

Hints and Tips

Finding the funds

Why groups look for money

Many community groups have to raise funds at some stage. It might be for:

- Start up costs.
- Checking out a new idea.
- Starting new activities.
- Equipment.
- Training courses.
- On-going running costs.

What type of funding is right for you?

This is the range of funding that many groups led by older people use:

- Contributions by members and people taking part - usually for each meeting/class or a yearly subscription.
- Donations of money.
- Donations of practical help - often called in-kind support.
- Fundraising activities.
- Grants.

Many groups decide to have a mixture of grants and fundraising events such as coffee mornings as well as things like weekly fees or membership fees. Think about:

- What you need funds for.
- How much.
- When you need the money by.

“We only needed a small start up grant to get us started. The village hall let us use a room for free to begin with and then we covered the use of the room from the small weekly amount all our members contributed.”

“The most successful men’s sheds told us that they got a start up grant and then relied on donations of equipment, wood etc. That’s what we are aiming to do too.”

“We ran our art group ok for several years with donations and members’ subs. Then we got a wee grant to run a class for older people who needed individual support from a volunteer to come along and at the group. That was great fun so we got another grant and stated a class in the next town too.”

“It’s easy to get drawn into the ‘give money for poor dependent older people who can’t look after themselves’ sort of message. That’s not us. We’re all needing a bit of extra help but we do a lot ourselves, just more slowly. Our message is ‘be part of enabling us to stay active and make a contribution to our community.’ Then we’ll take your money and use it well.”



Who can help you?

- People in your group?
- Other local groups or other organisations?
- People in your community?

Does the fundraising also get over the message about what you do and what is important to you?

Donations

Some of the things that groups have done to encourage donations include:

- Put a 'wanted' article in the local community newsletter, community website page or facebook page.
- Use free recycle websites.
- Spread the word through families, friends and other contacts.
- Ask local businesses for donations for special events or open days (tea, coffee, prizes for raffles).
- Contact local businesses and asking for a donation towards the cost of a piece of equipment or towards running costs such as your rent or insurance.

In-kind support

Some organisations, a local businesses or the local Council or Health Board might be able to give you free use of a room or help with something like free photocopying. This is usually called in-kind support.

You may also be able to trade help in kind. Think what you can offer to other groups too.

"The best bit of advice we got was – Tell people what you are doing and it is amazing what they come up with."

Fundraising ideas and events

Some groups have a fundraising event once or twice a year. Others do it more regularly. Some groups like to organise their own fundraising events, while others are happy for someone else to do all the work. It depends on what you feel is right for you.

Some other things groups have told us they do:

- Quiz nights and sheets.
- Bingo.
- Making and selling things – baking, craft goods, recipe books.
- Guess the number of items in a jar.
- Sponsored walks, duck races, toddles, bring your teddy to work days, and lots more.

Grants

Some groups apply for grants for things like start up costs, developing new activities, or buying new equipment.

Some of the grants that community groups apply to include:

- Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All and Investing in Ideas.
- Co –op grants.
- Small grants schemes through Foundation Scotland.
- Grant schemes from banks, building societies and shops.
- Councils usually have small grants for community groups.
- Health Boards have small grants for health initiatives.

If you want to apply for a grant you will need:

- A committee (of at least 3 people - usually a chairperson, secretary and treasurer).
- A constitution (your written rules for how you run your group).
- A bank account in the name of the group.



Our Hints and Tips on Getting Organised has information about these things

"We used the back room in the pub for our meetings. They didn't use the room in the afternoons, it made the place busier for them and they liked helping a local group."

"We were struggling to pay for our room in the centre because the charges had gone up. Another organisation heard and they offered us free space once a week in their premises. They wanted their building used and we wanted somewhere to meet."

"We meet at a room in the mosque on days it is not needed. Then they offered to cover our postage too, to help us keep in touch with more people."

"We get our newsletter printed by the Council on the big machines at the head office. We have to wait if they are busy with committee reports, but that's fair enough."

"We have members who love knitting and crochet but have run out of people to make things for. We said to a local mums and toddlers group that we would knit children's and babies' clothes. Then we sell them and split the proceeds. We're now getting donations of wool and that's brought down the cost, so it brings in a nice wee sum. And it's helping both our groups in so many other ways too."

"We have a coffee morning once a month in our village. It is a social occasion for people who live here. They like coming to have their coffee with friends and helping raise funds at the same time. We keep some of the money for our group and donate the rest of it to other local groups."

"One of our members used to be a cook. He came up with the idea of sharing recipes. We put it together into a booklet and sold it to raise funds."

"We make bird boxes and garden tubs for flowers and sell them. We enjoy making them and we raise funds to our men's shed too."

Who can help you?

There is lots of help for groups wanting to apply for grants.

- Ask someone from another local group or organisation who has experience of applying for grants, especially groups which do similar things.
- Ask organisations in your area that have staff who help local community groups.
- There may be Council staff who help community groups – for example community workers or grants officers: see the list or contacts at the end of this note.

What funders look for

These are the common things grant funders look for:

- What you want to do.
- Who will benefit from what you do.
- How much you need.
- How you will do it all (what, when, where, who etc).

Most funders tell you:

- What they will fund and won't fund.
- What types of groups they want to support.
- What their priorities are.
- Deadlines for applications.

Our top tips for applying for grants

- Read the guidance and all the information provided by funder.
- Answer all the questions.
- Get someone else to read it before sending it off.
- Keep all your notes, names of suppliers for equipment etc in the one place. It may be several months before you hear and it is easy to forget these sort of details.

Further sources of information and advice

Your local Third Sector Interface (TSI), sometimes known locally as CVS and Volunteer Centre, provide support and help to community groups.

You can find your local TSI at www.vascotland.org or T. 0141 353 7318. Some TSIs have a community toolkit on their website with lots of information for community groups, including on funding <http://www.slcvo.org.uk/Community-Toolkit/ctoolkit?PageName=toolkit-home.htm>

Your local Council may have community workers who can help local groups.

Know How Non Profit <http://knowhownonprofit.org/funding/fundraising/fundraising-events-and-challenges/events>

Five Minute Fundraiser video clips to help you www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/five-minute-fundraiser/

Institute of Fundraising www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/about-fundraising/event-fundraising/

Fundraising - 101 ideas. This is an American website but has some ideas that would work here www.fundraising.com/fundraising-101.aspx

About Wisdom in Practice

Wisdom in Practice is a project which supports and promotes the development of services and other activities led by older people. It is funded by the Scottish Government through the Equalities Programme and is run by Outside the Box.

There is a range of resources for groups, including publications, how to guides, events and development support for individual groups and projects.

This is one of a series of Hints and Tips on topics which groups led by older people have said help them in starting their groups, getting organised, keeping going and finding funds.

There is more information at www.otbds.org/wisdom



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"The village shop/post office had a jar full of buttons for us - 50p a guess for how many. They also had copies of a note about the new craft group the money was going towards. So we were publicising the group and the new activity as well as raising money. The shop also keeps copies of our Christmas Quiz sheet each year and donates the prize for the winner."

"I always look for the list of what they won't fund, saves me wasting time if we don't fit with their criteria."

"We didn't have time to apply by the first date they listed. We checked the deadline for the next round of applications and decided to take our time and go for that one."

"We aren't a charity so we check that first. Some funders only fund charities. We don't want to become a charity just to get a grant. There are enough trusts which give small grants to community groups whether or not they are charities."

"A bit of lateral thinking helps. We were able to apply to the Council under their Health and Wellbeing strategy for older people grants for our Mens' Shed. They said we also fitted in the mental wellbeing criteria - we hadn't thought of that until then."

