



**SD**

supporters direct

# FUNDING GUIDANCE

## WHY GET FUNDING?

Trusts can look to raise significant capital for funding through their own independent fundraising methods but often there are funders who support community projects and may make suitable funding partners for your project.

Obtaining sufficient funding is often the main requirement and consideration when a Supporters Trust is looking to embark on a project no matter how big or small.

## FUNDING EXPLANATION

Your Supporters' Trust can obtain funding for a variety of projects and there are two distinct types which funders acknowledge:

*Capital projects* usually relate to property and buildings where a project exceeds £50,000. For example, funding facilities such as a 3G pitch being built. They are longer term projects investing in something that depreciates over time.

*Revenue projects* are usually projects where total expenditure is less than £50,000. The costs will normally be to meet community or sporting objectives such as coaching or sports equipment.

Unless a trust owns a club or an asset the majority of funding applications will be for revenue projects. This guidance offers some advice and inspiration in the form of case studies to help guide trusts through potential funding applications.



## GOVERNMENT FUNDING

In 2015 the Government produced its strategy for sport, *Sporting Future: A new Strategy for an Active Nation*<sup>1</sup>. This highlighted the need for wider national engagement in sport and physical activity and established a focus for future funding decisions based on the social good that sport and physical activity can deliver.

The strategy was based on a framework for measuring successful outcomes in:

- physical wellbeing;
- mental health;
- individual development;
- social and community benefit; and
- economic development.

To be successful at applying for funding you may need to show how your project links in with a wider agenda (e.g. not just sport for sports sake)

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486622/Sporting\\_Future\\_ACCESSIBLE.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf)



## WHAT TYPES OF FUNDING CAN TRUSTS GET?

### Funding for individual projects

Funding is often only available for specific projects in individual regions. Usually, these projects are working with and benefiting certain groups in your community. The funders are only able to fund a limited amount of grants per year and the application process is extremely competitive.

Some examples of funders who offer grants for single projects are:

Fans Fund Small Grants Scheme - <http://www.fsif.co.uk/funding/fans-fund-small-grants-scheme/>

Heritage Lottery Fund - <https://www.hlf.org.uk/>

Big Lottery Funding - <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

Football Foundation - <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/funding-schemes/facilities-scheme/>

UnLtd - <https://unltd.org.uk/path/>

## 'A COMMUNITY FUNDED CLUB TAKEOVER'

### Case Study – Bath City

#### What happened at Bath City FC

The Bath City Supporters Society raised £365,000 in funds to take a majority stake in Bath City FC.

#### Why is a ST well placed to deliver this?

The Society used a community share offer, a form of crowdfunding, to raise the funds. These types of offers, which give investors a mix of social and financial returns while maintaining the 'one member, one vote' principle, can only be launched by cooperatives and community benefit societies (CBS) – making them a great option for supporters' trusts.

#### How much resource do you need for this?

The basic costs of launching a community share offer are reasonable: we paid roughly £6000 in consultancy fees and perhaps £2000 in printing costs for prospectuses and flyers. However, the resources required to make your community share offer successful are considerable in terms of time, skills and talent. It's vital to have volunteers with the skills to develop a credible business plan, as well as those who can gain publicity through media relations, events and marketing.

#### Three top tips:

Don't wait for a crisis. As soon as your trust decides that community ownership is the best option for your club, start selling the idea to supporters and build your fundraising team and business plan.



Be clear about your story. People will buy community shares for a variety of reasons, and you can attract support from beyond your diehard supporters if you can show how a community-owned club will be an asset to local people.

Be creative with any crowdfunding rewards you might offer to pledgers. A behind-the-scenes tour, the chance for a fan to sit on the subs bench for a match or a “permanent roll of honour” at the stadium for pledgers will cost you next to nothing, but will convince some supporters to dig deeper.

“Our community share offer was a great way to rally more support from a wider range of local people behind the dream of a community-owned Bath City FC. The campaign attracted lots of new volunteer talent to our trust, many of whom have continued to lend their skills and time to the club now that we are majority community-owned.”

If you would like to know more about this project please contact the trust at bathcitysocietycommittee@gmail.com

## Partnership funding

A great partner for a Supporters Trust looking to extend their work and profile in the wider community is the community sports trust at the club. Most professional sports clubs will have a charitable arm which delivers community activity, and will share many similar values, so there is likely to be potential joint projects and potential funding opportunities.

We'd recommend looking at cross representation on Community Trust and Supporters' Trust Boards like at Pompey Supporters' Trust or Bees United.

A great example of partnership funding came at OxVox, the Oxford United Supporters' Trust.

