

British Gliding Association



Funding often looks daunting, partly because it appears to be hit and miss - but it needn't be.

The classic route to funding failure usually starts with an excited phone call between committee members about a fortnight before the deadline for applications for a large grant that will be the answer to everyone's problems. The second element for failure is that, previously, the committee had not considered applying for a grant.

The ensuing melee will result in stress, frayed tempers and a half-baked application that can't reflect the organisation's aims. Midnight oil and goodwill will be wasted. There will be a negative impact on the Club's overall mood. To the Funder this approach will be glaringly obvious and the applicants will simply look unreliable and unprofessional.

If by some miracle, funding is secured, the organisation then runs the risk of being tied into monitoring and evaluation that will be more trouble than its worth and possibly having to run a project that, although lucrative, detracts from the Club's normal objectives and activities. This way failure will take a little longer but, never the less, it is virtually guaranteed with the real potential of embarrassment and the added drama of having to pay money back.

Following the basic principles overleaf should result in the Committee remaining in control and is more likely to result in successful applications.

ACCESSING FUNDING – BASIC PRINCIPLES

Firstly a few points to bear in mind:

1. Accessing funding is a numbers game
2. Funders want to see that you will take good care of their money and achieve their aims on their behalf
3. Funders will want to know:
 - How is their money going to be used?
 - When is it needed?
 - Who will benefit?
 - How much is required?
 - Why is it required?
 - How long will the project go on for?
 - That the answers to these questions FIT THEIR CRITERIA

So how to convince the Funders that your gliding club is worth funding?

Approach the whole thing from the other way round – work out what your club needs THEN find suitable sources of funding. Keep it really, really simple. If it starts to get complicated, it's time to stand back and take an overall look at what you are doing and why.

The copies of supporting paperwork are set out first. This is because they are sometimes the fiddliest bits to get together. If you are doing a batch of funding applications, it pays to have several photocopies of your evidence, initialled as true copies by your Chairman, ready to put with applications.

The rest are in no particular order, but the key is a holistic approach. Take time to look at all the options and work out as many ways to create solutions as possible. What are the overall aims and long term Business Plan of the club? How does a project sit within the overall aims and Business Plan of the Club? Which solution is likely to work best? It is also a good time to review your Club's livery and letterhead. Consult and take advice from the BGA Communications Officer.

Your members are extremely likely to have good ideas and projects are always more successful if everyone is involved – ensure you give your members 'ownership'; it is their club after all. This may take a little longer, but will help to bring success in a shorter time scale later on.

When it comes to taking action, working groups of 3 can be better than the whole committee; but avoid working groups of 1.

The basic principles

1. Demonstrate good governance by producing
 - Constitution or Memorandum & Articles – adopted and signed at an AGM or EGM
 - Committee – details of posts
 - Bank account – in Club's name with multiple signatures required for debits
 - Last year's accounts – audited or verified and signed as required
2. Use your Club's Business Plan and cash flow forecasts to help establish a need for projects and to show how the project fits within the overall club strategy.
3. By taking time to look at the Club's overall strategy and consulting the members before forming a project, the answers to the following questions will become much easier to answer:
 - What do you want to do?
 - When do you want to do it?
 - Why do you want to do it?
 - Who will benefit?
 - How much will it cost?
 - How long will it take?
 - What will happen after the funding stops?
4. By taking the time to look at what resources the Club has available both in terms of the business and the people involved (and remembering volunteer time), you will be able to demonstrate what the Club is doing to help itself.

Now you are in a position to seek the Funders that fit your Club's requirements. Your Club will appear professional in its approach to business. Funders will be impressed by your level of commitment to success, as demonstrated by your realistic approach to the size of the project and what you are prepared to do to help yourselves. Both organisations will then be working towards common aims and you will be able to enter into a business partnership. Club morale will benefit and the midnight oil can be preserved for planning the sorts of flights we all dream of.