

The Paristamen Charity

Standing beside charities with small grants to make a big difference

BLUE SKY GRANT PROGRAMME 2023

Christian Reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future

Invitation to bid for £25,000 grant - updated

Revised deadline for proposals: 10 February 2023

But please make contact before then for an informal discussion if possible

The Paristamen Charity is a small grant-maker based in East Lothian but supporting charitable work across Scotland and sometimes further afield.

Each year we seek to award a "Blue Sky Grant" – the idea is to offer a £25,000 grant to enable a charity to do something as a significant one-off initiative – maybe something unusual or innovative that would be unattractive to traditional funders.

(The Blue Sky Grant will be by far our largest grant of the year – most of our awards are Responsive Grants, usually around £1000. For more about Paristamen see our website www.paristamen.org.uk)

For our 2023 Blue Sky Grant we are looking for proposals concerned in some way with **Christian Reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future** in the lead up to the key decisions that lie ahead which are likely to come to fruition in a General Election in 2024.

The Focus of the Grant

The trustees are looking to support a charity with the skills and experience to develop a *new project or initiative* that will operate across Scotland to facilitate **Christian Reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future**.

A key aim will be to help Christians relate their faith to the decisions they take when voting and/or engaging with politicians, bearing in mind our calling as stewards of all that God has created and our responsibilities to order human society in accordance with Christ's teaching.

We suggest the focus should be on the decision that Christians face when asked to consider the question: *Should Scotland be an independent country?* This was the question posed in the 2014 referendum and was the suggested question in the draft Referendum Bill tabled in 2022. Whilst no imminent further referendum is expected following the Supreme Court judgment in November 2022, it remains a central question and will clearly be central to the 2024 General Election.

The project should engage with the key themes that are central to the independence debate, but in all cases with a focus on *enabling both sides to be heard* in a context of *Christian reflection*. The focus will be on encouraging Christians on all sides of the constitutional question to engage in a spirit of dialogue, with a real sense of listening to each other, and to help those who are undecided to reflect on the question they are being asked to consider.

However, we are not expecting that Christian reflection on this subject will lead participants to a simple yes/no answer. For those who believe Scotland would be better if independent from the UK, there are many different models of how an independent Scotland might work. (The Scottish Government has tabled a series of policy papers under the theme 'Building a New Scotland' at <https://www.gov.scot/newscotland/> but other visions of independence have been suggested).

Conversely, for those who believe that Scotland's best future is within the UK, some suggest that major

constitutional change is still needed (for example, the Labour Party proposals in the Brown Commission report <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Commission-on-the-UKs-Future.pdf>).

Approach

The project will need to support Christians to engage with the core issues in the debate. The following is an example of possible themes to address (but this is not a prescriptive list):

- The current status of Scotland in the UK (and history) – benefits and disadvantages
- Scotland's place in Europe (including the case for an independent Scotland to rejoin the EU)
- Economic arguments for and against independence – including not just questions of overall wealth but impact on household inequality
- Practical issues such as borders and trade (with the rest of the UK and internationally)
- Currency
- Implications for specific industries (especially in localities where a particular industry is important to the local economy)
- Defence
- Climate change
- Foreign affairs and international development
- Justice, equality, human rights (including freedom of religion)
- Scotland's natural and physical resources.

Note: The project is intended to facilitate engagement with the question of whether Scotland should be an independent country – including associated theological and ethical issues – rather than the arguments for and against holding a referendum.

Organisation of the Project

We anticipate that the grant will be awarded to a *Christian organisation working across Scotland* – but operationally the project would be expected to work with a very wide range of local Christian churches and/or community-based Christian organisations.

The recipient could be a national church umbrella body, a more general Christian charity, a Christian media organisation, or a higher or further educational establishment with experience in practical theology/Christian political engagement (where this project could form part of a wider research initiative).

The project will develop resources to support local churches/groups in organising meetings and events that will encourage Christians to engage with the issues above, and, in particular, to hear from those on *both* sides of the argument. It should also develop appropriate web-based resources and promote constructive debate on social media. Every effort should be made to engage Christians of all ages eligible to vote and from the widest range of social and cultural backgrounds.

