



The EWE Centre  
The School Grounds Project  
Esh Winning Primary School  
The Wynds  
Esh Winning  
Co. Durham  
DH7 9BE

### **Guide to Making Funding Applications.**

*Grant giving bodies fall into a number of broad categories:*

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

Your District, County, City or Borough may well give grants to voluntary organisations. In general the amount of money they have to offer has been falling over the years and will depend on the political will of the authority and other factors. For information on the grants that may be available internally (through Durham County Council) and externally contact Kathryn Warren, Economic Development Officer – National Lottery on 0191 3833633. If the scheme has an environmental / sustainability angle then it is worth making an enquiry with Durham County Council's Local Agenda 21 Team. Your local Councillor can be a useful person to have involved with your scheme you can find out who they are by ringing the Council's switchboard (0191 386 4411).

#### **PARISH COUNCILS**

These very small local authorities have the power to raise money from taxes and often support local community projects. Your District or County Council should be able to put you in touch with your local Parish if need be.

#### **GRANT MAKING TRUSTS**

There are many of these across the UK. They range from tiny organisations giving a few pounds here and there to very large bodies, which give millions of pounds per year to charities. These trusts are often very specific about what they will and won't fund, what geographic and subject areas they will support and how they will accept applications. The Directory of Grant Making Trusts, published by the Directory of Social Change summarises this information in a reasonably accessible form (see information sheet). It is particularly important to do as much research as possible before making applications in this sector. Most Trusts like to receive an initial telephone call before you think about submitting an application, to avoid wasted time and effort on your part and theirs.

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The EWE Centre, Esh Winning Primary School, The Wynds, Esh Winning, Co. Durham, DH7 9BE  
Tel: 0191 373 9799 Fax: 0191 373 9799

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The School Grounds Project is a partnership between:  
Durham County Council, Groundwork East Durham, Groundwork West Durham,  
Esh Winning Primary School, The Early Years Childcare and Development Partnership

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## **BUSINESSES**

Local firms will often support projects of value to the community on a philanthropic basis. Some companies get involved with School Grounds Projects to improve community relations or in order to attain recognition, from the press or an award scheme (e.g. Business in the community). Some larger businesses have formal grant programmes (e.g. Volvo, Barclays, Greggs etc...). Contact businesses in your local area to see if they will support you financially or with gifts in kind. Most businesses are more prepared to give a gift than financial support. Local builders are particularly good contacts as their gifts in kind can be used on site and they often have materials left over from earlier jobs. If the gift cannot be used on site it can always be raffled to raise funds. If you do manage to secure local business support find out how they would like to be acknowledged – a simple ‘thank you’, a photo in the local press, or even logos on school equipment. Remember, if you treat them well in the first instance they may help you again!

## **LOTTERY**

A proportion of the National Lottery revenue is given to a range of ‘good causes’ who distribute money to voluntary groups. See information sheet for contact details.

## **GIFTS IN KIND**

Parents quite often prefer to give time and materials (which could be lying around the house doing nothing) than being tapped for cash. Send a ‘parental skills letter’ home to parents asking them to list any relevant skills. Remember only one person needs to have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry forward a project forward.

## **Applications**

### **Remember to include in your application:**

- A contact name – use the name of the person who knows the most about the project.
- A contact phone number – belonging to the contact person.
- Your reference number – this will probably be sent to you with your application pack.
- Your charity number – if applicable.
- A SAE - when you send for your application pack enclose an SAE, they may not use it but it shows good will.
- Press cuttings, photo's etc... detailing the work that you have completed so far.

### **MATCH THE CRITERIA**

- Emphasise how your project fits the criteria set by the funder. DON'T be tempted to try and promote a project with tenuous links as most funders will be inundated by applications that are directly relevant to their criteria.
- Divide your scheme into discreet fundable elements then start matching these elements to the funding that is available at that time.
- Most grants are made available for specific types of group and / or project. Before you apply make sure that your group (and / or project) matches the criteria set out by the funding body.
- Some funders will only fund projects within a specific geographic area, check that you fall into this area.

- Try linking your school with a local community group to access more funds: partnership schemes tend to be more successful. In addition, some funders will not fund school projects as they feel this should fall under statutory provision. In general it is wise to play down the curriculum relevance of any scheme and concentrate on the extra curricular links instead.
- Charities have more money available to them as some Trusts will only fund registered charities. Is your group a registered charity? Could it become one? Could you get a charity to accept money on your behalf?
- Read the guidance material provided and then give them a call! Believe it or not funders WANT to give their money away and most will happily guide you through their criteria and application form.
- Don't apply to too many Trusts at once for the same item. You don't want twenty funders responding positively as most funders will only give money for a specific project and you may have to give nineteen lots back! A funder is unlikely to consider your group again if you've messed them about in this way before.
- Most Trusts will have information on the schemes that they have funded in the past (check out their website). If your scheme sounds similar then you may have a good chance of securing some money.
- Get the most up to date information possible, some funders change their funding focus on an annual basis!

