**FUNDING SCHOOL GROUNDS IMPROVEMENTS & ACTIVITIES**

Funding for school grounds improvements can come from a variety of sources, including large grant making bodies much as the National Lottery, or from small school events, such as a sponsored walk. Where you source your funding from very much depends on what you want to do and who is involved in or who benefits from your project.

**General advice on applying for funding**

The application process for funding bodies varies tremendously, some simply ask for a letter outlining your project whilst others may involve a time consuming and detailed twenty page form. Make sure you:

* have the time to undertake the application
* have all the information required before you start
* meet the funders criteria, including: organisational status, match funding requirements and outcomes.

Funding bids can fail due to incomplete or ill-matched applications and missed deadlines.

**Involve the whole school**

Successful school grounds projects are well thought out and consider the needs of the whole school community. Remember to consider and involve groups that use the school site outside school time as this may make the project of interest to a wider range of funders and supporters. This includes pupils, teachers, support staff, parents / other family and the local community, who may be able to use the grounds, as well as individuals, organisations or businesses with links to the school.

The more people that are involved the greater the resources for you to tap into and the more likely you are to succeed with grant applications as funders like to see evidence of consultation and need. Funders are likely to want to see evidence of how your project:

* meets their own aims, objectives and criteria
* fits into the school development plan and local strategies, such as those focused on health and well-being.
* delivers educational elements and links to the national curriculum.

**Planning is key to success**

As with any project, planning is your key to success. It is a very good idea to establish a management group for your project with members from all parts of the school community. Once you have calculated the costs of the work you would like to do it is important to develop a fundraising strategy. A fundraising strategy should:

* be in line with the aims and objectives of the project – this will help you to avoid being funding-led which could mean you compromise your project
* have realistic timescales and target dates – it is worth noting that many funders have long lead times so you will need to make allowance for this
* breakdown the projects into manageable chunks this allows flexibility and successes to be achieved early on which is important for the morale of the project team
* include funds to manage the project in the long term i.e. maintenance of the school grounds
* be reviewed and amended periodically or following funding application outcomes or fundraising events.

**Other hints and tips**

1. Don’t forget to consider gifts in kind – carry out a skill survey to see what skills and knowledge you can draw on in your school community
2. Approach local businesses for sponsorship, such as materials or monetary sponsorship. Requests from pupils may be more successful
3. Consider re-using materials in your project, such as paving stones, old bricks, unwanted plants - from the school site or from parents or partners
4. Organise an event – there is an endless list of events that can raise lots of money, some for relatively little effort. Events such as sponsored walks, sponsored silences, non-uniform days, cake sales, discos, fun days, quiz nights, plant sales and karaoke evenings to name but a few
5. Speak to any individuals who are linked with initiatives at the school such as healthy schools, walk to school schemes etc. They may be able to draw on funding such as money linked to promoting healthy eating which could pay for a growing area

**Other sources of help and support**

Contact your Local Authority’s External Funding Officer or the local CVS (Council for Voluntary Services) as they may be able to help you locate funding or allow you to use a grant search database. Your local Community Foundation will offer a range of support and information on funding sources:

* Cambridgeshire <http://cambscf.org.uk/home.html>
* Essex <http://www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk/>
* Hertfordshire <http://www.hertscf.org.uk/>
* Luton & Bedfordshire <http://www.blcf.org.uk/>
* Norfolk <http://www.norfolkfoundation.com/>
* Suffolk <http://suffolkcf.org.uk/>

Search online: as well as helping you to identify sources of funding some websites will also give you advice on fundraising.

**Specific Funding Sources**

*Below is a selection of funding sources to which schools can apply. As details of schemes change regularly please check the funding sources own website before starting an application process*

**Tesco Bags of Help Grants Programme**

The money raised from the 5p bag charge in Tesco stores in England, Wales and Scotland is being used to pay for a large number of local projects to improve green spaces in communities. Projects that will get the green light as a result of the funding will include building new pocket parks, sports facilities, woodland walks and community gardens. Schools are eligible to apply for grounds improvements

Funds available: £500-£2000

Administration of the local funding is being managed by Groundwork and for support and advice available via Groundwork East please check our website: <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/east/blogs/bags-of-help-current-east>

For information on the national scheme as a whole or to make an application visit: <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme>

**One Stop Stores – Carriers for Causes**

Groundwork is working with One Stop stores to administer the Carriers for Causes grants initiative, to fund good causes within two miles of a One Stop shop.

The types of projects funded will be very broad and will cover the direct costs needed to deliver the project, this could be buying litter pickers and bags for a community cleanup days, plants, spades and forks to plant up a new community garden, the cost of a minibus for a day trip for a community group or the materials needed to paint a room at the local hospice.

Funds available: Grants of up to £1000

For more information on the national scheme or to make an application visit:

<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/national-grants/carriers-for-causes/>

**Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All**

BIG Awards for All England offers grants between £300 and £10,000 for projects that improve communities, and the lives of people within them. There is a relatively simple application process and a commitment to provide a decision within ten weeks.

