

Funding Factsheet December 2007

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1. What, why, when and how much?

The why and the wherefore:

Firstly, what do you need money for? It may seem like a rather obvious question, but what exactly would you spend it on if you got it and how would it make a difference to your group?

All funders, whether they be grant giving bodies, trusts, business sponsors or patrons, will want to know why you particularly need their help and what outcome they can expect to see from their investment in you.

Think about dedicating at least one of your committee meetings to planning ahead and deciding on your aspirations and priorities as a group over the coming 3-5 years. What kind of activities do you want to engage in and why? Commissioning new music? Running workshops for disadvantaged people? More concerts in bigger venues? More expensive soloists? Touring?

What will be the impact of these activities on your group, your community, local young musicians, struggling composers, international relations? Once you have some answers to these questions, you will find it much easier to put together applications for funding which tell the funders what they want to know – namely how can you demonstrate that your projects are a GOOD THING.

Many funders (although by no means all) are unwilling to help with “core funding” and prefer to see their financing used for specific projects. This can seem like a barrier if you are looking for funding to help you carry on putting on your regular concert programme. However, if you are in need of support for your normal activities, try turning that around and asking why your concerts are not currently paying for themselves – do you need to attract a bigger audience, find a different (bigger/cheaper?) venue, change your marketing strategy, incorporate new activities into your plans? Now how might you design a project such that it helps you to address this need? An audience development project; a new website; joint high-profile concerts with other groups; lecture-concert tours? Be creative and not only will you find that you can fulfil the funders’ requirement for a discrete project, but you will be using the money effectively by creating a legacy for your group which will pay for itself over and over again.

How much?

Once you have your plans in place, you can start to draw up budgets for them. This need not be a painful and detailed exercise, and you may well already do this for your regular concert programmes. If you are new to budgeting and financial planning and it seems a little daunting, you can always contact me for assistance (in a previous life I used to do exactly this for high-street banks!). Do remember to add in a reasonable contingency to the budget (say, 15%) to allow for miscalculations and unexpected expenses.

Next ask yourselves the following questions:

- What do you currently spend money on and how much? Can you reduce these costs?
- How do you currently raise funds (including ticket sales, friends schemes etc as well as sponsorship and other funds)? How much do you raise annually at the moment? Are there strings attached to any of this money (e.g. a trust or foundation may specify that their grants can only be used for certain activities)?
- How much do you have in reserves and how much of that do you need as a cushion in case of a lean period?

Once you have identified the gap between your current income and savings and your budgeted costs, you can start to think about how to fill that gap.

When?

The important thing is to give yourselves plenty of time to research, plan and apply for funding. Some trust funds and foundations only consider applications annually whereas others invite applications at any time; many can take up to 6 months to make a decision.

Which way now?

Consider all the different avenues of funding listed in section 2 and 3 below and decide on which is the most appropriate for you. This will depend on what you want the money for, how much you will need and over what time period – many funders want you to spend the money on a specified project within a specified time frame. Another factor to consider is how much time your members have to commit to applying for funding as it can be somewhat time-consuming.

2. Sources of funding:

Be creative about choosing your funding sources and target organisations and try always to bear in mind what is in it for the funder – why would they want to support your group?

Possible sources of funding (all of which have been used by Making Music members around the country) include:

- **Awards for All**

The first port of call for most projects, you can apply for up to £10,000 of funding for up to a year from Awards for All. This fund includes contributions from both the National Lottery and Arts Council England. The application process is a little arduous – the 23-page application form and numerous supporting documents require careful thought and some advance planning. However, this remains one of the overall best places to look for funding. For details of how to apply, see the appendices.

- **Get paid for doing what you do best**

Paid concerts help to minimise the risk to your society. As well as bookings for parties, corporate events, etc. some venues may consider contracting your group for a fixed fee concert if they themselves are trying to develop. Perhaps they want to branch out into a new type of music, or maybe they want to bring in a different audience group. This can be a two-way relationship with benefits for both parties. Some Local Authorities – Norfolk County Council for instance – are prepared to offer Service Level Agreements (SLAs) which are a contract for your group to provide cultural services to the council over a specified period for an agreed fee.

