

Applying for Lottery Funding

In recent years a number of bridge clubs have successfully applied for Lottery Funding. Projects that have been supported in this way range from the purchase of a duplicating machine to refurbishment of club premises. The process can be long and complicated, but determination often pays.

There are a number of different Lottery Funders in the UK and a complete listing can be found at <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/> where you may wish to check and see which one might be the best to approach for your particular project.

Most commonly, bridge clubs will usually wish to stress that they are providing a useful service to the local community with benefits for mental and social health.

The Awards for All scheme specialises in funding small, local community-based projects. Its website www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/ contains much useful advice which should be studied carefully before considering an application. In particular the Guide for Applicants is required study. Both this and the Application Form can be downloaded from www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/apply.html

The other main funder most likely to be appropriate for bridge clubs is the Big Lottery Fund whose website www.biglotteryfund.org.uk provides full information.

Experience has shown that:

- the project must be specific and fully costed. Preparation needs to be done thoroughly.

- the application form must be completed fully and carefully. Each and every point must be responded to in great detail.

- incomplete and inaccurate forms are rejected, and clubs may have to re-apply more than once, so patience and perseverance are essential.

- the club must be a community organisation accessible to all, e.g. the club constitution must not permit the committee to determine who can be a member and who cannot.

the constitution must contain explicit rules for control of club finances, e.g. cheques must require the signatures of two officers of the club.

Although not essential, it may help to obtain charitable status for the club first, noting that for clubs renting a hall for one or two sessions per week the cost of becoming a charity will probably outweigh the benefits. Help and advice on this are available on the Charities Commission website at www.charity-commission.gov.uk. The EBU has a wealth of information on its website about charitable status and gives practical help with the application process including an example of an approved governing document, see <http://www.ebu.co.uk/club-charitable-status>. For further assistance please contact Jonathan Lillycrop, the EBU Club Liaison Officer on 01296 317206 or email jonathan@ebu.co.uk.

It also pays to seek guidance from your local Voluntary Advice organisation, contact details from www.navca.org.uk - the advice given is invaluable.

Fundraising Service for Bridge Clubs

If your club is in need of funds for a project which is important for the club and the members there is support near to hand - John Harris of Third Sector Consultancy. John is a full member of the Institute of Fundraising and is bound by their Code of Practice. John has recently worked with two bridge clubs – raising £10,000 for each through Big Lottery Awards for All.

One project was to refurbish and re-equip new premises and the other was to fund a fast track programme to bring new members into the game and the club.

To complete an application takes one day for Third Sector Consultancy and this covers: liaison and discussions about the need for the funding, developing any steps the club needs to take (e.g. consultation to evidence the need for the project) and writing the application. The club has to be constituted but does not have to be a registered charity. The cost would be £350 (no VAT).

You can contact John on 01943 463047
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www.thirdsectorconsultancy.org