

Friends Of Muir Group Community Investment Award Guidance Notes



A Guide to your application

The Friends of Muir Group (FoMG) charity was established in 2002, and is a subsidiary of Muir Group Housing Association Limited. It exists to improve the quality of life for Muir Group residents and the communities in which they live.

Please read this guidance carefully to make sure that you are eligible to apply and that your activity fits in with our objectives. The key question to ask yourself before completing this application is – **Will your activity impact or benefit Muir Group residents in any way?** This does not need to be a direct impact, but you will need to demonstrate how your activity will give good opportunity for Muir Group residents to benefit, or provide a much needed resource in the community that will ultimately provide a benefit to our residents.

This guide is designed to help you understand the following:

1. Our objectives
2. Who can apply
3. Application timetable
4. The application process and how to apply
5. How we inform you if you are successful or unsuccessful
6. What we expect from you if you are successful
7. Completing our application form
8. Our evaluation and monitoring process
9. How to contact us

1. What are FoMG objectives?

Our main aims reflect the needs of the communities we serve. Applications will be assessed in relation to these objectives and how they contribute to the social, economic and physical regeneration; and sustainability of our communities.

- ⇒ To deliver projects that benefit Muir Group residents and their communities
- ⇒ To provide support and advice to people in financial hardship
- ⇒ To provide support and advice to older people or people with disabilities
- ⇒ To support and contribute to recreational facilities for those who need it by reason of age, disability, poverty or social economic circumstances
- ⇒ To promote education for all people
- ⇒ To promote the advancement of education, training or retraining, particularly amongst unemployed people
- ⇒ To provide financial assistance towards the relief of unemployment in areas of social and economic deprivation

Funding will be targeted towards activities aimed at three specific groups:

- ⇒ Young people
- ⇒ Older people
- ⇒ Communities

Funded activities will be based around the following themes:

1. Arts and heritage
2. Crime and safety
3. Equality and diversity
4. Environmental initiatives
5. Education and training
6. Health and well being
7. Sport, play and recreation
8. Special topics (reserved for our supported schemes)
9. Financial inclusion

We will consider core costs and ongoing costs, but we will not commit to support long term projects, regular payment plans or commitments. If you need funding towards a long term project you must apply for a specific element or activity relating to that project. Each application will be treated individually. Please do not rely on us for continued even if we have funded you before.

What we will not fund

We will not fund certain activities because they do not meet with our criteria, or we feel that we are unable to sustain them adequately

We will not fund activities that:

- Are conducted outside of our areas of operation
- Have already taken place, we will not fund in retrospect
- Pay towards or settle a debt
- Promote or support political activity
- Pay for or support a public appeal
- Support individual religions to the exclusion of all others
- Recruit people into a specific religion or political party
- Credit Union ongoing costs*

***Important note for Credit Unions**

Although we will not commit to ongoing support costs we will still consider start up grants and associated activities that promote the relief of poverty or debt, and encourage saving schemes.

2. Who can apply

We will consider applications from individuals, resident and community groups, voluntary groups, and organisations that provide valuable benefit to Muir Group communities.

Individuals

- An individual must be a Muir Group resident or live in Muir Group owned or managed accommodation
- Single awards to individuals will only be granted to benefit the individual applying for that grant. It cannot be redirected to another person
- Awards to individuals will only be considered in cases of extreme hardship or exceptional circumstances

Groups or Organisations

- Applications must demonstrate activities that directly benefit Muir Group residents and their families in areas where they live or work
- Where appropriate applicants should explore other sources of contributory or match funding for activities
- Where appropriate applicants should work with other organisations, groups or partners to maximise possible potential of the activity

You will need to demonstrate that you are able to target Muir \group residents and their communities. If you are uncertain about your activity falling within our areas of operation, please contact our customer services team.

How much grant funding is available?

- **Individuals** - Awards to individuals are unlikely to exceed **£150**, other than in exceptional circumstances
- **Groups and organisations** - can apply for grants up to a maximum of **£1,000**

How many times can I apply?

Applications are open to all organisations for activities as long as they meet with our objectives. You can apply for funding more than once, for different activities, or make repeat applications for the same project, however, each application will be considered individually.

3. Application timetable

We meet every three months to review grant awards. We expect you to submit your application to us in plenty of time and in any case no later than three weeks before each meeting date.

- Late applications may be deferred to the following meeting. This may mean that your activity will not be able to go ahead
- Please check our web site or contact our customer services team for meeting and submission dates
- Remember to plan your application well in advance

4. The application process and how to apply

How to apply

We will not respond to or acknowledge speculative letters or email requests for funding

- Make sure you read the guidance notes thoroughly
- All applications must be received on our 'Application for a Community Investment Grant form
- The application must be completed and signed
- You will need to provide a Constitution or code of conduct
- You will need to provide your organisation or group accounts
- You will need to submit your application at least three weeks before the FoMG meeting date
- We prefer to receive your application by email, but you can also fax or post it to us – address details are given below.
- Make sure you keep a copy for your own records

Application Pack

Where can I find an application form and supporting information?

You can get an application pack in the following ways:

- You can download an application pack from the FoMG section of our website
- You can request an application pack from our customer services team who will post it
- You can request an application pack from a member of staff
- You can collect an application pack in person from our head or regional offices

Contact details are given at the end of this guidance.

How will your application be processed?