### Case Study – OxVox Supporters Trust

#### What it is:

OxVox recently linked up with Oxford United Community Trust to raise money to fund match day tickets for children living in care, as they explain here:

The Yellows are at the heart of the community, and the stadium is a place where all walks of life come together with a common purpose, accepting and celebrating one another as they shout and cheer for their team in a safe environment. As well as respite from the pressures they face, match days offer an opportunity for young people to build relationships with their carers as well as their peers, and broaden their social horizons.

#### Why is a Supporters' trust well placed to deliver this?

Ultimately, the community trust, a separate division and business of the club, helped set up a Just Giving page and we used the Community Trust's bank details and charity details etc to enable GIFT AID. Working together with the Community Trust added credibility, improved our networks and resource.

Myself and others on the Supporters Trust and some members then effectively did the promotion. We sourced items to auction, signed shirts etc. and had sponsors offering them for free to auction on. The fund quickly exceeded our expectations and we went on to raise just short of £8,000.

With the money ring-fenced, the community trust transferred the monies to the football club, who then went on to issue 78 tickets. These were then handed over to Oxford United Football in the Community.

This enabled us to then work with Oxfordshire County Council Residential & Edge of Care Service and they then eventually administered the distribution of tickets. Once the tickets were purchased, other parts of the council, fostering, for example, took some tickets from those supplied. So it reached much further than the children in care that we had originally identified.

#### How much resource do you need for this?

The resource, in these situations and working within a voluntary group, effectively was only a handful of people within the Supporters' Trust who made this happen and drove it on. Yes, we needed or appreciated the support on web stories from the club but the media were also very, very good. As a Trust, you have to work with the media and build a positive working relationship like ours. We've had lots of engagement with them over our stadium situation (and being the first Trust in the UK to have a CRTB - Community Right to Bid) benefitted that. They were happy to help us.

**Three top tips:**

You need to have people on the committee and within the membership who can spend some of their free time to make these projects work, otherwise they fail.

You need to work closely with your club and media so you will need to have a good relationship with with them - they help spread the word. However, also utilise social media - Twitter and Facebook - as OxVox's presence was key to this.

We asked celebrities and ex-players to endorse the tweets, we ran competitions and kept people informed. That was the real success.

As one carer puts it, "the match day is a place where children can think about their lives and have ambition that things can be better for them and that people care about them and their lives. The Oxford United family provides that and more.

If you would like to know more about this project, please contact the trust at [enquiries@oxvox.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oxvox.org.uk)

## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### Heritage

The main funders of heritage projects in the UK are the Heritage Lottery Fund.

They offer a range of different grant programmes ranging from £3,000 to over £5million. In assessing applications, they take into consideration the outcomes the project will achieve for heritage and the surrounding communities.

*Some examples of Supporters' Trusts successfully accessing and applying Heritage Lottery Funding are detailed below:*

#### **Case Study - Nuneaton Town Supporters' Co-operative (NTSC)**

NTSC successfully secured a grant to present a history of senior football in the town. Entitled 'From Town to Town' the project aimed to chart the history of the football club from its formation to the present day and to provide information and artefacts that can be taken out into the community to educate and enrich the lives of local people.

#### **Case Study - Exeter City Supporters' Trust (ECST)**

ECST have been engaged in several projects geared at collecting and preserving the history of the football club. One of these projects was The Grecian Archive, which aimed to facilitate the exploration of the history and heritage of Exeter City Football Club.

Some of ECST projects have also been developed with the support of Exeter City Football in the Community.



#### **Case Study - Telford United Supporters' Trust (TUST)**

TUST received £35,500 for a project called 'Building the Telford Tribe' which tells the story of the fans' involvement in the football club.

Volunteers were supported to make previously unseen materials associated with the club's history available online as well as helping to grow interest in the club from the wider community in Telford.

The project enabled local young people to discover information about the history of football in the borough, as well as producing materials that can be used by the older members of the community to reminisce about football in the town over the last 140 years.

## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Increasingly, trusts are looking to link up with local authorities and health services providers to fund projects that improve, assist and promote better physical and mental community health. There are a wide range of projects that Supporters' Trusts have engaged in, from inclusion projects which encourage the community to get active to improving the living standards for those suffering with mental or physical disabilities.

*Some examples of Supporters' Trusts successfully accessing and applying funding to health orientated projects are detailed below:*

### **Case Study – Leyton Orient Fans Trust (LOFT)**

'Cycling is my Goal', was a project developed by LOFT (in partnership with Waltham Forest Council, Cycle Confident and Mini Holland) aimed to work with people of all ages within the local community in Waltham Forest to improve their confidence with cycling on the roads. LOFT were awarded a £10,000 grant from TFL to bring this project to life.