Exclusions: Awards for All cannot support activities or services which the school has a statutory responsibility to provide. Awards for All looks to support activities that take place before or after school, during lunch breaks and in school holidays. If you're planning to apply to this funder, make sure that your application clearly states that the facilities you create will be accessible outside school hours and/or may be used by the wider community. Successful bids have been made for after school gardening clubs and grounds improvements which have been implemented by parents and partners outside school time

Funds available: £300 - £10,000

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/awards-for-all-england>

**Tree Council – Trees for Schools Fund**

N.B. CLOSED FOR 2019 but check website early in 2020 (usually opens April/May)

Projects must fall between £100 and £700. Children under the age of 16 must be ACTIVELY involved in the planting process. Schools must be local authority run or registered as a 'not for profit’ organisation (including a community interest company, a charity organisation or a social enterprise). The school must be able to raise 25% of the planting costs. Hedge plants and willows are not eligible for funding. This programme will only fund up to 4 fruit trees on semi-vigorous, vigorous and very vigorous rootstocks Planting must take place during National Tree Week (or as soon as possible afterwards) Applications in respect of work already carried out are not eligible.

Funds available: £100 - £700. Funding is only offered once a year and the deadline for applications is usually March.

<http://www.treecouncil.org.uk>

**Ernest Cook Trust**

The Ernest Cook Trust is one of the UK’s leading outdoor learning charities. All grants awarded from 2019 will be for environmental education projects, outdoor learning and ‘learning from the land’. The Trustees would like to see applicants addressing key global concerns through educational projects which focus on issues such as (but not exclusive to):

* connecting with nature
* climate change
* environmental pollution
* loss of biodiversity
* farming and food production
* renewable energy
* mental and physical wellbeing
* social justice

As of October 2019 two grant schemes are open (apprenticeship & scholarship grants and outdoor learning officer grants). More new grant streams will be phased in over the next few months.

Please note that The Ernest Cook Trust only funds projects within the UK. Grants are not made to individuals, agricultural colleges, pre-school groups, independent schools or local authorities and Grants are not made retrospectively.

For more information visit:

<http://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/grants/>

**Local School Nature Grants**

The Local School Nature Grants Programme includes up to £500 worth of outdoor resources, which can be chosen from a mix of over 100 different products.

The packages offer a wide mix of products to appeal to a broad range of ages, are customisable, enabling Infant, Primary and Secondary schools to choose from a menu of items which best suit their learners and their setting.

The project is funded by Postcode Local Trust, which receives funding from players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

Key information about the grants:

* The total spend on products cannot exceed £500
* All prices include VAT and delivery
* Any underspend will be used to help further schools partake in the project and cannot be reimbursed to the school
* Schools are welcome to select the same item multiple times, as long as the £500 budget is not exceeded
* Training is delivered on your school site

For more information visit:

<https://www.ltl.org.uk/projects/local-school-nature-grants/#nature-grant>

**Wooden Spoon – the children’s charity of rugby**

Projects must enhance and support the lives of children and young people (under the age of 25) who are disadvantaged physically, mentally or socially. They must work directly with children and young people and have a positive influence on their lives as a result of the activities or service provided.

Eligible projects include:

* health and wellbeing - no child should miss out on the health and wellbeing benefits of sport.
* sensory rooms and gardens – projects to enthral, engage and excite young minds by stimulating children’s senses.
* specialist equipment and facilities - providing firm foundations for brighter futures by backing building works and tackling transport and activity aids.
* playground and outdoor activities – projects that value the power of play in learning new skills.
* educational projects – engaging socially disadvantaged children and young people not in education, employment or training.

While there is neither a minimum nor maximum grant level, it is unlikely projects of a physical nature under £5,000 in value will have sufficient substance and scale to qualify under the “projected life span” criteria.

<https://woodenspoon.org.uk>

**Elspeth Thompson Bursary**

Administered by Royal Horticultural Society. Value up to £5,000. It is intended to support community gardening projects aimed at bringing the community together by the sharing and acquiring of horticultural knowledge and skills, and by inspiring a love of gardening across all age groups. Closing date for applications is 31 December and applications are considered in February of each year.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/bursaries-grants/elspeth-thompson-bursary>

**Asda Foundation**

Reports that it gives to charities and not for profit organisations. No figures identified.

<https://www.asdafoundation.org/applying-for-funding/top-up-funding-grants>

**Other organisations lists of funding sources**

As well as the details provided above we have found on other organisations websites lists of potential funding sources. Links to these are detailed below.

<http://www.matta.co.uk/useful-information/grants-and-funding>

<https://www.api-play.org/resources/funding/>

*Groundwork East accepts no responsibility for the content of websites other than its own. A link to another website is there to provide possible further sources of information but should not be regarded as an endorsement of that organisation. At the time of writing the information given was accurate.*