Ideally we would like to see a project working across a number of Christian denominations, but a well-run project based within one denomination would be acceptable so long as the events and activities are clearly open to all.

There are various ways that the project could be organised but we anticipate that the grant recipient would appoint a part-time project leader to co-ordinate this initiative (either by deployment of an existing member of staff or a new appointment, whether employed or freelance). Other support roles may be appropriate.

The project leader will need a clear passion for the project, and must be able to engage constructively to secure involvement from those on both sides of the argument – particularly in terms of getting speakers for events. He/she will need to be a committed Christian with a firm belief in the importance of Christian engagement in political decisions. We do not expect that the project leader will have no view on the central question, but he/she must agree not to campaign publicly on either side for the duration of the project.

We suggest that each local event will comprise a series of sessions looking at different themes around the independence question or be organised as a day conference divided into various sessions. Ideally, we would hope that an event will be possible in most of the 32 Council areas, each of which will need to be well publicised to local churches and Christian groups in the area. However, the project resources

should make it relatively straightforward for more events to be organised where there is local interest (it is not expected that the project leader will be personally involved in every event).

A local Christian minister or lay leader with a strong commitment to the aims to the project should be identified to chair each event, introduce speakers, and encourage an approach that facilitates courteous listening and engagement. Each event should include opportunities for discussion in small groups, but where the aim of the discussion is to learn and reflect rather than to convince others of a particular viewpoint. Each event should be clearly advertised as a *Christian Reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future* and should include times of prayer.

The requirements above are stated in general terms but *they are not intended to be prescriptive* – we are open to other suggestions about how such a project would work in practice.

Guidance on Prospective Bids – Q&A

Q1 Are there any geographical restrictions?

A1 The project must be focused in Scotland as a whole, but could be hosted by a charity based anywhere in Scotland.

Q2 Does this have to be a “new” project?

A2 Effectively, yes – though it could be developed from other work on Christian engagement on social/political issues.

Q3 What is the timescale for use of the grant?

A3 We suggest that the appropriate timescale for the project would be in the year April 2023 to March 2024 (given the likelihood of a General Election in May 2024). This would include times for preparation and review as well as the actual events – though we are happy to consider proposals for a shorter timescale. The project should, however, aim to produce resources than can promote further discussion through social media etc, rather than coming to a sudden end once the events are completed.

Q4 Can a bid be made by several organisations in partnership?

A4 Yes, we welcome constructive partnerships if you feel that is helpful (though it is by no means essential) but there must be one Scottish-based charitable organisation as the lead partner.

Q5 Must the grant be treated as a restricted fund?

A5 Yes, our grant will be restricted to this project (including an appropriate share of organisational overheads, if needed) – but the project could be defined in broad terms.

Q6 Are you looking for a project with a specific Christian theme?

A6 Yes, the focus is on *Christian Reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future* and the main aim is to support practising Christians to reflect on these issues. However, events and activities should be open without requiring any specific church membership or similar status (but prior registration is acceptable, and participants may be invited to commit to respectful participation in an event that will include space for Christian prayers).

Q7 Do all the speakers/contributors at each event have to be Christians?

A7 No, this is not a requirement, though speakers need to be briefed that they are contributing to a Christian discussion. However, when extending local invitations it may be worth stressing that speakers who are able to relate the political decisions to their own faith would be particularly welcome.

Q8 If the project goes well could we apply for a further grant to continue the work?

A8 No, our Blue Sky Grants are specifically one-off. The Paristamen Charity would not be in a position to provide further funding beyond this specific grant.

Organisation and Financing of the Project

Applications should explain how the project would operate and must indicate how the £25K would be spent by means of a clear breakdown of costs under appropriate headings. Where staff costs are involved, please indicate the role(s) concerned, the amount of time and rates of pay that would apply.

The project budget should also include appropriate provision for promotional activities (including social media) development of web-based and printed resources, appropriate travel costs, etc.

About Paristamen

The Paristamen Charity is a small grant-making charity based in Dunbar, East Lothian. Our objects are relatively broad – they cover (a) the advancement of the Christian faith and (b) any other charitable purpose which is not inconsistent with (a). We make some grants such as this for explicitly Christian projects, but also many broader grants to charities working in fields such as poverty and disadvantage, health, advice work, human rights. The charity is governed by four trustees who have a wide range of experience in the voluntary sector (and holding a range of personal political views). See www.paristamen.org.uk for more details.

