Local Trust
trusting
local
people

STIR to ACTION

Find and access funding

A COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



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WHAT IS FUNDRAISING?

Fundraising is seeking financial support to pay for the great projects you're delivering in your community.

There are different ways to fundraise, each with its own process and benefits.

GRANTS

Pots of money, usually for a specific project.

How to access: Write a funding bid (apply); sign up to online grant matching platforms (find out more on page 5).

CROWDFUNDING

Contributions from a 'crowd' – usually lots of smaller donations from a large number of people

How to access: Run a crowdfunding campaign.

DONATIONS

Contributions from individuals, for example through events, online fundraising, or one-off donations.

How to access: Usually by asking people, running events, or signing up to online platforms.

MATCH FUNDING

Pots of money, conditional on first raising money from another source.

How to access: Usually via application or crowdfunding.

TOP TIP

It's important to try more than one fundraising method on your fundraising journey and to have a good funding mix! (See pages 10-11 for more info)









Left: Portland Inn Project (Photo: Glen Stoker)

Why fundraise for community action?

- Whether it's creating a community hub or improving local housing or services, fundraising will enable you to **do more in your community**.
- Many methods of fundraising provide an opportunity to **build awareness and increase engagement** with your organisation.
- This could also help you **grow your team of volunteers** – as some people may be able to give their time, rather than money, to support you.
- When people put money behind the work you're doing, it's **real validation** of your vision for change.
- Depending on what you're doing and where you're based, there may be **match funding** available to you, to make your money go further.
- Often, once you've raised money from one source, this can **attract even more funding** from other sources.

