

BIG Lottery Scotland

We don't want authors – we want you!

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Inspired by a chance conversation on a train Funding Officer, Laura Aitchison, tells us why you don't need to be an author to write a good funding application.

Fear of the Funding Jungle – “I'm no author, get me out of here!!”

Friday night and I was chatting away to my “train neighbour” over a crushed Aero bubbly I'd rescued from the bottom of my bag. The topic turned to work and my job as a funding officer at Big Lottery Fund Scotland. As the words left my mouth she appeared excited, then disheartened.

“That's great! I run a community group you know! But we could never apply for Big Lottery funding, I'm no author”.

I started to wonder how many other potential applicants feel this way? So, if you take one thing from this blog, I want you to know this: we care if you can make a difference in your community, not if you can get a triple word score in Scrabble.

Use your resources

My advice to you when thinking about funding is have a look at our website. If your project sounds like something that both matches what we look to fund and is

something you are confident you can deliver – get in touch! This goes for both practiced fundraisers as well as those who have never written a funding application before. A conversation with us can really help to focus your application

Plain English please

Speaking as a funding officer, an application in basic language packs more of a punch than a page of buzz words or jargon. Using long words doesn't tell me that you and your community are able to run an inspiring project. However, it does use up valuable word count on your application. From a personal point of view, it makes it an easier read if your application is clear, focused and to the point.

Focus on your project

It may seem “too” simple but the key things we want to know are:

- what you want to do
- how you plan to do it
- when it will happen
- what difference it will make.

There's no set “tick box” words or trick questions. Write as if you were explaining your project to someone who has just moved from Antarctica – with no knowledge of your idea and whose brain is still a bit jet lagged. Be simple and clear. Remember to add your passion for the project and double-check the guidance notes (especially the “people led” section).

JK Rowling may have a way with words, but could she run a project that really makes a difference as well as your community group? Don't let writing a complex application put you off.

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