



# Getting Funding for your Permaculture Project

**Compiled and written by Tammi Dallaston Wood**



## What sort of thing can I fundraise for?

### **Capital items:**

Tangible objects – office equipment; vehicles; buildings, etc

### **Equipment:**

Specifically for items of equipment, similar to capital but *not* for buying or erecting buildings

### **Revenue:**

Split into 2 aspects

#### **Running Costs-**

Costs of running the organisation, these are usually recurring – stamps, rent, stationary, phone costs

#### **Workers/ Staffing**

Wages, salaries

### **Projects**

A new, definite and separate activity within your organisation. It will usually have specific goals and outcomes. There is more money for funding these areas than revenue costs. Some fundraisers advise building in a percentage of project costs for core funding, often disguised as a consultation fee, or management fee.

### **Events**

Businesses and private sources are best placed to offer cash contributions and in kind donations for groups running fund raising events. They will often ask for little more than a mention in the events programme.



## **What are the Sources of Funding?**

### **Central Government Funding**

Often based upon national initiatives for example to increase volunteering, provide more tree planting opportunities or enhance community life.

### **Lottery Funding**

Money that is distributed at a percentage of the money spent by players of the National Lottery. The most well known are the Community Fund and Awards for All.

### **EU Funding**

Big money, but often has extraneous monitoring and evaluation requirements

### **Loans and financial services**

More helpful for profit making organisations

### **Local Authority Grants**

Be very aware of meeting their requirements; try to build up a personal relationship with them

### **Other local sources of funding**

Ask around other organisations that work in a similar field to you (community, farming, sustainable issues) for information (but be aware that they may not wish to divulge their sources of income!)

### **Grant-making trusts**

A huge variety of these, ranging from the very specific to the very broad. Look in the library for details of Grant-making trust directories. Trusts are a significant source of funding, distributing more than £1.5 billion a year. They often provide funding for community projects and innovative or risky projects that other funders might not support. Compared to other funding, money from trusts often has fewer strings attached, and easier application processes. But, because many only meet a few times a year, a decision can take a long time. Most trust grants are one-off or short to medium term grants.

### **Business and Private Sources:**

Have a look through the yellow pages for large local businesses that might be prepared to assist you. Many will offer donations in kind – plants, tools, stationary, computers, etc. Could also offer staff as secondments, sponsorship, profile raising. Be very specific about what you ask for.



## **Where do I go to get details of sources of funding?**

### **Yellow pages**

For large businesses in your area, or smaller businesses working within your field (e.g. recycling, garden centres, etc)

### **Funder Finder**

A CD ROM based at Community Base that lists all the up to date funders relevant to your organisations needs

### **The environmental Funding guide**

Reference copy available from Brighton Permaculture Trust or order via the library: details.....

### **Brighton and Hove Library**

Details

### **Growing with Permaculture**

Book published by Brighton Permaculture trust which includes the successful sources of funding given to other permaculture groups in Brighton and Hove. £3, available in December. Send Cheque for £4.25 (inc p&p) to:

*Growing with Permaculture, Brighton Permaculture Trust,  
Community Base, 113 Queens rd, Brighton*

### **Common Sense Charity**

Hold a database of local funders. It is £20 to join, and you get access to the database. In return you are asked to supply details of groups that have funded you. Call Jill Sweeting on: 01273 709562



## How To Write A Funding Application

### Getting started:

Think about writing a concept paper. This is a brief, succinct description of the project idea, about 2-4 pages in length. It addresses these basic questions:

- What is going to be done?
- Why is it important to do it?
- How will it be done and by whom?
- How much money is required and for what general purposes?

You can share this information with your colleagues, to make sure that you all agree on the fundamentals of the proposals. It can also be used as the basis for an application, for those funders who suggest writing a letter to the trustees.

### Before you start:

Look through any guidelines or application forms that you may have for the funding application. If you are not sure whether they are up to date, call to check. It may specifically ask for some of the below.

Have all the necessary documents to hand. If you have all of these things to hand, the application will be made much less tedious.

- **Budget**, for a project based application
- **Annual accounts**, or projected figures if you have been going for less than a year
- **Business plan**, for a project based application
- **Cash flow forecast**, for a project based application
- **Constitution**, the rules and regulations that you adhere to
- **Mission statement**, a sentence describing the remit of your work
- **Annual report**, documented evidence of your activities over the last year
- **Promotional material**, collect all such material in a file in see-through plastic envelopes
- **Newsletters**, if relevant
- **Users comments** and **photos**, provides the human touch that makes your organisation stand out from the rest



## **Applying to Trusts**

Many trusts ask that applicants write them a letter. So you need to find out the criteria that the trust have, and word your letter accordingly. Many trusts only accept one approach from an organisation a year, so make sure it is a good one.