### **APPLICATION CONTENT**

- An interesting and creative project is more likely to win funds. Make your project unique so that it stands out from the crowd.
- Present your case in a clear and concise manner.
- Demonstrate a NEED for the project and state how you intend to meet this need. State why your project is important and exactly who will benefit from its realisation – the more people the better. Provide evidence!
- Only provide the information that they require – funders won't appreciate having to wade through a mountain of waffle!
- Be POSITIVE – phrases like we can, we will, we intend to, make you sound like you know what you're doing and creates confidence that the project will succeed.
- Demonstrate good management ability – build up a case history of previous successes. Detail the experience and qualifications of those involved.
- Make sure that your project is realistic and achievable.

### **MEET THE DEADLINES**

- Send in your application in good time. Some funders have rolling assessment; others assess applications just once or twice a year. Read the guide provided and meet the deadline.
- If you get the grant make sure you can do the work in the time expected by the funder, or they may ask for their money back! If you do have problems keeping to the planned timetable TELL YOUR FUNDER and explain the how and why and what you're going to do about it. Funders are very understanding about unforeseen problems (unseasonable weather not permitting play equipment installation on time; problems with contractors etc) as long as you keep them in the picture!
- Claim funds on time (keep all of your receipts) – most funding bodies have budgets that must be spent each year and will not appreciate it if you delay committing / spending the money.

## **WATCH YOUR CASH FLOW**

Some grants are paid only after the work has been done. If this is the case, make sure you can pay for the work up front and remember to keep all of your receipts!

## **KEEP THE FUNDER HAPPY**

- Many grants come with conditions. Take them seriously as future grants may depend on it. This covers lots of things from meeting the deadlines to having a “this project has been supported by...” signs displayed.
- If you do have difficulty with the conditions – LET THEM KNOW, solutions can be worked out – but only if you’re honest.
- Outline plans for future maintenance / an exit strategy, the funder won’t want to fund a project if they feel they’ll be approached again in 5 years time to redo a project which has fallen into disrepair.

## **MATCHING THE FUNDS**

You may have to match funds. This does not necessarily mean matching the funds with cash it could mean matching with gifts-in-kind and / or volunteer time. If you’re making use of ‘experts’ (gardeners, plumbers, landscape architects) or ‘unskilled labour (parents) who are giving their time for free place an approximate value down against their services. Most consultants would charge £200-£300 per day plus expenses!

## **FILLING IN THE FORM\***

- Remember to address the application to the right person!
- Read the guide provided carefully. Photocopy the form and practise on the photocopy first. Answer the questions accurately and legibly. Make your points simply and powerfully.
- Answer all of the questions thoroughly and in the space provided. If they give a single line space they don’t want an essay!
- A well presented application shows you care about what you are doing – and that you want THEM to fund you.
- Ask for a specific amount of money and state how it will be spent If you ask for exact monies and say who you’ll be getting equipment/assistance from it shows you’ve done your homework and that you are enthusiastic about the project. If you have difficulty with any points, get in touch and ask them what they mean – it’s better than guessing. You’ll come across better if you ask all your questions in just one or two phone calls.
- Remember to keep a copy of your application.

*\* See additional sheet for advice specific to ‘open letter’ style applications*

## **REMEMBER: DO YOUR RESEARCH**

- Ask for guidelines and **STICK TO THEM!**
- An ill thought out application (to the wrong funders, at the wrong time, for the sorts of funding they cannot give) wastes your time and theirs.
- Get someone unconnected to your group to proof read the application. If they ask for clarification on any points / jargon / abbreviations so will your funder. Make sure it can be understood by everyone!
- Once submitted don’t be afraid of giving the funder a follow up call, to check that they have received it.

## **INCLUDE RELEVANT FURTHER INFORMATION**

- If you have further information (including pictures/children's plans etc), ask yourself whether it is what the grant body needs to know. If it is send it too.
- Try to be a little bit different and get your application noticed. Show the funders what else you have been doing to raise / secure funds. In-school fundraising (raffles, coffee mornings, non-uniform days) shows a great commitment to achieving the scheme. Tell potential funders about the funding that has already been secured / spent, funders like to see that they will not be your sole source of support.
- Do you need to include a copy of your group's accounts? Or a break down of your intended budget?

## **KEEP IN TOUCH**

Funders need to know how your project is getting along. Some will want a formal report. If you have any problems TELL THE FUNDER the how and why and what you plan to do about it. Funders are very understanding about unforeseen problems, so let them know.

- Say 'thank you'. Letters of thanks from the recipients (pupils, community groups etc...) will be particularly well received.
- Acknowledge their support (try and get a thank you in the local paper)
- Provide a progress update (even if it's not asked for) as this could make the difference if you apply to the same grant body a second time!
- Send the funder before and after photos, pictures of people enjoying the new grounds etc – let them know their money was well spent!

## **Another Approach**

### **OPEN LETTERS**

The 'Grant Applications' information is relevant to ALL types of application, this sheet is specifically for those applications which are not made on a standard application form.

- ALWAYS use headed notepaper, with relevant contact name(s) and phone number(s).
- If you've been given a reference number – QUOTE it.
- If you have a charity number – QUOTE it.
- Keep the letter to a maximum of 2 sides A4 paper (you can add appendices if necessary).
- Make sure that your font is easy to read.
- Get to the point immediately – a funder does not want to wade through 2 pages of information before discovering they don't fund your kind of project anyway.
- Include and emphasis all the main points that you want to get across in your application. The funder can contact you about any additional information that they want to know.