✝ Parish Resources
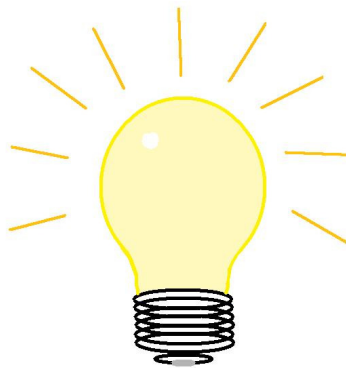
A Few Final Things to Remember

Qualitative and Quantitative

It is vital to prove that your project is required, and is meeting an urgent and visible need. One Grants Officer told us that she reads all applications, mentally asking the question 'so what?' throughout, and often the question goes unanswered. The applicant lists all the great things the project will do (repair the roof, add toilets and a kitchen, and employ a youth worker) but the funder is still left asking 'So what?'

Spell out what will change because of the activities your project will undertake, and why this matters. Try to include some of the following in your application, to really bring it to life.

Include statistics, stories and strategies

- National statistics
- Survey/questionnaire
- Case studies
- Pilot project
- Local strategies
- Letters of support

For Example:

Instead of writing 'Many elderly people feel isolated and our pensioners' coffee mornings offer them a place to meet other people…' try to offer something like:

'Research shows that elderly people are more likely to suffer from feelings of isolation than the general population; one in five people over the age of 65 is alone for more than 12 hours a day (Age UK Survey). We carried out a survey in our community which confirmed Age UK's findings; of our 200 respondents, over half were over 65 and of these, 34% lived alone. We offered respondents a list of possible activities to rank in order of preference and an informal weekly social gathering scored top.'

Feature the opinions of potential beneficiaries

Including letters of support, or quotes from community members who will benefit directly from the project can have a real impact on the applications voice. In addition to this, photographs of people discussing the project are direct evidence of local engagement.

For Example: "A lavatory is essential, as we need to be able to provide modern, clean facilities which meet health and safety standards, in order to offer the building for wider community use."

> **"After a twenty five minute drive to get to my Church, it would be wonderful to have access to a clean working toilet." Mr Smith, aged 78**

Checking the Application Form

Be sure to spend some time checking the application form. Most funds are considerably oversubscribed and therefore any failure to complete the form correctly could mean that it is thrown out at the first hurdle. Some funders will provide a checklist with the form; go through that to ensure you have fulfilled all the requirements. If you're not sure about something it is better to phone the grants officer to double check rather than to hope it will be OK.

Another useful technique is to ask a couple of people who know nothing or very little about your project to read over it and see what they think. It can be

a helpful idea to provide them with a questionnaire such as the one below, and see how effectively you are delivering the message you want to deliver.

Monitoring and Reporting

So often a successful funding bid is seen as the end of the process, whereas in fact effective monitoring and evaluation is paramount. Monitoring and evaluating your process can help prove you have achieved your anticipated outcomes, can help you learn from less successful elements, can make your project more sustainable, and can help you with future grant applications.

Some funders will have specific monitoring and reporting requirements. Make sure you know about these before you start your project because you may need to do some kind of base-line survey so that you can measure what has changed. Some funders may want to visit and see your project in action. Be proud of this, and don't be afraid to admit any mistakes; often funders are only to glad to learn from projects so that they can help other projects to succeed. Even if you don't have to report to funders, do carry out your own monitoring so that you know yourselves whether you project achieved what you intended. Be clear what indicators you will use to evaluate success before you begin. You may find you achieve outcomes you did not expect too.

It's also worth keeping a file of newspaper cuttings and photos of events, feedback from beneficiaries, short case studies and progress reports throughout the life of the project. If you collect these along the way, you will amass some good evidence of what works and what doesn't which will really help future funding applications. It will also remind you of different stages of your project's achievements – it's amazing what you can forget!

Thank the Funder

If you are awarded a grant, write a letter of thanks to the funder for supporting your project. Also outline that an invitation to the launch event will be sent in due course once any building works have been completed.