Many community groups will be running more than one project. If you are, then pick the element of your work that most closely fits with a trust's priorities.

### **Picking trusts to approach**

Establish which trusts fund your type of project and which trusts cover your geographical area. It is useful to know what limits a trust has on the size of grants, or what level of funding they have given out in previous years, to give you a guide on how much to request from them. It is a waste of time to approach a small local funder for a sum outside of their normal giving.

### **Be aware of previous contacts**

Your project or organisation may have had links or funding from a trust in the past and it is important to be aware of any previous relationships before approaching a trust. The contact person at a trust may stay the same for a number of years and they will remember previous contact.

### **Application information**

Many trusts produce a leaflet or a single page of guidance on what they do and don't fund, how they work and what you should submit. This information can be extremely useful and can save you and the trust a lot of wasted time and effort. You should request any guidance notes that a funder produces and use them as a guide when selecting relevant trusts. Unfortunately, not all trusts will provide even this basic guidance.

### **Making your approach**

In the first instance, it is probably best to make contact by telephone. The application will normally take the form of a letter although a small number of trusts use application forms.

A budget for the project, your latest accounts and a copy of your annual report should also normally be submitted. Some trusts publish guidelines



on what they expect to receive. A number of trusts try to limit the amount of information that they are sent in the first instance. You may need to submit multiple copies of each piece of paperwork depending on the Trust.

You can let the trust know in your letter what other information is available so that they can ask for it if needed. You should also select someone enthusiastic and informed to act as the contact person for your applications.

Your application should be **two** pages long with an accompanying letter *unless otherwise guided by the funder*. It is important to apply well in advance of needing the funding and to ask for a specific sum rather than pleading poverty and asking for any donation. For example, you might request £3,000 of a total cost of £8,000 and then explain where the remaining funding is coming from.

### **Deadlines**

Trusts that publish deadlines receive a rush of applications around that date. Your application may receive longer consideration and be viewed more sympathetically if it is received outside of this late rush. Try to plan your work so that you are not in danger of missing the deadline. Many trusts only meet quarterly or even annually, meaning a missed deadline will result in big delays. Find out what the deadlines are and try to meet or beat them.

If a trust advises you to hold off until the next meeting then, if possible, you should. The trusts cannot control the flow of applications so your bid might have more chance at a quieter decision-making meeting than one with a large number of applications.

You should allow **three to six months** for the outcome of an approach to most trusts.



## **Starting the application letter:**

Your proposal needs:

**The Introduction** (A beginning)

**The Body of material to be presented** (A middle)

**The Conclusion/Recommendation** (an end).

**Appendices**

### **THE INTRODUCTION**

presents and summarizes the problem you intend to solve and your solution to that problem, including the benefits the reader/group will receive from the solution and the cost of that solution.

**Include:**

- Name of group, address, contact details, and charitable status: use your headed paper.
- Short description of your organisations work - Aims and Objectives, mission statement, activities/ services provided by the group
- Area of operation/ benefit
- Management and staffing structures (i.e. co-op? not-for-profit? Paid staff? Volunteers?), current budget.

### **THE BODY**

of the proposal should explain the complete details of the solution: how the job will be done, broken into separate tasks; what method will be used to do it, including the equipment, material, and personnel that would be required; when the work will begin; and, when the job will be completed. It should also present a detailed cost breakdown for the entire job.

**Include:**

- Statement of the Problem,
- Evidence of need in the area/ amongst the beneficiaries. How will the users be involved?
- Description of purpose of the project for which you want funding:
- Proposed Solution(s),



- Programme of implementation, Timescales; Project start and finish dates;
- Who will manage the project?
- How your project or individual approach will make an improvement to the problem, Results expected,
- Evidence of previous success/ history of the group
- Amount sought from the trust; how much money you already have (proof that their money is needed). *Be brief here - Further budget details can be placed further into proposal*
- Numbers of paid workers; volunteers; beneficiaries (punters); people requesting or needing the new/existing service

## **THE CONCLUSION**

should emphasize the benefits that the reader will realize from your solution to the problem and should urge the reader to action. It should be encouraging, confident and assertive in tone.

Proposals try to educate the reader and convince them to do something; we also want to make the reader believe that the solution is practical and appropriate.

### **Include**

- Plans for sharing information about the project and what you learn from it with others in the field
- How your organisation intends to monitor and evaluate the project

## **APPENDICES**

### **Budget**

(Itemization of expenses in the implementation and operation of the proposed plan, and detail of materials, facilities, equipment and personnel)

Budget for the project:

Details of funds raised; other sources approached. Carefully review your budget to ensure that ineligible items don't appear in the budget and that adequate attention has been given to cost sharing. Some funders want evidence that others will meet part of the costs of the project. Consult the funders' guidelines for eligible and ineligible items.