How to find and access funding opportunities

Where to look for funding

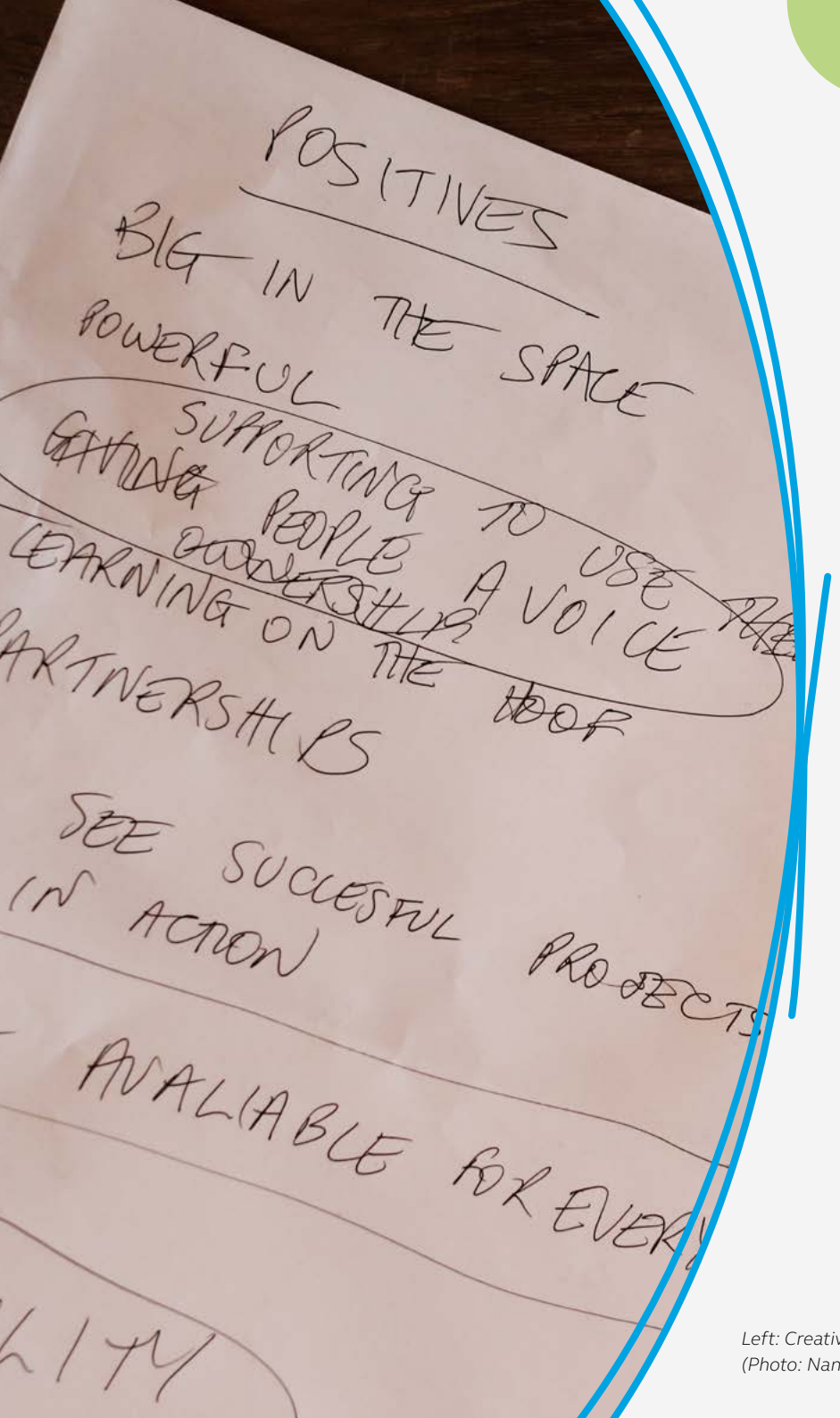


- Sign up for **funding alerts** from your local authorities and charitable foundations, or follow them on social media.
- **Search social media** for funding opportunities for the type of work you're doing.
- Sign up to **grant databases** (such as Grants Online) or grant matching platforms like ActionFunder, Neighbourly or Localgiving.
- Search for **match funding** opportunities on crowdfunding platforms, or from organisations within your local community.
- **Talk to people** in your community! Many housing providers, local authorities, or local charities could be interested in supporting your community project – it's always worth starting a conversation.





Above: West End Million Big Local (Photo: James O Jenkins)



How to access funding



1. Create a **basic plan**: outline what you need money for, how much you need, and when you need to receive the money.
2. Decide which **type(s) of fundraising** are best matched with your plan.
3. Start searching for the right opportunity(ies), e.g. grants available in your area.
4. Be sure you **understand any funding criteria**, application process, turnaround timescales, or other considerations.
5. Take time to **prepare your application** well before the deadline; leave yourself time to make revisions or improvements.
6. **Celebrate your successes**, and get to work in delivering your project.
7. Not successful? **Ask for feedback**, make adjustments to your plans or application, and try again!

Left: Creative Civic Change event (Photo: Nana Varveropoulou)

Top tips for finding and accessing funding

- Be funding ready. Have a clear budget, plan, and outcomes for what you will use the money for.
- Speak with other organisations or groups in your area to find out how they approach fundraising, and if they can share any helpful advice.
- Work collaboratively wherever possible, with colleagues, friends, or anyone who shares your aims. Fundraising is easier, and more enjoyable, when it's done in a team.
- Have access to a bank account for your organisation, or a trusted local organisation who can receive funds on your behalf. The Social Change Agency offers a great service for community groups who want help managing their money.
- Big project? Break it down into smaller, more manageable and fundable phases.



Left: South Bermondsey Big Local (Photo: Lucy Wines)

WRITING A GOOD FUNDING BID

You've searched and found a grant opportunity that is right for you. What's next? Follow this plan for the best chance at success, within a timeline that works for you.

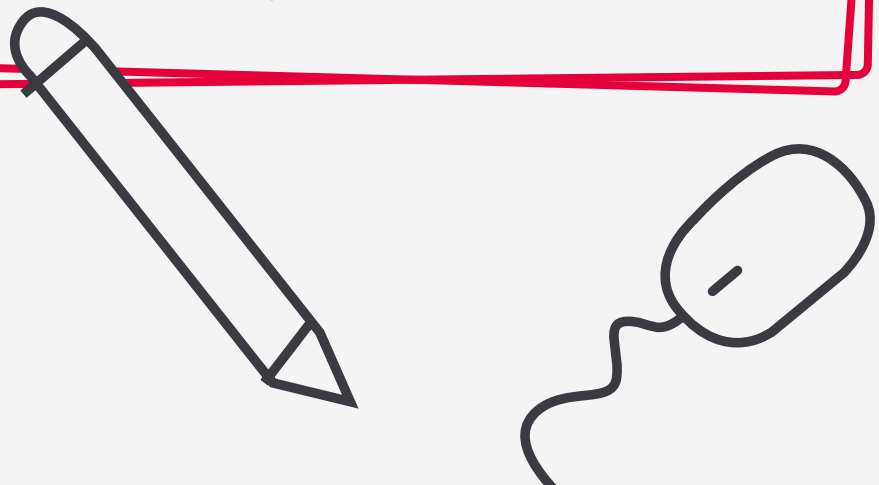
STEP 1

Read all the relevant information and documents associated with the fund or grant programme.