- **Business sponsorship**

Think about what you can offer any business which sponsors you – it is a quid pro quo relationship between you. Think about what you stand for and use it to sell yourselves to them, such as bringing music to the local community, supporting local talent, excellence, providing leisure opportunities for their staff. How much publicity will you give them for their money? How many people come to your concerts each year and what sort of audience can a sponsor hope to advertise to through supporting you? If you can, provide potential sponsors with a 'business case' showing the likely benefit to them in return for their outlay in a language they will understand.

Can you offer them other benefits as well, such as providing music for their Christmas lunch or summer garden party, or corporate tickets to certain concerts? Rather than just money, think about tangible items which they could purchase for you and use to show their support – music stands, folders, merchandise (tea towels, tea shirts, mugs, pencils, recordings). Any of these can

be personalised with your logo and the logo of your sponsors – it provides them with longer-term publicity and you with useful assets.

Ideally, look to develop a long-term relationship with a company and get to know individuals on a personal level – it is much harder to refuse a face-to-face personal request than a 'Dear Sir or Madam' letter. It will be considerably easier to secure sponsorship if you know someone in the company so talk to your members and make use of any contacts.

- **Trusts and Foundations**

These are a great potential source of funding, but do your research! Most trusts and foundations are specific about what they will and will not consider funding. One careful, thorough, relevant and targeted application can be worth 20 cross-your-fingers-and-hope mailshots.

The appendices to this document (in a separate file) are an extensive list of relevant trusts, foundations and other funders, organised by the type of activities you might have in mind. If none of these seems to fit the bill, another good source of information is the computer search programme 'Funder Finder' (accessible by appointment at the Arts Council England Eastern office in Cambridge).

- **Local Authorities**

Whilst some councils still have community grants schemes, or arts/culture/leisure funding available, most are heavily subscribed and many councils no longer offer funding at all. However, many of those councils who no longer have grants schemes do have specialists in fundraising instead who can give you advice via telephone or email about what is available and appropriate to your situation. If your local authority is unable to offer you any support at present keep trying, their situation may well change.

- **Hospitality**

If possible at your venue, sell drinks and snacks in the interval of your concert. Bear in mind that these do not necessarily need to be alcoholic – many people would be delighted with coffee or tea and a slice of cake rather than a glass of wine which has the benefit of not needing an alcohol licence. If you do want to serve wine, you can get a temporary licence for a small cost which should easily be covered by the money made on selling the drinks as long as you give some thought to the price you charge.

If you have any willing cake-bakers in the group, consider an interval cake stall – this can also be a great idea for your rehearsals or AGM by taking it in turns to bring in homemade cakes and biscuits and selling them at the break.

- **Raffle**

Similarly to the hospitality idea, why not ask members to donate raffle prizes and hold a raffle at your concert or rehearsals.

- **Endorsement**

Ask a local celebrity to endorse your society's concerts. Many celebrities are very proud of the area they come from and of course they love to be loved. A celebrity endorsement can significantly increase audience numbers, thus generating income.

- **Ticket sales**

Firstly, consider how much you charge compared to other similar groups in the area? Can you increase your ticket prices without significantly damaging your audience numbers? Making Music members' experience is that price is often not one of the factors on which people decide whether to attend a concert, so think about reviewing your pricing structure.

If you routinely fill your concert venue, consider moving to a larger venue and selling more tickets!

- **Special offers**

Think about running special offers on concert tickets, for example a 'concert virgins' scheme, whereby anyone who has never been to one of your concerts before gets in free, or a 'generation gap' scheme where anyone who brings someone at least two generations older or younger than them gets in free. Although this will obviously not raise any money in the short term, in the long term it will bring in new audiences and therefore increase ticket sales.

Consider offering discounts or two-for-one deals for advance ticket sales – this is a very good way to guarantee an audience as if the weather turns out to be horrid or a great TV show happens to be on that night, they are more likely to switch off 'I'm a wannabe, get me onto TV' and brave the wild winds of the fens if they have already paid for their concert ticket!

- **Interest on bank account**

If you are lucky enough to have savings make sure you have them in an account where they will earn maximum interest for your group. As well as the usual high street banks it may also be worth looking at banks set up exclusively for charities, for example the Charities Aid Foundation Bank (www.cafonline.org).