**At the end of your letter, state that the following additional information is available if they so request (but only if it is true!):**

**Users comments:**

Letters of support from other agencies, partners or organisations in the area, users comments

**Qualifications**

Of writer(s) and/or project implementers

**Organisations Information**

Most recent annual report and accounts

## **Before You Finish: Little Things That Can Make A Difference**

- Look at any recommendations/ guidelines from the funder, keep to any page limitations and make absolutely certain that the proposal fits the type of activities that they fund.
- Make sure that you have supplied **all** the information that they require. The majority of requests for funding meet the waste paper bin simply because the applicants haven't heeded this advice. There is no point wasting your time or theirs.

Your proposal should-

- Offer to fulfil a need or solve a problem
  - Suggest how you plan to do it
  - When you plan to do it
  - How much it is going to cost
- 
- Think about how much your reader (the potential funder) may know about the subject. Try not to pitch too high (lots of jargon) or too low (patronising). Don't make assumptions that they know what you do or what the worth of it is



- A good proposal is always readable, well organized, grammatically correct, understandable, and brief
- Use a spell checker before submitting the proposal
- Proofread carefully
- Avoid abbreviations and jargon.
- The first time you use an acronym, write out what it stands for and put the acronym in parentheses, e.g. Brighton Permaculture Trust (BPT). After that you can use the acronym - BPT
- Make sure all your references are correct.

## **After you have sent the letter/ application form**

Call them to make sure that they have received the application. They will remember you.



## If you get a successful response

Send a thank you letter!

### Build a relationship with your funder

- Offer a site visit
- Join their organisation
- Invite them to the AGM
- Offer complimentary membership of your organisation (where relevant)
- Mention your funders in any press releases or press coverage
- Send relevant photos, press clipping etc to your funder
- Put them on your newsletter database

If the proposal is successful, make the **best possible** use of the funds awarded.

Let others know about your project. This may include:

- Providing advice or assistance others developing similar projects
- Disseminating results in magazines and press
- Make sure that others in your field learn about your activities through correspondence, telephone conversations, presentations, and publications

### After The Grant is finished

You should consider sending a trust a brief end of grant summary outlining the results and outcomes of their funding. Very few organisations actually do this unless the funder asks and being proactive can create a very good impression for your next approach to that funder.



## Fundraising Ideas

There are other ways of attracting money into an organisation than submitting requests for money from external funders.

**Appeals** in your newsletter, the press, or by widely distributed leaflets

**Barbecue** or other social event, pay upon entry

**Convergences** and conferences, a number of workshops relevant to your field of work for the general public. Offer catering facilities and a space to network and display information

**Dutch Auction**, where the first bidder bids at (for instance) £1, the second bidder bids for the goods at £2.50, but places *the balance* in the collection box (£1.50), the third bidder bids for the goods at £3 and places the balance in box (50p). Bidding continues for a fixed time period, known only by the auctioneer, and the last bidder gets the goods.

**Exhibition** of your work, with a request for funds for a particular project

**Festivals**, take a stall and some leaflets and a collection box. People respond well after having a friendly conversation with a real person. Also

**Farmers** markets.

**Green Fairs**, as above

**Hallowe'en Party**, works well with land based projects accessing the local community

**Individual** pledges, do you have a rich friend? Ask them to donate for a particular cost (i.e. stamps for the year, or office rental)

**Jumble** sales, nuff said. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

**Lecture Services**, advertise a workshop or lecture that your organisation has a strong interest in. You can tailor this to your audience

**Market** stall, with collection tin or sales of relevant merchandise

**One Hundred Club**, invite a hundred people to pay £1 to the organisation via direct debit once a month. Each person has an individual number. You pay out 3 prizes totalling half the money donated (i.e. £30, £15, £5). The organisation gets to keep the other half. Operate the draw to coincide with your regular meetings, workdays or newsletter. **Online** auction via the Friday Ad: [charity@friday-auction.co.uk](mailto:charity@friday-auction.co.uk) or call 01273 837751.



**Plant** sales, easily done at a car boot, jumble sale or street market. Can even be done from your drive. Have a selling point i.e. edible flowers, or locally sourced seed, or plants for shady areas.

**Raffle**, best done through a newsletter or at a convergence

**Sale**, of relevant merchandise, plants, etc

**Trips** to relevant sites, events or gardens

**Use** your membership base to find out what you could offer that the rest of the community would like

**Vegetable** sale, a day of sale of surplus organic veg from growers and allotmenters. Best held at Harvest. A good opportunity for advertising

**Wildcrafting** walks, paid guided walk with people who wish to know more about the edible qualities of nettle, burdock, horseradish, fat hen, ground elder, etc

**Xmas** Fairs

**GOOD LUCK!!**