

GRANT FUND RAISING FOR ALLOTMENT SOCIETIES

Andrew Brown - February 2010

This paper briefly covers

- 1 Reasons for raising grants
- 2 How to raise grants
- 3 Local Barnet funders and key national funders
- 4 Links to more information and further sources of grants

1 WHY DO YOU WANT FUNDS?

Organisational Strategy – Where do you want to be in 5 and 10 years? If you are not clear about where you want to get to it is certain you won't get there! Before starting fund raising check that your society has got an idea of where it is trying to get to and why. Ask what funds you have now and what they are designated for. If your society has large financial reserves and no idea what they are to be used for, why would any funder give you a grant? Before fund raising put in some thinking about your society's strategy. This should include its financial strategy.

Financial Strategy – How much money are you going to need for your strategy? What are you going to designate your reserves for? (ie spend it on in the future). What should you have in reserves? Are you wasting money? How might you increase your income without resorting to grant funding? Alternative ways of achieving your strategy include cutting expenditure, increasing rents or service or membership charges, earning income (run a plant sale) or persuading the Council to pay for what you want.

Fund Raising Strategy – Look at all the different types of income and match them to the different things you need money for. You can spend rent income on pretty well anything but grants are nearly always restricted to a specified purpose. Hence it makes sense to spend your rent money on things which are unlikely to interest a funder (water, electricity and fence line clearance) and seek grants for those things which are likely to interest funders (disability access or educating school children). Have a look at the website of the Allotments Regeneration Initiative (ARI) which publishes for free online "A fundraising guide for allotment associations". They also publish and have links to lots of technical and management information for people who run allotments.

2 HOW DO WE RAISE GRANTS?

Grants are one of the easiest and quickest ways to raise money for some things, especially if those things are a project with a beginning and an end, even if it leaves you with a capital legacy in the form of a fence, roadway or gates.

- ◆ Start your grant fund raising early. From deciding to seek funds to receiving money typically takes 3-12 months. Do not start your project expenditure until you have the grant because most funders will not pay you for work already done or ordered.
- ◆ Identify those funders which your project might interest. Use the BVSC database or Directory of Social Change publications (see below).
- ◆ Visit the prospective funder's website to find out what their current policies are and what they actually give money for. Get additional information from their reports and accounts on the Charity Commission's website about who the funder actually gives money to.

- ◆ Obtain the grant application pack and then read the advice notes very carefully. Check that you are eligible to apply.
- ◆ Telephone the funder to discuss your idea and see if they sound encouraging. This will give you an opportunity to ask the vital question – "What proportion of applicants receive a grant?" This will enable you to decide whether to spend your time approaching this funder – there's a world of difference between a 5% chance and a 50% chance and grant applications are time consuming.
- ◆ Learn and understand the jargon. What are outputs, outcomes and impacts?
- ◆ Grant applications are very competitive. Always submit good applications with a high chance of success. It's worth going the extra mile to ensure your application ends up on the "yes" pile and not in the waste bin.

But remember, grant income is a short term solution and should be part of longer term and broader organisational, financial and fund raising strategies.

3 WHERE DO I LOOK FOR GRANTS?

Local Sources of Grants

London Borough of Barnet

The Council makes one-off small grants to a wide range of non profit organisations provided they have a written constitution. The Council have no history of making grants to allotment societies but they have the power to do so and will consider applications. Contact Mr Ken Argent who is the head of the Grants Unit on e-mail Ken.Argent@barnet.gov.uk or telephone 020 8359 2020. The Council has three funds with a common application process from which it makes small grants.

- ◆ The Council's own small grants fund providing up to £5,000 from a £65,000/year fund.
- ◆ The Borough's former lottery fund providing smaller grants from a £15,000/year fund focused on environment and arts.
- ◆ The Edward Harvist Charity providing grants from a few hundred pounds to £15,000 from a £70,000/year fund.

The Milly Apthorp Charitable Trust

This useful little fund is sadly being wound up and is presently giving out no grants. But keep in touch as they may have a limited period of giving out final grants. This is a small charitable trust with independent trustees but administered by the London Borough of Barnet's Grants Unit. It has a history of making one-off grants from £100 to low thousands of pounds for a wide range of purposes. Contact Mr Haroon Khan in the Council's Grants Unit on e-mail Haroon.Khan@barnet.gov.uk or telephone 020 8359 2097.

Northwest London Community Foundation

The Foundation administers grants for various funders and is building its own endowment for future grant giving. Their schemes change from time to time so keep an eye on their website.

National Sources of Grants

The National Lottery is the obvious place to start. There are four Boards – Heritage, Sport, Arts and the Big Lottery Fund. The latter currently runs ten schemes but Awards for All is the principal one for allotment societies. But keep looking at the others because they are regularly launched and have recently included the Local Food programme which gave out much bigger grants than Awards for All.

Awards for All

AfA is designed to get small amounts of money into the hands of a wide range of community groups – like allotment societies. This is "a simple small grants scheme making awards of between £300 and £10,000". You can apply if:

- ◆ You are a not-for-profit group
- ◆ You have a bank account that requires at least two unrelated people to sign each cheque
- ◆ You have a governing body with at least three unrelated members
- ◆ You have a written constitution
- ◆ You can spend the grant within one year

The Awards for All programme aims to help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need. "To achieve our aim we want to fund projects that meet one or more of the following outcomes:

- ◆ People have better chances in life – with better access to training and development to improve their life skills.
- ◆ Stronger communities – with more active citizens working together to tackle their problems.
- ◆ Improved rural and urban environments – which communities are better able to access and enjoy.
- ◆ Healthier and more active people and communities.

City Bridge Trust

This is a London wide funder managed by the Corporation of London which has recently celebrated its 800th birthday. They give grants for a wide range of activities including environmental purposes. See their website.

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

This is large funder which will specifically support allotments, but it is not easy to access their funds because they are always looking for something genuinely new.

Other National Sources

- ◆ Thousands of grant giving charitable trusts are out there. The Barnet Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) subscribes to one of the online and searchable databases. The Federation is a member of BVSC which will allow allotment societies to access the database.
- ◆ Detailed information on grant policies and what grants have been given to whom can be found in a charity's annual report and accounts which are available on-line from the Charity Commission.
- ◆ The Directory of Social Change are the leading publisher for books on fund raising. You can buy on-line or visit their book shop at Euston.

4 WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The Allotments Regeneration Initiative (ARI)

<http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari/resources/ari-factsheets.html>

North West London Community Foundation www.nwlcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Big Lottery Fund <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

Awards for All <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/index/england.html>

City Bridge Trust www.bridgehousegrants.org.uk

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Barnet Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) <http://www.barnetvsc.org.uk/index.htm> and contact
Funding Advice Officer Marilyn Keats

Charity Commission <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>

Directory of Social Change for publications on fundraising <http://www.dsc.org.uk/Home>

And always remember: If you don't ask you don't get.