Application process and timescales

We are keen to keep the application process as simple as possible – we do not wish to waste your time preparing a complex bid which is unlikely to succeed.

- (a) If you feel your charity may be in a position to bid for this grant, we would encourage you to make contact as soon as possible to discuss an application informally before applying. Please call (01368 864582) or email our Chair of Trustees, Gareth Morgan gareth@paristamen.org.uk (but please bear in mind this is a relatively small charity run by the trustees on a voluntary basis: we do not employ staff – however, if time permits, he may be willing to comment on a draft application).
- (b) We do not have a standard application form – please set out the application as you wish – but as a minimum please give the following information.
 1. Proposed title for the project – we suggest *Christian Reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future* – but we are open to other ways of expressing this.
 2. Name and charitable status of the organisation applying (including registered charity number(s) as applicable).
 3. Name and status of any partner organisations.
 4. Names and contact details (including postal address, tel no and email) for key individuals to be involved – including an overall co-ordinator who would be the prime contact with ourselves.
 5. Details of relevant expertise for the organisations(s) including key individuals, including previous work on these issues, access to wider networks etc. If you have a specific project manager in mind, please give his/her name and a summary of relevant experience. If not, please explain how you would seek to recruit a suitable project manager.
 6. Proposed organisation of the project including the specific activities that will take place and the staff/voluntary roles involved. Please make clear how you will reach and recruit the support of local churches, and how you will promote engagement more generally.
 7. Proposed timescales and budget – how you *expect* the resources to be used (see above under “Organisation and Financing of the Project”). If part of our grant will be transferred to partner organisations, please make this clear. On the expenditure side, if

you will need to charge any general overhead costs to this grant, please make that clear. If you will be using income from other sources towards the project, please make this clear.

8. Details of how you would like the grant paid (if successful) including bank details if you would prefer to receive payments by BACS (but we are happy to make payment by cheque if preferred). Payment can only be made to an account in the name of the charity making or leading the bid to us.
9. Your proposals for reporting back to us as the project proceeds, including how you judge its success or impact (though there is no need to establish elaborate monitoring arrangements and we appreciate long term impact may not be evident until well after the conclusion of the project).

Note: We would expect to have a direct meeting with the successful bidder at the start of the project and to keep in regular contact as the project proceeds. We would appreciate being invited to events organised (though we would only expect to attend one or two). We would ask to receive copies of all media produced.

10. We will also wish to receive your charity's latest Annual Report and Accounts with the application – and for each financial year the project is running. As explained, if a grant is awarded we would expect this project to appear clearly as a restricted fund in your accounts. Please see our website for guidance on submitting accounts – we always need the latest *final* report and accounts showing approval by your trustees and auditor or independent examiner.

- (c) Applications must be submitted to reach us not later than 10am on Friday 10 February 2023 preferably by email to: admin@paristamen.org.uk. If emailing, *please send all documents as PDFs*.

If sending by post please send to: Mrs Sharon Morgan (Admin Trustee), The Paristamen Charity, 10 Kings Court DUNBAR EH42 1ZG. Please ensure you attach the correct postage.

- (d) All applications will be initially reviewed by one trustee to check they meet the criteria for the scheme and if so, they will then be seen by all trustees before a decision is made. We will let you know whether your application is going forward to consideration at the trustees meeting.
- (e) Initial decisions will be taken at our trustees meeting in late February 2023. We may need to contact you at that stage to discuss further details, but if there are no further conditions or issues to resolve, we would expect to send confirmation of the grant award by March 2023. (We will also let you know if your application is unsuccessful.)

Assessment Criteria

Given the provision for informal liaison before a formal bid we hope to avoid triggering large numbers of bids which are unlikely to succeed.

At the final stage, each trustee of Paristamen will separately score each application and the total scores will be considered.

Although we hope to make a single grant of £25,000 under this programme we reserve the right not to award a grant or to make a smaller grant if we do not feel the applications are strong enough.

Some more general information about The Paristamen Charity and further copies of this document are available on our website www.paristamen.org.uk