

Fundraising

The Almshouse Association receives enquiries regularly from its members concerning how they might go about raising funds for a project they wish to undertake.

It is hoped that the following guidance will provide you with some helpful tips to start your fundraising journey.

- Identify clearly the project that you are fund raising for. If it is the 'running' of the almshouses or maintenance set out clearly what is to be funded and the impact on the residents.
- Form a Fundraising Committee consisting not only of the trustees but others who may be co-opted due to their connections and influence within the local area.
- Hold a brainstorming session and invite local business people to share ideas, formulate a strategy and research sources of possible funding.
- Compile a 'Case for Support' document which should not be expensive to produce. This key document should clearly set out the origins and background to the charity, its role in the community and how its existence makes an essential difference to the lives of those in need whom the charity accommodates. The nature of the project for which the funding is required should be clearly stated and above all the beneficial outcomes that the project would bring, i.e. how it would benefit your residents and/or the local community. Remember to highlight any unique or innovative aspects of your project, this might include partnerships already formed in support of your project or focusing on a sustainable future.
- Approach local businesses and, if possible, identify local wealthy private donors.
- Approach your local 'Community Foundation' and Local Council who hold funds for charities.
- Offer talks to community groups, The Round Table and other fund-raising groups.
- Research local private trusts.
- Keep the local community involved by holding 'open days' or coffee mornings so that local people are aware of the almshouses. Raising awareness and raising funds are subjects which are interrelated and there is no substitute for effective, on-going PR to gain the interest and support of others.

- Generate further local publicity through the local press and radio.
- Make applications to charitable trusts and foundations, details of which can be found online as well as at the local library. 'A Guide to the Major Trusts' published by the Directory of Social Change (<https://www.dsc.org.uk/publication/the-guide-to-major-trusts-2025-26/>) is but one example of the sources of information available. This provides a detailed guide to grant funding. It provides information on over 1,000 of the largest UK funders, which award a combined annual total of over £7.23 billion. Many of the trusts operate within set criteria and support whether by age, geographical location or causes involving different categories such as the arts, health, education, animals and so on. In the case of almshouse charities the main categories aside from location are disadvantaged people, general charitable purposes, housing, older people, heritage and social welfare.
- Target your approaches as far as potential funders are concerned. For example, in the case of applications to charitable trusts, it is vital that the letter of approach is tailor-made to attract the interest and support of the recipient.
- When preparing a funding application remember the following guidelines:
 - Be specific about your project plans and aims
 - Write in plain English – use short sentences and avoid acronyms and jargon
 - Focus your application on the potential funder's priorities
 - Provide evidence that your project is needed
 - Include all the information the funder has asked for and any additional information or documents they require, such as your most recent accounts or any supporting plans for your project
 - Make your budget as specific as possible and include details of any other funding or resources already secured for your project
 - Take extra care to meet any deadline for funding applications – late applications will not be considered even if they are fantastic!
- If a potential funder has an application form, use it! If not, you will need to write a letter. Whilst it is helpful to produce a template letter, ensure that it is then tailored to the aims and criteria of the organisation you are applying to, and how your project will fit into these. Keep your letter to a maximum of two sides of A4. Focus on providing relevant information about your charity, what you do and why it fits into the priorities of the funder.

- Enquire whether The Almshouse Association might be able to consider granting a loan to make up a shortfall in funding.
- The Almshouse Association has prepared a flyer on Grants, Loans and Funding which will provide you with a good starting point of who you might be able to contact to start your fundraising campaign.
- Good luck!