- **Legacies**

Delicately encourage members and other supporters to commemorate the wonderful time they have enjoyed with the group by leaving a bequest. Of course, this is not an immediate source of funds, but it can secure the future of your group for many years to come.

- **Donations**

Make it easy for people to donate: give them information about how to do it in concert programmes, on your website, in your literature. Be sure to thank them publicly and (with their permission, of course) include a list of donors in programme credits – many people who choose to support local causes like other people to know about it!

- **Patrons/Friends/Corporate Friends schemes**

Think in terms of what you can offer friends/corporate friends, such as season tickets, special advance bookings, free live music for their office events, publicity, pre-concert talks or post-concert hospitality with the performers.

- **Member subscriptions**

How much can people realistically be expected to pay? Are you increasing your subscription levels in line with inflation? Can you introduce a higher subscription rate for people who can afford to pay more, whilst keeping a concessionary rate for those who can't stretch to more than they already pay?

- **Advertising**

Invite local businesses, private schools, music teachers and other musicians, music retailers etc to advertise in your programme. Consider offering them a discount for advertising in multiple concert programmes or for a year's advertising. Be realistic about what you charge them – should £50 buy a whole page advert in your programme? Provide them with different options (e.g. full/half/quarter page adverts; colour vs. black/white) and set the price accordingly. Alternatively, offer advertising space on your website, which would enable you to look for advertisers such as online music retailers rather than locally based businesses.

- **Hiring out your assets**

You can hire out the sheet music you own through Making Music's Music Exchange Scheme. You may well be able to hire out other equipment owned by the group too (e.g. staging, chamber organ).

- **Gift Aid**

Make sure you reclaim gift aid on all donations and member subscriptions – if you are unsure of how to do this, there is a Making Music infosheet on the subject at www.makingmusic.org.uk.

- **Fundraising Events**

Holding an annual fair, fundraising dinner or cabaret, or organising a sponsored event – e.g. sponsored busking tour around the country – can garner funds and also be enormous fun. Another fun fundraising idea is holding an auction of promises and donated items – you might be amazed at some of the hidden talents your members can offer for sale!

- **Don't forget to consider 'in-kind' support**

If you need money for a certain thing turn it around and ask yourselves how you could save money on it or even get it for free. Perhaps a local school has newly developed community facilities where you could rehearse at a cheaper rate, or maybe a local wine merchant would like to donate interval drinks in return for advertising at the concert. A local printshop might be interested in advertising in your programme for a discounted rate on the printing.

3. Additional fund-raising and money saving ideas

Fundraising ideas

- Use www.everyclick.com to raise money when searching the web if you are a registered charity
- Sell cards/tea towels/t-shirts etc based on designs by a member of the group, or record some of your concerts and put together a CD of your greatest hits to sell at concerts
- Hold a concert with a 'theme' as a hook for funding support. For example, one group held a children's concert (complete with puppetry) for which they received Awards for All funding
- Develop your audiences – this is more long-term and strategic than a one-off project but can make a real difference to income
- Performing societies: hold a 'come and play' or 'come and sing' day – music hire is relatively cheap as long as the day does not include a performance
- Orchestras: hire yourselves out to choirs as an accompaniment; price yourselves such that it works out cheaper for the choir than hiring individual players

Money saving ideas

All groups:

- Club together with other groups to book soloists (possibly as a mini-tour)
- Convert your mailing list to an electronic list to save on postage costs
- Put on a collaborative concert: increase the audience, split the costs

Performing groups:

- Choirs: it may work out cheaper to use an amateur orchestra as your accompaniment instead of booking individual players to form an orchestra



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4. Further information

The following additional information on fund-raising is available to Making Music members:

- Information Sheet 40 – Raising Funds Locally
- Information Sheet 40b – Applying for Trust Funds
- How to... Develop New Audiences

Available from the members' area of the website at www.makingmusic.org.uk or by telephoning the Making Music office on 0870 903 3780

More information on Making Music's services and how we can help your group can be found:

- on the Making Music website www.makingmusic.org.uk
- on the Eastern regional website www.makingmusic.org.uk/eastern
- in Information Sheet 97 – Making the Most of Your Membership (available to members on the members' area of the website at www.makingmusic.org.uk or by telephoning the Making Music office on 0870 903 3780).
- by contacting me at joanna@makingmusic.org.uk.

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