

1.9

Annual Grant and Looking for Funds

Annual administrative grant

Moray Council provides an annual grant to Community Councils to cover the costs in administering community council business. The grant shall be fixed at a rate reviewed and advised annually by the Local Authority and may be disbursed in one or more instalments during the course of the financial year.

Community Councils are able to raise funds in order to carry out their work in the community. Often this involves the organisation of fund raising events, but another option that is often open to Community Councils is to apply for grant funding from one of a very wide range of sources.

The quality of the application for grant funding can often be critical to its success or failure. Very often the grant aiding bodies will not have any opportunity to meet with those who are making the application and so their sole source of information about the proposal may be what is contained in the original application. For this reason it is important that the information provided is appropriate and, if possible, persuasive.

What the grant covers

The administration grant is available to cover the costs in administering community council business which includes:

- Auditors' fees
- Production and circulation of minutes, agenda and annual reports or other Community Council documentation
- Stationery
- Photocopying
- Postage
- Travel costs
- Telephone and mobile phone costs
- Information Technology (IT) costs including hardware and software
- Accommodation lets
- Affiliation fees
- Subscriptions
- Bank charges
- Advertising
- General publicity, promotional and ceremonial activities
- Consultation with the community
- Honorariums' to the Community Council secretary and Treasurer

The Local Authority shall determine any additional support services and resourcing as necessary.

Annual accounts

The year end for Community Councils is the 30 September; annual accounts should be ready for this date for them to be independently examined an examiner appointed by the Community Council, who is not a member of that Community Council or a co-habitat of a member.

Once the accounts have been agreed at the Annual General Meeting (if held) or an ordinary meeting they should be forwarded to the Community Council Liaison Officer at Moray Council. Annual grants **will not be paid** until annual accounts have been received. Accounts templates are available in section 3.

Finding funding

Moray Council Economic Development Team main areas of work are Town Regeneration, Business Support, Tourism and Funding.
Contact 0300 123 4561

Preparing speculative grant applications

Many grant-aiding bodies have special application forms that have to be completed. Where this is not the case you should try to state your case in about two sides of A4 paper, with any supplementary documents attached.

Begin with a brief summary of who you are, what the project is and how much money you want. You could also give a brief introduction to your community, emphasising any particular constraints that there are such as remoteness or high unemployment. (You might want to attach a map showing your area and location.)

Provide information about your organisation:

- Its title, address, telephone contact and number;
- How it is organised, Constitution, membership etc;
- Its financial situation, including information about any other, or previous sources of grant funding;
- Its overall objectives and its past achievements.

Give a clear account of what you will do with the money if your application is successful, and what you hope to achieve by spending it. Explain what your working methods will be and indicate how you will plan and control your budget.

Refer to the need that exists for the project and how there is a gap in provision from other sources, so that you are not seen to be duplicating existing services. (You might include any supporting evidence that is available, newspaper articles, statistics etc.).

Explain why your Community Council is best placed to carry out the project and, if possible, show that you have consulted with other organisations and have their support. (If you are co-operating with other bodies then say so).

Some other tips on applying for grants

- Try to make informal enquiries first to establish whether funds are still available, and if so what the criteria are for awarding them;
- Remember that you will be competing with other organisations and other projects so try to convey the importance of the project and emphasise its value for money. Above all, try to fire the imagination of the person(s) who will be assessing the application;
- Appearance is always important in these decisions so try to make sure that your application is typed up neatly and well presented;
- If possible get someone who has had no contact with the project to look at your application before you submit it. They may be able to spot jargon, inconsistencies or ambiguities;
- Don't be tempted to underestimate your costs. You may find that you are subsequently unable to finish the project or that you have to skimp over important matters in ways that affect the overall success of the project;
- Support is available around funding e.g. identifying funding sources, developing funding applications, monitoring and evaluating a grant via Moray Council's Community Support Unit.

Hints and tips for finances

As a Community Council, insist on clear financial reporting systems, ask questions and do not approve financial decisions unless / (and) until you are clear about their implications.

Ensure that money is only used for the purposes that it was intended for and set against the Community Council's objectives.

Consider the following when dealing with finances;

- What procedure is in place to discuss and decide on financial matters relating to the Community Council?
- Who is allowed to approve spending, handle cash?
- Who signs / countersigns and for what amounts, and are these individuals related?
- Who can order supplies and services and authorise payment at various levels?