union of GB from which we can award Church Growth Grants to SEBA churches and projects. Indeed, it looks as if there will be increasing requests from churches for Association Church Growth Grants in the future. We would ask you to bear with us (and pray for us!) as sometimes we must make tough decisions in how we allocate the Grant money we have been allocated by the Baptist Union.

Please note – all email correspondence for Grant applications should be sent to Mrs Pam Kerley at pam.admin@seba-baptist.org.uk

**Rev Paul Kerley
SEBA Regional Minister
February 2024**

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