

5. Applying for Grants



This sheet has useful guidelines on making grant applications and information on where to find out about local and national grants.

There are many grants available to groups who are undertaking conservation work, finding out about their local area and its history, learning traditional skills and involving local people. A voluntary community group, managing a burial ground, can fit very well with the criteria required for some grants.

APPLYING FOR GRANTS

1. Have you the right structure?

It is a requirement of grant giving organisations that a group making an application has a constitution or set of written rules.

Churchyards and burial sites are in most cases managed by an existing organisation and any grant application will probably go through them.

On the very rare occasion where you need to form a group that is independent of the owners or managers of a site, seek advice (see useful contacts).



2. Develop your project into a winning idea

Make a list of what your churchyard project needs funding for.

This could be:

- A management plan
- Biological surveys

- Tools and tool storage
- Repair of boundary wall
- Leaflet and events
- Interpretation
- Repair of memorials

Split the list into essential and desirable. Involve the wider community to ensure everyone's interests are taken into account.



3. Draw together existing facts

Make sure that all the information about your project is readily available. Back up your proposal with facts and figures: how large is your burial site? Does it have any listed memorials? How many ancient yews has it? How many people use the church and churchyard? How many volunteers are involved in managing it? How many metres of dry stone wall need repairing? Obtain quotes for the work and services so you know how much money you need.

4. Research and identify likely funders

Cross reference your project with likely funders. Make targeted approaches to a few rather than writing a general letter to many.

Ring the funder and speak to them. Read their criteria. Can you weave what they are looking for into your project?

For example, if you want to repair a dry stone wall and the funder is looking for community involvement then add into the project a demonstration or training weekend. Often, adding to your project to help it to fit into a funder's criteria can actually greatly enhance it! It stimulates ideas that you may not have originally considered.

5. Write a good proposal

One person could take responsibility for writing the proposal while others get the background information and letters of support.

Read and follow the guidance notes. Check deadlines and keep copies of whatever is sent. If the funder has an application form, photocopy it first and fill it in draft before completing the final version. It may be available electronically.

Write a clear and succinct application. Describe what support you have from the wider community; have you consulted with the community and other local

INVOLVING PEOPLE

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organisations? Ask those organisations to write letters of support. Ensure you show how the project meets the funder's criteria.

6. Say 'Thank You' and meet your obligations if you succeed

Make a list of any restrictions or obligations. These could be acknowledging funders, documenting volunteer time or recording the number of people at events. Think about how you need to evaluate the impact of your project. Take lots of photos. Fully document how money is spent and ensure all receipts are kept.

7. Celebrate!

Take the opportunity to celebrate and let people know what you will be doing: in the local press and parish magazine, over tea and cake or at the Sunday service!

8. If you don't succeed

Ask the funder for feedback and find out whether you can re-apply. Look for other sources of funding and contact organisations that can help.

Work in partnership

When applying for grants there is no need to go it alone; could you link with other people to make an application covering several sites? Is there a local community group or initiative that you could work with? This might include developing a project with a local history group or joining with a town council in

making public green spaces better for wildlife.

ORGANISATIONS WHICH CAN HELP

Volunteer centres and county voluntary councils

There are volunteer bureaux and centres across England. These organisations can help you set up a group, find grants, recruit new volunteers and tell other people about what you are doing. In Wales there are the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, County Voluntary Councils and Environment Wales.

The local authority

Many local authorities have staff to help and advise volunteer groups. There may be a 'Community and Voluntary Service' within the council. Again, these staff may help you to find suitable funds or volunteers and often have suitable small grants of their own.

Community councils

If you are in England, there may be a community council in your area that could help you further. There are 38 charitable Rural Community Councils across England charged with community development.

Lottery funding

The lottery funds have both large and small grants available for community groups which are straightforward to apply for. Take a look on the websites of the Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery Fund.

Useful contacts

Big Lottery Fund, www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Church of England, ChurchCare, www.churchcare.co.uk

Church in Wales, www.churchinwales.org.uk/heritage

County Voluntary Councils/Wales Council for Voluntary Action, www.wcva.org.uk, www.sustainablefundingcymru.org.uk

Environment Wales, www.environment-wales.org

Heritage Lottery Fund, www.hlf.org.uk

Community Councils are linked by the charity ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), www.acre.org.uk, and form the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN)

Local Authorities

Volunteer Centres (England), www.volunteering.org.uk

Volunteering in Wales, www.volunteering-wales.net

Useful reading

Fundraising for a Community Project – Simon Whaley, How To Books



Silver Birch