- Make sure that your organisation is eligible to apply.
- If you are not sure, contact the funder to ask.

Working back from the submission deadline, make a basic plan.

- Who will be involved in writing the bid?
- How long will you need?
- What supporting information do you need to pull together?



STEP 2

Work through the application form and make some notes.

- What information is needed in each section?
- Which questions/sections will be easy to answer? Which will require more time?
- Do you need information from anyone else to support the application?

Make a list of all the documents you will need to submit.

- This could be bank statements, annual accounts, or documents relating to your organisation.
- Ask others who have access to the documents to help you get them all in one secure shared folder.



Above: Hackney Wick Big Local (Photo: Andy Aitchison)

STEP 3

Write the first draft of your application. If possible, share with colleagues or friends for feedback.

Pull together a budget associated with your application.

- Some funders require more detail than others, so make sure you're clear on what's needed.

STEP 4

Review your draft application to see where you can make improvements, or if there are still gaps that need to be filled.

- Incorporate any feedback you've received.

Finalise your project budget.

- Have you included all the costs you need to deliver your project?
- Use estimates where appropriate.



Left: Whitley Bay Big Local (Photo: Paul Norris)

STEP 5

Submit your application and supporting documents.

Set a reminder in your diary on the date you expect to hear the outcome of your application.

- If you haven't heard by the expected date, email or call the funder to check in.

STEP 6

Application successful? Share the good news with friends, colleagues, and others in your community!

Application unsuccessful? Don't worry – many funding bids are unsuccessful.

- Don't be discouraged. Start to think about the next funding opportunities.
- Ask the funder for feedback. This can be invaluable in improving your funding applications.



ADDING OTHER TYPES OF FUNDING TO THE MIX

Grants are almost always competitive and over-subscribed. While writing bids is a great way to raise a portion of the money you need, you should include other types of fundraising in your funding mix.

Funding source	Good for	Why try it	Top tips
Crowdfunding	• One-off, discrete pieces of work. • Projects with clear community benefit. • Fundraising for unincorporated groups.	• Great for building awareness, engagement, and validation for your work. • Relatively low risk, easy to access. • Can help build your team of volunteers or your customer base. • Unlocks multiple pots of match funding with one campaign.	• Plan ahead. • Research platforms to choose the right one for you. • Get others to help you run the campaign. • Focus on your story, and how it connects with your supporters. • Learn from other crowdfunders. • Put your crowdfunding page in your email signature.
Other online fundraising (easyfundraising)	• Small donations to boost your income. • Fundraising for unincorporated groups.	• Super simple to set up. • Always fundraising for you in the background.	• Remind people to add your organisation as their chosen cause when doing their online shopping. • Put up posters, add it to your website, or create regular social media updates.

Funding source	Good for	Why try it	Top tips
Grant matching platforms (ActionFunder, Neighbourly, Localgiving)	• Getting your idea or project in front of relevant grant makers, donors, and other support. • Reaching beyond your immediate community or network for fundraising.	• Access multiple funds with one application. • Access add-on fundraising support and resources. • Always matching you with funding opportunities in the background.	• Research the available funds on the platforms to make sure they're relevant to your work. • The platforms match you with funding using an algorithm, so be specific in your application and use several relevant key words that match the funds' criteria. • Update your profile and application form regularly as your work progresses.
Fundraising events	• Community engagement. • Fundraising for unrestricted funding. • Funding for unincorporated groups.	• Great for getting to know people in your community. • Great for recruiting volunteers and other non-financial support. • Puts the 'fun' in fundraising!	• Budget carefully. You want to make events as profitable as possible, while also giving attendees a great experience. • Ask local businesses for donations (food, venue, supplies, raffle prizes) in return for marketing their goodwill at your event. • Make sure everyone in your community knows about it! Get the word out on local news, radio, social media groups, notice boards … everywhere that people look for information locally.



