

# Moving on ... What makes a good funding bid?

Many projects inspire groups or individuals to look further, to research and tell people about another aspect of the heritage they have been exploring, conserve another set of documents or artefacts, or to begin another heritage project.

If you're in the final stages of a funded project, your group already knows something about writing a successful application, but you may now be thinking of applying for further funding. This guide may help you think of things that you did not consider in depth last time, or that you have forgotten. It is not intended to be a complete checklist – every funder has different criteria and different priorities, and you will need to research those and tailor your application accordingly. Sending the same application to a dozen or more potential funders is unlikely to result in success.

## Choosing your funder

- There are many grant awarding bodies, from major institutions such as the Heritage Lottery Fund to local charitable trusts. A useful database is maintained by The Heritage Alliance <http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/fundingdirectory/main/fundinghome.php>
- Although not specifically geared towards history and heritage, you might also find the Funding Central website useful, see <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx>. If your project is in

Leicestershire, you should also look at <http://www.open4community.info/leicestershire/Default.aspx> (other counties may have similar resources)

- When you have identified a possible funder, read any guidance about the type of project they will consider, and the amount of money they can provide. Make sure your project meets their criteria.
- Talk to them, or start with an email checking that they would be interested in your type of project. Don't waste time writing a detailed application that stands no chance of success. Try to build a relationship before they receive your application, so they are expecting it.

### **Plan ahead**

- Many grant-awarding bodies consider applications on set dates and for many charitable trusts this will be an annual meeting. Make sure you don't miss the date. If it is a long way away, are you going to wait, or try somewhere else?
- As well as knowing the type of project the funder is interested in supporting, you also need to find out the type of outcomes they want (see below), and how they assess applications. Most of this information should be available on their website, but if you have built a relationship with them, you can also ask direct questions.
- Allow plenty of time to write the application, and to check it. Ensure you have covered all the points, that the spelling and grammar are correct and that it is in plain English, with no unexplained jargon.
- Also ask someone who knows nothing about the project to read your application and tell you **what the project is about** and **why it matters**. If they can't understand this easily, then the funder may not understand why they should provide the money.

### **What to say about you and your heritage**

- You will probably be writing to someone who has never heard of your group or the heritage that interests you. Give them some background.
- Before you get into the details about your project, present the wider picture – why your heritage is important, not just to you, but to the wider world.
- Convince them that your group is well organised, and has the necessary skills to keep track of the budget and to deliver a successful project. If you have managed a project before, say so!

### **What to say about your project**

- The project plan is a crucial part of any bid. State what you will do, who will do it, and when it will happen.
- Why are you doing the activity? Is there any evidence of need? Why does it matter?
- What experience does your group have at doing the activities you have identified? What help will be required, and is it available?
- How will you manage the project?

## **Outputs and Outcomes**

- What outputs will you produce? These may include a book, leaflet or trail, school resources, a website, exhibition, presentations, and/or the conservation, renovation or preservation of something.
- Can you demonstrate the need for these? How will you meet the different needs of different people?
- Identify the outcomes – the changes and benefits to heritage or to local people that will result from your project, such as raised awareness, new skills or knowledge, changes of behaviour, community cohesion, etc.
- How do these outcomes match the aims and objectives of your chosen funder?
- How will you measure achievement of the outcomes and the value delivered by the project? (See next page for more about outcomes.)

## Outcomes

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) lists on its website the range of outcomes it aims to achieve through its grant programme. Each project is expected to achieve one or more of these outcomes. These are summarised below, and you will find more examples on their website:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/Pages/Outcomes.aspx#.UhpL-75wblU>. Many other funders look for similar outcomes.

### Outcomes for Heritage

- Heritage will be better managed – to be demonstrated, for example, by achieving national or sector quality standards
- Heritage will be in better condition – for example by meeting standards used by heritage specialists and/or demonstrated by surveys of visitors or local people
- Heritage will be better interpreted and explained – demonstrated by comments made by visitors
- Heritage will be identified and recorded – feedback from visitors or users, which also confirms that they recognise its importance

### Outcomes for People

- People will have learnt about heritage – visitors have confirmed what they have learnt and what they are now doing with that knowledge
- People will have changed their attitudes and/or behaviour – demonstrated by evidence of changed behaviour
- People will have had an enjoyable experience – demonstrated by feedback from those involved
- People will have volunteered time – demonstrated by volunteer records and their confirmation of the personal benefits they have gained

### Outcomes for Communities

- Environmental impacts will be reduced – demonstrated by, for example, low carbon emissions at your site, or enhanced bio-diversity
- More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage – demonstrated by a change in audience profile
- Your local area will be a better place to live, work or visit – demonstrated by feedback from community members and visitors
- Your local economy will be boosted – demonstrated through information provided by the local authority or tourism organisation

## Your budget

- How much money do you need, and when do you need it?
- What do you need it for? Make sure you build in all your costs, including capital costs (things you need to buy, such as a camera or some software) and revenue costs (on-going expenses, such as insurance).

- Obtain quotes or estimates for major costs
- Have you built in a contingency for possible cost overruns?

### **Contribution**

- Funders rarely provide 100% of the costs of a project. How much can you raise in donations? Can you provide documentary evidence of cash promised?
- Every heritage project is reliant on volunteers. Provide evidence that you are likely to attract the volunteers you will need.
- Some funders allow you to count volunteer time as part of your contribution. Check any guidelines to see if this is permitted, and the rate(s) you can use. Explain how you will keep track of hours donated.

### **Exit and legacy**

- How will the project be sustained when it has finished?
- Are there any on-going costs, and how will these be met, e.g. insurance, website maintenance, etc?

### **Risks and contingency**

- All projects carry risks. Demonstrate that you have thought about these and how they can be minimised.

### Some useful tips for funding applications

- Involve your entire group in the application process. They may all have good ideas.
- Decide how you will demonstrate to a funder that there is a need for this project.
- Assign tasks, for example researching what already exists, or surveys of people who might use the outputs.
- Agree the timetable as a group
- Discuss the outputs and outcomes that will be achievable
- Producing the plan and timetable is often best done as a group activity – agree the tasks, write each one on a post-it note (or similar) along with the name of the person who will do it, and arrange them in a timeline.
- Rearrange responsibilities and the timetable if necessary to ensure no one will be burdened with more than they can take on at any stage of the project.
- It may take several drafts before you are happy with the application. At each stage, refer back to the funder's criteria and ensure you are on course to meet them.
- Make sure you have said **why** you are doing the activity, what **difference** it will make, how much **money** you need, how you will **spend** it, how you will **manage** the project, and how your project will be **sustained** following completion.
- Check the instructions for the format required for your application, for example, is it to be sent by email, or do they want a paper copy (and how many), or both? Send your application off in good time, and consider using a mail service that guarantees delivery by a date.

## **Await the response**

- If the answer is 'yes', congratulations. Now the work starts to ensure you will deliver what you have promised.
- Make sure you know how the funder wishes to be acknowledged, or if they don't want any public acknowledgement.
- Don't forget to thank the funder when you receive the reply (and there may be some formal forms to fill in)
- Thank them again when the project is complete, providing full details of your outputs, outcomes and supporting evidence. Leave them with a good impression of your capabilities – you might want to approach them again at some point in the future.
- Don't be despondent if the answer is 'No'. The amount of money any funder has for grants, and the number and quality of applications received, may vary substantially from year to year and over the course of a year. It may just be that there was not enough money available when your application was received. Ask for some feedback, and ask if they will consider a revised application in the near future.

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