

## COMMUNITY BUILDINGS & VILLAGE HALLS

When looking at Community Buildings (including Village Halls) there are many points to consider. The information below has been divided into two sections:

- Project Development
- Funding

### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Organisations wanting to apply for funding to develop, renovate or repair a community building or village hall need to consider dividing the project into stages and dealing with each one in turn.

#### Stage One: Feasibility Study

A Feasibility study is the first stage of a project. It is the preliminary study of the project to be undertaken and outlines the likelihood of success.

A feasibility study identifies:

The **Need** for the project.

This will involve evidence of need such as details of open meetings, community consultation exercises, user surveys and questionnaires, local support etc - anything that illustrates support for the project. Groups need to focus on the services and activities that the project will facilitate. Funders are not interested in the building per se only in its benefit to the community.

The **Constitutional Implications** of the project:

- Trust Deeds/Constitution: where are they and what restrictions lay within? Do they need to be adopted in any way? How to do this?
- Length of the lease? If this is for less than 21 years, it is regarded as short term and funders will not be willing to fund the project;
- Ownership of the property? There needs to be a clear and formal agreement, otherwise funders will be unwilling to get involved;
- Is it a listed building. If it is or has special architectural features, please contact the Listed Buildings Officer at the Local Authority who may also have details about specific grants.

The **Project Requirements:**

What are the implications of the project with regards the building?  
Does it require internal remodelling? Will the project increase the

size of the hall? reduce the number of rooms? Ensure that you consider disabled access and that where necessary, plans meet standards outlined within the DDA.

**The Project Details:**

At this stage you need fairly detailed drawings that will suffice your options appraisal.

**The Options Appraisal** for your project:

Organisations need to explore as many options as possible for the building ranging from doing nothing, to a complete rebuild. Each option should have advantages, disadvantages and cost implications. See below for a couple of examples:

**The Managerial requirements** of the project.

Village Hall committees are very good at managing small scale projects, but are they able to manage a larger more detailed development? The project may require professional management either contracted or in-kind. If a professional fee is involved, it will need to be costed into the project.

**The Timescale** of the project:

This needs to be realistic and take into account many different time factors ranging from time to apply to funders, time restrictions on any funding already secured to the time commitment of the volunteers.

The project timescale and development must be realistic otherwise people will lose faith and will not be willing to see the project through.

**The Permissions** required:

Are you allowed to do what you want to do? Permission could be required from:

- Landlords. If the hall is leasehold, the landlord will need to approve renovations. The lease will also state what the charity is allowed to do;
- Planning permission. This must be secured before applying to funders. It may be advisable to ask the local Parish Council to apply on behalf of the village hall as they are entitled to 50% discount on planning application fees;
- Restrictive Covenants: these cannot be ignored and must be either abided by or addressed. In some cases these can be removed but it will take time!

**The cost** of your project:

The costs of each stage need to be identified and logged from the start – from the photocopying costs to the architect's fees for commissioning drawings of the preferred option.

The feasibility study is now complete and **Stage Two: Project Plan** now needs to be developed encompassing details of the following:

- The Organisation
- The Project
- The Budget
- The Timetable
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Future
- Other Information
- See Business Planning Fact Sheet

## FUNDING

If the project is for a major scheme of improvements then look at a phased Funding package:

- a) Building refurbishment: heating and lighting upgrade, entrance area improvements, toilets and changing rooms.
  - b) Kitchen refurbishment
  - c) Pre-school area: classroom and toilets
  - d) Anything else?
- Improvements to the fabric of the building will increase its value. Funders will therefore normally expect applications for building work to be submitted by the owners, unless the groups using the premises have long-term leases for their exclusive use of parts of the property and ensure that you allocate specific costs or a specific part of the project per funder.
  - Larger funders should be contacted first for the main scheme and smaller and more local funders for the smaller costs or specific items. Approach funders in priority order.
  - The community groups using the building can usefully apply for funding for any equipment, furniture or fittings that are needed, this does not need to be the Village Hall Committee. They could do this individually e.g. pre-school group applying for the children's toilet fittings or for furniture for the classroom they will be using **or** as a consortium, with one group (e.g. the one that uses the kitchen most often) making the application on behalf of everyone who uses it. Applications would need to cover all the relevant costs (e.g. fridge, cooker, crockery and cooking utensils, etc).
  - If the building is listed or has special architectural features, the Heritage Lottery Fund may also be able to help (see details below).

## Points To Emphasise In Funding Applications

- The amount of careful preparation undertaken and the professional advice obtained (e.g. building survey or a 5 year plan);
- Any previous work completed. When? How much?;
- The users survey and community consultation undertaken, and the level of local support and interest these demonstrate (ensure it is current);
- The wide age range of groups using the building (show age percentage breakdown if you can);
- The wide range of services/activities being provided;
- The extent to which the refurbishment work will enable you to increase the use of the building and improve the environment for those using it (particularly relevant to younger and older visitors);
- The amount of money you have already raised within your own local (but very small) community; it's not just the cash, but the level of local interest and support that this demonstrates that will impress funders.

### Top Tips:

- Get groups to consider the flexible use of existing facilities to address needs – explore options such as the multi-use of buildings;
- Remind groups to keep records of all funders they approach and what the response is. Many funders will not accept applications from successful groups within a given timescale. This can also apply to unsuccessful applicants too;
- Try to access professional support free for a particular piece of work (e.g. options appraisal/feasibility study) through the various business support networks;
- Have an Energy audit on the building undertaken to help make the building more (environmentally) sustainable.

## FURTHER HELP

### Advice/Support:

- Village Hall Adviser: Carl Glynn  
Tel: 01768 869525  
Email: [carlglenn@ruralcumbria.org.uk](mailto:carlglenn@ruralcumbria.org.uk)

- **Cumbria CVS Development Officers:**  
Eden: Jozi Brown  
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West Cumbria: Amanda Crane  
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Barrow: Jacqueline Jewula  
Tel: 01229 823144

- Local Authority Access Officers:

Allerdale:	Mike Serginson	01900 326 504
Barrow:	Kevin Morrison	01229 894 256
Carlisle:	Margaret Easton	01228 817 183
Copeland:	Heather Morrison	01946 852 692
Eden:	Ray Beare	01768 212 159
S.Lakeland:	Alun Brown	01539 717 191

- Energy Audits  
Cafs: Phil Davies/Richard Suddaby  
Tel: 01768 210276

National Energy Action (NEA)  
Alex Fowler/Arthur Scott  
Tel: 0191 261 5677  
Email: [Alex.fowler@nea.org.uk](mailto:Alex.fowler@nea.org.uk)  
[Arthur.scott@nea.org.uk](mailto:Arthur.scott@nea.org.uk)

- ProHelp: David Andrews  
Tel: 01900 825760  
[www.cumbriafoundation.org.uk](http://www.cumbriafoundation.org.uk)
- DT's Low Carbon Buildings Programme  
[www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk](http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk)
- [www.renewablesnorthwest.co.uk](http://www.renewablesnorthwest.co.uk)

**Resources:**

- Village Hall Fact sheets: Visit website: [www.ruralcumbria.org](http://www.ruralcumbria.org)
- Charity Commission Publications:  
CC18 Use of Church Halls for Village Halls & other Charitable  
Purposes  
RS9 Village Halls and Community Centre