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Better Communities Bradford

Better Communities Bradford (BCB) have successfully developed a fundraising and income strategy encompassing a variety of sources, to continue the work of Greenmoor Big Local which began in 2012.

BCB have pursued – and secured – grant funding for a number of services and activities, while obtaining contracts from the local authority for others. For example:

- BCB was awarded two rounds of **grant funding** from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop and run their sewing classes. These classes help local women acquire new skills and enable them to generate an income by providing sewing services. They also offer a safe, local environment for women to engage in social activities and conversation.
- BCB have **secured contracts** from Bradford Council to provide services such as day care, allowing them to deliver essential support to residents and providing the organisation with a steady, predictable source of income.

"IT'S IMPORTANT NOT TO HAVE ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET."

Mazhar Ellahi, founding member of Greenmoor

Left: Big Local Brookside (Photo: Andy Aitchison)



Other key factors in BCB's fundraising journey include:

- Negotiating with the council to secure **a long-term lease** on the building where they are based. This is something that funders often look for – especially in regard to core, unrestricted or long-term funding.
- **Keeping overheads low**, especially in the early days, to ensure services could continue running in periods where there was less income. BCB is run and supported by a mix of part-time staff and volunteers. As Mazhar explains, as you grow your range of income, you can consider increasing your staff.
- Using some of their funding to pay five years of **rent in advance**, which provided ongoing security and gave BCB more flexibility in how they used other sources of funding.
- **Developing local partnerships.** For example, BCB have worked closely with Scholemoor Beacon, and provided funding and support to help them acquire the local community centre from Bradford Council through a Community Asset Transfer process.

Saving Stretford Public Hall

In 2013, Trafford Council announced it was looking to dispose of the Stretford Public Hall building. In response, a small group of friends decided to campaign, to keep the Victorian building for the good of the community.

How did they fundraise to save the hall and make it sustainable?

The group's fundraising journey consisted of a mix of start-up grants and loans, development grants, revenue funding, and a community share offer with match funding.

They raised more than £150,000 in community shares directly from the Stretford community and beyond, and over £500,000 in grants from funders including Power to Change, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Trafford Housing Trust, Biffa, Virador, Coops UK and the Co-op Foundation.

That initial group of friends became the Friends of Stretford Public Hall, who manage what has become a multi-purpose community and arts venue, providing a meeting space for a range of community groups. With over 30 tenants, mainly artists and creatives, the hall hosts weekly, low-cost wellbeing classes, art sessions and musical groups.

The community of Stretford, meanwhile, has been revitalised through the provision of local volunteer opportunities and jobs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the friends continued to help the community, with the hall acting as a mutual aid hub providing food and support to those most in need.

JUST THE BEGINNING

This toolkit has been created to help you fundraise for community action. Fundraising is an essential way to pay for the amazing projects you're delivering in your community.



If you've found this toolkit useful, share it with someone else who might too!

SHARE IT

About Big Local

Big Local is a resident-led funding programme, providing 150 areas in England with £1.15m each to spend across 10 to 15 years to create lasting change in their neighbourhoods. The programme is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

About Local Trust

Local Trust is a place-based funder supporting communities to transform and improve their lives and the places in which they live. We believe there is a need to put more power, resources, and decision making into the hands of communities.

We do this by trusting local people. Our aims are to demonstrate the value of long term, unconditional, resident-led funding, and to draw on the learning from our work delivering the Big Local programme to promote a wider transformation in the way policy makers, funders and others engage with communities and place.

localtrust.org.uk

@LocalTrust

Front cover images:
Left: Hackney Wick Big Local (Photo: Andy Aitchison) Right: Big Local Connects (Photo: Richard Richards)

About Stir to Action

Stir to Action is a national co-operative infrastructure body that focuses on strategic economic development projects, ensuring the future new economy is more diverse and representative.

Stir to action have worked alongside Big Local communities to identify and diversify income and fundraising sources through 1:1 support and events.

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Canopi | 7-14 Great Dover Street | London SE1 4YR | General enquiries 020 3588 0565
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