

Small Grants Evaluation – May 2016

Of the 92 email addresses the questionnaire was issued to we received 37 responses, a 40% response rate. Of these returns 13 were from the Developing Communities strand, 7 did not receive or did not apply for a grant in 16/17, 6 were from the Health and Physical Activity stream, 4 from the Gala days, 3 from the Community Councils, 1 from the Employability Learning and Training stream and the remaining had received grants across streams.

The most popular way of finding out about the grants was word of mouth

How did you find out about the Midlothian Council Small Grants Scheme?	
Word of mouth	32%
Midlothian Council Website	22%
Previously received grant	19%
Midlothian Voluntary Action (MVA)	14%
Contacted directly by the council	11%
Advert in local press	3%

Of the 37 returns 9 left the question about needing support blank, of those who did answer the top 3 contacts for help were MVA, attending a drop in grant surgery and Midlothian Council.

The ease of the application process was rated an average **6**, with 1 being easy, 5 being just right and 10 being too difficult.

Suggested improvements for the application process:

The application form did not seem to "fit" us as a Gala day parade, which is why I called for confirmation of which parts to fill in. I was advised that the forms were to be changed for next year, but there had not been time to change the content for this year. I was advised to complete it "as best as we could". This must have been acceptable as the grant was received.
Make it easier to understand
Possibly condense the form.
Process was just right and the support our volunteer received from Midlothian Council was excellent.
Some of the sections seem a bit repetitive; but I am used to filling in science grant forms so perhaps I should expect this. There is a lot of guesswork involved, looking forward at expected costs and income!
My computer Samsung tablet did not download the form properly so the result was a bit messy. I do not have signature option so eventually had to work with a paper copy.
It's too laborious and time consuming, it needs to be made much simpler.
Not sure how it could be made easier
Simpler, with less details required, particularly if funding has been granted previously.
This needs to go back to how the grant system and form worked before for small, medium, large galadays
less project driven questions for charities who get running cost support
More notice about the availability of the grant would be useful
Introduce an 'application reference number'. As there are lots of different streams and organisations potentially applying for more than one grant stream, providing a reference number to each application (when processed internally) and on any external communication sent out to grant

awarded organisations will ensure when discussing different projects/reporting, that reports and discussions are linked to the correct application.

Make the form filling shorter/easier it put the process online
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The ease of the monitoring process was rated an average 5.5, with 1 being easy, 5 being just right and 10 being too difficult.

Suggested improvements on the monitoring process:

Have not had to do anything regarding monitoring as yet

Instructions need to be clearer regarding proof of receipts. I emailed scanned copies through per the instructions and then was informed copies would require to be posted.

The monitoring process for our small grant was adjusted as appropriate for the amount we received.
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Just keep the forms as simple as possible. We are a very small recipient, although very grateful, so spending hours on a form can be frustrating.

I completed a form again in paper format. It would have been easier to start with paper forms.
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I've no idea what the monitoring process is. Once my application was submitted there was no transparency on progress or process. Zero communication.
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Once you understand the monitoring process you get it.
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Simpler, shorter, without the requirement to send invoices & receipts. Happy to have a personal visit to the Club, to show what we do & where our funding goes!

Send a copy of the grant application with the request for information about monitoring
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Not enough time was given. A courtesy email ahead of the official email giving organisations approx. 2 weeks to complete would have been greatly appreciated. Although the reporting was relatively simple there will always be external factors coming into play; other deadlines, staff absence etc.
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Any other comments:

I am chair of the parade organising committee and my details were on the application. We had been advised that the grant was to be paid directly into our bank and the bank details were confirmed on a form issued by the Council which required two committee members signatures. However the grant arrived by cheque to my home address. This survey, however, was sent to the previous chairman, who passed it on to me.
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The only observation was that the form is lengthy. That said the more information you have about the application then a more informed decision can be made on it. This is essential for the decision to be impartial as to what the application is for rather than for whom..

The application form is a bit off putting

The application process whilst we found reasonable may prove off-putting to some organisations, it may be helpful if it could be condensed/simplified in some way.
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Very disappointed we didn't get a grant this year.
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Thank you!

These whole procedures would be easier with paper forms as the majority of my time was spent with the problems of compatibility I encountered. We are not all 25 years old!

The overall form filling process was too time consuming and based on our experience we decided it wasn't worth the effort applying for a grant the following year. From speaking to other local organisations many decided the same. Also, our organisation only received payment of our grant today due to the cheque being sent to the wrong address and no communication from the council throughout, 18 months after grant application was submitted. Not even a message advising we had been awarded the grant. The whole process was not transparent and seems to be designed to put
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people, mostly volunteers giving up their own time, off from applying. Wholesale changes are hopefully being planned.
It would be good for council to see the projects at work
We really appreciate all the support given to CETC by Midlothian Council. It means we can continue to offer first class & highly qualified trampoline & DMT coaching to children, young people, & adults in Midlothian & the surrounding areas, and also provide coaching & judging opportunities for all ages. Thank you.
The scheme seems to be working well. You are not asking for information beyond that required for robust accountability for expenditure of public money.
While appreciate that you have to ensure that funds end up in the right hands. It was a lot of effort. To bring all the information together to suit the criteria
The system I feel is too complex and why fix a system that had been working for galadays
Provided requested Bank details for bank transfer but payment was by cheque as in prior years. Not an issue.
Generally happy with the process
Thank you for your assistance
As long as I get help with it

Issues to be looked at by the Communities Team:

- The form (length and clarity of what is asked for)
- Check the contact details for Penicuik on Parade (survey was emailed to previous chairman, provided bank details but got a cheque)
- Procedure for receipts (instructed scanned copies were okay then requested to post originals)
- Can paper applications be used?
- Bonnyrigg Rose FC (arrange meeting to discuss process, never received note of award, cheque sent to wrong address, questioning transparency of process etc)
- Midlothian World History Society (provided bank details but were sent a cheque)
- More advance notice for request of monitoring form
- MC to visit and see the work of some of the projects