

# SLCVO

Skye and Lochalsh Council for  
Voluntary Organisations

# Making Strong Funding Applications

**a guide to communicating your case for support**

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# TODAYS SESSION

## AIMS

- To **increase your confidence** in your approach to applying for funding
- Give you a **better understanding** as to why funding applications are not always successful
- Equip you with the **information** you need to develop robust strategic plans & successful funding bids

## CONTENT

- Preparation & planning
- Gathering evidence
- Costing your project
- Identifying suitable funding sources
- Making your funding application
- What happens afterwards

*What would you like to get from today's session?*

“Unfortunately, the application was not successful on this occasion.”

“Thank you for applying but we’re fully committed already.”

“The applicant is not **eligible** because of its legal form, lack of charity status, size or geographical remit.”

“We’ve changed our strategy, and you no longer fit.”

# Making sure your house is in order



Strong committee (board) with good range of skills



Track record of accountable and transparent financial handling



Regular reviews of your governing document, policies & procedures



Engagement led service development



Understand and embed sustainability into your strategic planning



Human rights & equality embedded into everything you do

# PLANNING & BUILDING YOUR CASE FOR SUPPORT

Writing funding applications is much easier - and you are more likely to be successful- if you have a strong case for support and a robust project plan

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Being clear about what you do and the **impact** it makes

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Identifying and being able to **evidence** community needs

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Identifying and being able to evidence **who benefits and how**

# GATHERING EVIDENCE – ENGAGEMENT & RESEARCH

**“...involving communities in deciding priorities and shaping local action is vital if we’re to maintain collective wellbeing, support regeneration, and reduce inequalities.”**

Scottish Community Development Centre

## Engagement

- helps ensure your group is meeting its purposes & objects
- informs your forward movement – offering you a route map for development
- funders love ‘**real life experience**.’
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## Documents and Reports

Start with local ones such as

- SLCVO Skye & Lochalsh Third Sector Profile 2025
- Skye & Lochalsh Caring Communities Plan 2025-2030

[www.slcvo.org.uk/caring-communities-plan](http://www.slcvo.org.uk/caring-communities-plan)



# Local Place Plans and the Skye and Raasay Future Area Place Plan

Across all local place plans, the real common thread is not “projects” but approach - **community led solutions** that are: -

## **Place based** and **Preventative**

strengthening community resilience and  
reducing inequality in a fragile rural context

Common themes:-

- **Community Wellbeing**
- **Inclusion**
- Reducing Isolation



**Local Place Plans**  
[www.highland.gov.uk/localplaceplans](http://www.highland.gov.uk/localplaceplans)

**Skye and Raasay Future (SARF)** is the region's Area Place Plan, created in 2021. It sets out shared priorities for development, services, and investment.

[www.slcvo.org.uk/sarf](http://www.slcvo.org.uk/sarf)



# Costing your Project

- What are we planning to do?
- What do we need to make that possible?
- How much will those things cost?

- Be accurate.
- Don't underestimate.
- Don't overestimate.
- Remember to include 'hidden' costs
- Make sure the numbers stack up.



# Consider these application requests

## how could they be improved? What information is missing from them?

*“We want £15,000 to expand our service. Cancer patients on the island need more support. We plan to provide transport and wellbeing activities. We will gather feedback to see how it goes.”*

- **Numbers** of cancer patients locally
- **Evidence of need** (travel distances, waiting lists, anxiety data)
- **Who** will benefit
- What **difference** transport/wellbeing sessions will make
- **How impact will be measured** (tools, timings)
- **Budget detail**
- **Alignment with local priorities** (e.g., rural health inequalities)

*“We want to run an after-school club to help with wellbeing. Parents tell us kids love it. We’re asking for £9,000. Outcome: run 30 sessions. We’ll evaluate with a feedback form.”*

Evidence of **need** (how many families, what problem, who’s affected)

**Beneficiary** targets (how many children, eligibility)

**Outcomes** (wellbeing change—how measured, by how much, by when)

**Monitoring tools & timing** (e.g., WEMWBS short, SDQ, attendance)

**Budget detail** (unit costs, rates, assumptions)

**Alignment** to local priorities / plans

**FUNDERS FOCUS NOT ON WHAT YOU ARE DOING BUT WHO YOUR WORK BENEFITS AND WHAT DIFFERENCE IT MAKES TO THOSE PEOPLE**

# BECONNECTED Highland



The Highland Council is piloting BeConnected, a new digital platform to support community organisations and groups in accessing funding, in-kind support, and opportunities to collaborate across the region.