### **Case Study – Hendon FC Supporters Trust (HFCST)**

Young children in North West London receive healthy heart lessons and exercise classes thanks to HFCST who benefitted from a grant from national health charity Heart Research UK and SUBWAY stores.

The community group was awarded £8,600 to facilitate sessions to improve children's heart health and lifestyles in the local area using physical activities such as football, dodgeball, walking and cycling, amongst others.

### **Case Study – Watford FC Supporters Trust (WFCST)**

As part of their commitment to ensure the club remains at the heart of the community, WFCST provided funding to the disability provision delivered by Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust and the Herts DFDF project (Disability Football Development Fund).

The county wide DFDF project is delivered by Watford FC's CSE Trust in partnership with Hertfordshire FA. This project allows any organisation or group working with people who have a disability up to twenty hours' worth of free football support, ensuring that anybody who could benefit from a positive football experience, irrelevant of disability or special need, can have the opportunity.

## EDUCATIONAL

Many Supporters' Trusts get involved in educational projects in local schools using the power of sport to inspire young people with projects ranging from developing literacy to creative writing and even offering opportunities in further education through placements at clubs.

Some examples of Supporters' Trusts successfully accessing and applying funding to educational focused projects are detailed below:

### **Case Study - Foxes Trust**

FT worked with Supporters Direct and De Montfort University to pilot a Schools Literacy project for the entire Trust movement

The pilot took place during the 2007/8 Season and utilised materials put together by John Hutchinson for the club's museum. It was resourced by Trust members and included a stadium tour and attending a game, with pupils writing about various aspects of their experience.

### **Case Study – Leeds United Supporters Trust (LUST)**

LUST teamed up with Five Lanes Primary School to assist their year 5 pupils with their persuasive writing project. The Trust helped pupils write letters to persuade parents to become Trust members.

### **Case Study - Exeter City Supporters Trust's ECST**

The aforementioned Grecian Archives runs in partnership with the University of Exeter and gives students opportunities to get involved in live historical archiving and project research.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Many Supporters' Trusts focus their efforts in the community around social inclusion. This often means assisting elderly or disabled supporters in attending matches and improving accessibility at the grounds. Trust have also looked to assist with the development of clubs' youth projects.

Some examples of Supporters' Trusts successfully accessing and applying funding to community development projects are detailed on the following page:

### **Case Study - Brakes Trust Supporters' Co-operative (BTSC)**

BTSC are all 'fuelled up' thanks to funding from Phillips 66, the Leamington Football Club Community Grass Roots and Stadium Partner.

Phillips 66 and its fuel brand JET provided a year's worth of free fuel for the Trust's 17-seater minibus which benefitted hundreds of players from across the club's teams, as well as supporters and fans.

The local community also benefitted as the wheelchair accessible minibus is available for community groups to book when not in use for match days or club trips.

### **Case Study - Telford United Supporters Trust (TUST)**

TUST were awarded a grant of £20,000 from the Football Stadium Improvement Fund to help grow its number of trustees and active supporters. The 'Building the Telford Tribe' project allowed TUST to interview a cross section of Telford FC's fans, including children, families and disabled supporters, to understand how they felt the match day experience could be improved.

This exercise led to Telford United FC implementing new initiatives, including developing a family section within the ground and establishing a pre-match welcome area near local five-a-side pitches, for younger fans to use before games.

### **Case Study - Slough Town Supporters Trust (STST)**

Slough Town and the FA Skills Team partnered to run a six-week programme of coaching for primary school aged girls. The purpose of this initiative was twofold. Firstly, to encourage girls to play and, secondly, to establish a girls' team. STST contributed to the costs to enable the sessions to continue to run through until the summer.

## **TOP TIPS**

The top tips to remember when thinking of applying for funding:

- Think about what fans can bring to the table that others can't by considering projects that tap into the knowledge and passion of fans and celebrate the history of clubs and their supporters.
- A well thought out and executed project should bring the trust increased influence with important local stakeholders.
- Good PR from a community project is a great way to deflect criticism from doubters or can help the Trust if it needs to take a strong position against the club on another matter.
- Read the funding criteria, and read it again! For example, a project improving a stadium where the tenancy is secured privately will not be something a trust will be able to apply for, it would be for the entity that holds the lease.

### **Summary**

There are so many ways a supporters' trust can impact their communities and engage people, not only in sport but in a variety of other initiatives. If you have any questions about funding please don't hesitate to contact us at: [enquiries@supporters-direct.org](mailto:enquiries@supporters-direct.org)



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