

Funding - things to consider before you start...



So you're seeking funding for a project, event or scheme. All you need to do now is submit a funding application or two and you're ready to go. Well, not quite. Here are a few pointers to help you on your way and give you the best possible chance of success.

- **Is everything in place?** Funders are likely to ask for certain things before they will even consider funding your organisation. Although these can vary from funder to funder, there are a few that they will almost certainly ask for and this includes:
 - i. Documentation around governance (the rules under which you operate) so this might be a constitution or similar. If you need help or advice on this contact Mansfield CVS or Ashfield Voluntary Action (contact details overleaf).
 - ii. A bank account with two signatories who are unrelated to each other.
 - iii. Your commitment to Equality and Diversity (this can be a statement or policy which tells people accessing your service or project that everyone is welcome).
 - iv. Assorted policies and procedures - often you can download template policies which can be adapted for your organisation or activity. For advice on this please contact Mansfield CVS or Ashfield Voluntary Action.
- **Funders are not the enemy** - they're not trying to catch you out or trip you up. Some even welcome the opportunity to talk through your ideas with you prior to submitting a funding application.
- **Start small and build up a track record** - most people who run community groups are passionate, committed people driven by a desire to help their local community. These people are often visionary and dynamic and will tend to think big and go for bold, ambitious projects and large funding pots. Whilst this is understandable, a more measured approach is more likely to succeed.



Funders, whether Charitable Trusts, Lottery, local Government

or Parish Councils take their responsibility seriously. They want to make sure that that grants they award are well spent, projects are managed properly and delivered in accordance with the funding application. Whilst funders are prepared to take a certain amount of risk, every time a group is awarded funding and manages that award and delivers in line with expectations then they build their credibility and track record. Rather than immediately go for an ambitious big project, start small and build up your track record - it will pay off in the long run.

- **Do a good job with your monitoring** - if you've ever borrowed money from a bank you'll know that it's easier to borrow again if you paid back your loan on time and in full. 'Pay back' for funders is monitoring and an end of grant report (if they ask for one). A good monitoring report can also be used to promote your work so is always worth doing well, but you need to look at it as an investment in future funding with someone who has already funded you once. Look at monitoring, not as a chore, but as part of your ongoing relationship with a funder - they may fund you again!
- **Do your homework** - whilst there is really no such thing as an easy win, some funding pots are easier to tap into than others. Awards for All is a Lottery fund where you can apply for up to £10,000. The application form has recently been simplified and it is quite straight-forward, the chance of success is favourable, so it is a good start.

Another option is to go local, as some funders prefer to fund projects in their area (and may even exclude projects out of their area). Local options include; the Thomas Farr Charitable Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation, Boots Charitable Trust, Nottinghamshire Community Foundation, the Coalfield Regeneration Trust, Parish Councils and your local branch of Rotary. For help and advice on funding contact Ashfield Voluntary Action or Mansfield CVS.

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