

Fundraising for Allotment Societies

Barnet Allotment Federation

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Background

– ten years at LSA. Led on socially linked fundraising: Plant Sale and Open Days

-After main career, 10 years with own company writing funding bids for Government and European Commission funded projects. Secured several million pounds in funding for clients

- Past four years working for small charity representing 14 community centres across Islington. Have bid for and delivered various grant funded projects incl. Big Lottery Reaching Communities, Awards for All and Access to Nature and City Bridge Trust who fund my current post.

What do you need money for?

- Planning – first set out the Strategy for your site
- Create your Financial Plan – look at your income and what you need to spend to achieve your Strategic Plan
- When will you need the money?
- A healthy bank balance does not mean you don't need to raise money!
- Do you really need a grant?

Strategic Planning – self management means you have to maintain your site within the terms of the lease with the Council but that you can also improve it to meet the needs and aspirations of members

Financial Strategy – you can choose what you want to do with your income, and additional funds that you raise.
However - Your liabilities under the terms of your lease must come first, so plan to maintain a reserve before you spend rental income on new projects – your fence may need mending, or a tree may fall down! Grant funding will not address those necessities.

Grant funders will not give money for what they regard as statutory liability
Plan carefully when you will need the funding. Grants take a minimum of three months, and sometimes up to a year from bid to receipt of the money – and you cannot start spending in anticipation of your grant - it is not allowed!

If you want to buy a Gazebo for your Barbecues, or some new mowers then other fund-raising options may be better than a grant.

If you want to undertake a project which involves large capital expenditure, and/or making a difference to the way in which your site is used, then consider a grant.

Income generation

- The staples: Plants sales, Open Days, BBQs, Apple days
- Selling produce at local events: school fetes, church events...
- Craft days – local artists demonstration and sale of work in return for % of takings
- Workshops: composting, gardening for beginners, organic gardening
- Performances in aid of the Association
- Etc.etc.

Regular events involving both members and the community help to swell the coffers, but also involve more members in the finances of the site, engage the local community and raise the profile of your Association in the area.

They can also help you to keep a healthy waiting list and offer an opportunity to consult with the community.

If what you want to do involves getting planning permission then the more you know your neighbours the better.

Before you apply for a grant -

- What are the local political objectives? – Not just the Council, but NHS Primary Care Trusts, Public Health, individual Councillors
- What are the demographics of your community – age profile, relative wealth, areas of social housing, ethnic mix
- Who are your members?
- Who might you want to attract as members?

Funders tend to be either **Public sector bodies** who will have a particular political agenda to which funding is linked, or **charitable trusts** which disburse funds left by a benefactor who will themselves have a particular agenda which might be addressing poverty, improving facilities for children, or the elderly or an environmental objective such as reducing carbon emissions

It is worth putting together a file – either on paper or better – on line, of useful research reports, local plans, facts and figures. Look at Office for National Statistics site for demographic breakdown or the Council and Local health web sites.

Put together a breakdown of your membership – gender split, older people i.e. Over 65's, families with young children, any groups that use your site such as schools, nursery groups, disabled group etc.

Does **your strategic plan** include attracting young families, or catering for disabled members? Then put together a profile of their needs too.

The language of public funding

- You may want to build a community meeting room – whereas your funders might want ‘people to have better chances in life’
- Inputs/project activities – what will you spend the money on
- Outputs – what will happen e.g. More older people gardening
- Outcomes – improved health among older people
- Indicators/impacts – how will you know if you have been successful: e.g. xx older people report fewer visits to GPs
- Match funding – the contribution to project costs from other sources.
- Evaluation

Get to know what different funders are looking to achieve and think about your project in that context.

For instance: Awards for All want to achieve:

- people to have better chances in life;
- stronger communities;
- improved rural and urban environments,
- healthier and more active people and communities.

You don't have to address all of them, but address at least one.

Match funding – this can be in cash, or in kind. **Cash-** could be money raised and contributed from your own funds, other funders or donors. In kind – donations of tools or materials; volunteer labour. **In kind contributions** will need to be given a monetary value

For larger grants, funders will want to see an **evaluation** of your project and may want progress reports along the way. Make sure you have the resources among your Committee/membership to cope with this before you apply

Could you partner another organisation?

- Partnerships are often favoured by funders, especially for larger projects
- It spreads the risk and also the work such as reporting
- You can achieve a wider impact in the community and therefore improve your chances of funding.

If your longer term strategy includes attracting different groups to your site, or embedding your association into the community, then partnership projects may be the answer.

BUT check that the Council will allow this.

The lead organisation could be one better suited to handling the project management aspects of the project, and be able to draw on more expert resources

If addressing a large funder such as a Public Health body or a charity like Esmee Fairbairn then you could be part of a wider objective and therefore be more likely to be looked at. There is nothing wrong with being a 'junior' partner in a larger scale project.

Examples: food growing or healthy eating project – led by a school, or community organisation – you offer growing space and build facilities that you can share;
Befriending project for older people – your site could offer buddying between members and older people whilst developing more accessible facilities: on-site toilet, raised beds, paths etc.

What the funder will need from you

- Legal entity, have a bank account with at least two signatories for expenditure
- An explanation of what you want money for and why it is needed – how can you demonstrate the need?
- A budget for the project – total cost and timescales
- How much money can you show from other sources – your match funding
- Most important – how does your project contribute to their priorities and further their objectives?
- The name of the responsible person for the project

Need – how will you demonstrate this? This is where your file about local political objectives comes into its own.

Do you want to create raised beds for older people – then show how many of your members fall into this category, and the % of your local community. Similarly for disabled people

If you want to build a new meeting hut, then show that you have consulted members – perhaps a members questionnaire.

Remember your neighbours – show that they have been consulted and that there are no objections.

Budget – get a proper costing including delivery costs and any supervision of management costs. This could include a value of volunteer time to manage or supervise the project.

Match funding – what you will contribute as opposed to what you are asking for from funders

Your funders priorities – Most important. Look at these carefully and see how your project addresses them. Maybe hold a meeting or workshop with some of your members

Responsible person - The name given on the form should be the Chairman of your Committee or a Trustee. Ideally they should be able to commit to seeing the project through. It will help you if you have 2-3 committee members that you can be sure will stay involved.

Where to look for funding

- Barnet Council – see the website for current situation – it may change
- Awards for All – the simplest Lottery Grant for £500 - £10,000. Reaching Communities fund – large scale Lottery funding
- City Bridge Trust – Improving London’s Environment
- Esmee Fairbairn Foundation Food Strand
- Biffa Awards

Barnet Council have the power to make small grants, although not necessarily the inclination – see On the Barnet Federation website: Grant Funding for Allotment Societies – Andrew Brown (August 2012) – summary of how to go about applying for grants and details of lots of funders

The Allotment Regeneration Initiative – now archived but guidance available at http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/documents/Fundraising_Pack/ARI_Fund_IncomeGen_11.pdf

Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/index-england.html>

City Bridge Trust Greening the Environment - more Londoners with a greater knowledge and understanding of the 'green' environment and biodiversity ; more Londoners reporting improved well-being through greater use of open spaces and through growing and greening initiatives ;

more young people understanding the benefit of growing local food and its nutritional value. Esmee Fairbairn - difficult funder to win from – looking for real initiative – consider partnerships.

These are just a few. See the paper on BAF website but also look for funding. Dedicate a member of your Committee to funding sources – some have windows for bidding. Get an outline bid put together that you can adapt to a particular funder.

If you are refused – don't despair – look elsewhere or consider whether you could phase your project. Ask for feedback on where you fell down.

GOOD LUCK!