<https://highland.communitychoices.scot/>

- Boosts visibility with funders
- Aligns projects with local priorities
- Supports projects at all stages, even early ideas
- Improves fairness in funding allocation
- Encourages collaboration across the region
- Strengthens funding applications

# Finding Funder Information



## Sign up for alerts and newsletters such as:-

SLCVO monthly newsletter [SLCVO Membership Application Form](#)

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) members monthly Funding Bulletin



## Internet searches

Funding Scotland database [Funding Scotland](#) on the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) website



## Social media



## West Highland Free Press



## Networking & word of mouth

# Matching your ideas to the right funder

## 2. Check funders criteria and read the guidelines

- Do they fund projects in our area?
- What type of groups can apply?
- What types of activities do they fund
- How much will they fund?
- What sort of costs will they fund?
- Is there a deadline for applications?
- How do they want you to apply?

Funders want very specific information about what you want their money for, how it will be spent, and what this will help you to achieve.

# Your Funding Application

1

Apply using the **correct format**

2

Answer all the questions

3

Include **contact details**

4

send extra information – but only if it's been requested

5

**Double check your budget** figures add up

- Check your dates
- Include references if the funder requests them
- **Sign the application form!**
- Make sure your application **arrives before the deadline.**

# Writing your Funding Application



Use your project planning to inform your application



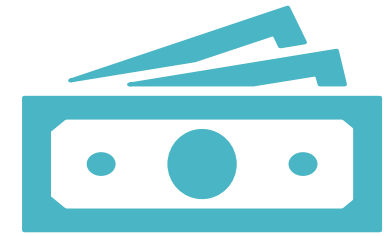
Write simply and clearly & be honest



Be concise








Tell a story



Tailor your application to the funder's priorities

**Don't underestimate the power of narrative. Funders don't just want statistics – they want to feel part of a story of positive change.**

Element	Weak Application	Strong Application
 Funder fit	Applies to many funders without tailoring	Shows clear research into the funder's goals, past grants, and priorities
 Evidence of impact	Relies on anecdotes or vague statements	Provides solid data using recognized measurement tools
 Outcomes	Broad or aspirational (e.g. "raise awareness")	Specific, measurable, and time-bound outcome
 Budget	Uses rounded numbers with little explanation	Detailed, itemized costs backed by real figures
 Organizational credibility	Generic description copied from website	Demonstrates proven success with statistics and examples

# AI or Not AI? – that is the question



Useful for research and drafting but ALWAYS **check** for inaccuracies

**Use with caution** - AI supported applications are often too generic in content, use too many buzz words and lack an authentic voice

Always **EDIT** any AI-generated content to ensure your application reflects your own experiences, skills, and what your community has told you they need or hope for.

Check Funder guidelines on the use of AI

**AI cannot replace the necessary human insight required for demonstrating organizational strategy, passion, and local partnerships.**

# What happens afterwards....

Check the grant conditions

Thank them

Credit them

Shout about it

Plan your reporting

Once you start your project – make sure you also start **monitoring**

Know your main point of contact



We are a Scottish Charity SC013885 regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) incorporated as a Company Ltd By Guarantee SC0177372

We are an independent rural delivery service partner for Highland Third Sector Interface

[www.slcvo.org.uk](http://www.slcvo.org.uk)

email [info@slcvo.org.uk](mailto:info@slcvo.org.uk) Tel 01478 612921

We are a community development organization, dedicated to supporting the community wellbeing of Skye and Lochalsh.

1. information and guidance on setting up a community group - from identifying a need to choosing your changing your legal structure
2. keep you on track if you decide to apply for registered charity status -
3. keep you up to date on legal compliance
4. discuss your project ideas and offer information and signposting to suitable funding sources - we can even review your draft funding applications
5. explore your ideas to generate income
6. promote your groups activities and services
7. help with your pleas for more volunteers (*just don't expect miracles!*)
8. get you together with others and support information sharing and learning exchange via events and forums
9. facilitate opportunities for collaboration
10. ensure community needs and services are escalated to District Planning level and on to Highland wide representation



## The not-so-secret guide to Effective Committees

Tue 3 March Staffin Hall 7pm or  
Thursday 5 March online 7pm

## We are all in this together! The role of community groups in Human Rights Advocacy

Wed 4<sup>th</sup> March online 7pm

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE [Training for Community Groups in Skye and Lochalsh](#)

# SLCVO | Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations

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