- After submitting your application, we will check it to make sure that it has been completed correctly and that relevant documents have been supplied
- We will also check that your application meets with our own objectives and criteria

- We may contact you for further information
- Applications are presented at the next planned meeting of the FoMG Board
- The Board will assess your application against FoMG core objectives
- Applications are judged purely on the criteria outlined and how they benefit our residents and communities at that time
- A decision will be made on the date of the meeting applied for
- On occasion the Board may request further information if they feel you have not provided enough evidence to support your claim. This may mean that your application will be deferred until a following board meeting
- The Board may offer you all or part of the funding you request at their discretion
- The Board may attach conditions to the funding award. If you decide to accept those conditions and do not abide to them we may ask you to repay all or part of the award

5. How do we tell you if you are successful or unsuccessful?

Successful applications

You will be notified of our decision within 4 weeks of the meeting date either by letter or email. We will also explain the next steps to receive the funding for your activity.

Unsuccessful applications

- The decision of the Board is final
- We will write to you stating the reason why your application is unsuccessful
- This may assist you to reconsider how you fit in with our objectives or how you might be able to improve your activity to be of more direct benefit to our residents and their communities
- You may resubmit your application for future consideration

6. What do we expect from you if you are successful?

We will expect the following if you are successful:

- Acknowledge acceptance of the terms and conditions - we will then issue you with payment or negotiate a payment method that is convenient for you
- Acknowledge receipt of payment on the form provided in your application pack
- Complete 6 monthly 'activity reports' if your activity is longer than a period of 6 months
- Complete an 'activity evaluation form' at the end of your activity
- The activity report form and evaluation form are supplied with your application pack so please keep them safe, if you mislay them you can ask for copies
- The lead applicant is responsible to make sure that all our conditions are complied with
- To tell us if there is a change in purpose of the activity and to seek approval from the Board. If you do not do this we may ask you to return all or part of the funding
- To include details of FoMG funding for your activity in your media articles or local news letters
- To forward copies of all receipts for purchases and expenditure so we can validate your funding to our auditors and to ensure the funding has been spent on the intended purpose

7. Completing the application form

Most of the questions on the application form are self explanatory. Guidance is offered with the questions on the application form, however, if you need assistance to help you complete the application please contact the Community Engagement Officer at one of the contacts given at the end of this guidance.

Section A – Self assessment

This section helps you to decide whether your activity fits with our objectives and if you are eligible to apply.

Section A - 7

- This section lists our objectives. We will assess your application against these objectives and the overall contribution your activity makes to social, economic and physical regeneration, and how it helps to make our communities more sustainable.
- We will expect you to self assess your activity, and to give a brief explanation of how your activity meets each objective or helps to deliver it.
- You do not need to meet each objective, but if you cannot provide a statement for any of the objectives, you may not be eligible to apply.
- We need you to determine what impact you expect your activity will make with each objective. Whether the impact is low, medium or high.
- The self assessment will help us to understand the potential of your activity

Section B – Risk assessment

We need you to tell us about any real risks linked to your activity. By ‘risk’ we mean a possible threat that may prevent your activity from happening or lessen the impact of that activity.

Section B – 8

- For example,

1. Managing Risk				
Identified risk	Risk level			Action to reduce risks
	low	medium	high	
Bad weather will prevent people from participating	X			Ensure alternative venue is available so activity can be moved quickly and at short notice
The activity is poorly attended		X		Ensure awareness of the activity is raised to target audience. Be more measured about how people are informed. Action plan raised
Adequate funding prevents activity from happening			X	Ensure funding target is achieved before promoting activity. Alternative and achievable plan in place for activity at less cost. Action plan raised

Section D – About your activity

This section gives you the opportunity to tell us about the benefits that your activity will have on the target audience.

Section D – 16

It is important for us to understand where your activity will take place and the target audience it will reach. We need to determine that our residents will have the opportunity to participate.

- We need you to tell us the exact location of your activity
- Or if it is a service, the area that your service covers
- We need you to be as specific as possible, preferably by telling us the post code, if the activity is wider spread tell us the ward or local area that it extends to

Section D – 20

What difference will your activity make? Please give as much detail as possible and tell us how you know that there is a need for this activity. Tell us:

- What the need is
- Information or research you have to support this
- Who you have consulted
- The needs of the people you hope to engage
- What affect or impact your activity will have on those people

Section D – 21

Tell us about the actual activity that you want us to provide funding or contributory funding for. We need to know:

- What the activity is – a description and purpose
- What you will do to deliver the activity
- A brief description of what you will spend the money on

Section D – 22

We need to understand how your activity will add value or how you will measure success against the predicted outcomes

- An outcome is something that happens as a result of an activity. This can be an expected or unexpected outcome. It can also be positive or negative
- For example the outcome of a community event may be that more people have a raised awareness of a project or service, and as a result an increase in the number of people targeted engaged with that project or service.
- For example; after consultation, people expressed their dissatisfaction with their local area. As a result 8 people came together and formed a community group to address local issues

We need you to list the top 3 predicted outcomes so we can assess these against your final evaluation.

Section H – Statement of applicant with terms and conditions

We need you to demonstrate that you understand our full list of terms and conditions.

Section H - 37

- If you do not understand what they mean or their consequences, please contact the Community Engagement Officer to clarify them
- Please tick each condition of funding to say that you accept and understand it
- If you do not accept the terms and conditions we will not be able to provide you with funding
- If you do not keep to our terms and conditions we will ask you to return any funding awarded to you
- If your application is misleading in any way, you will be liable to repay any funding awarded back to us

Section H – 38

We need signatures from the main applicant who will take responsibility for the activity and the funding

We also need a second signature from another group or organisation member to verify the application is true and appropriate

If you do not sign the application we cannot accept it.

Section H – 39

Your up to date contact details are very important.

We need to know how to get in touch with you if we have any questions

- If your contact details change after submitting the application please get in touch with us to update them
- We are an environmentally aware organisation so we prefer to correspond via email if possible, so please ensure that your email addresses are legible and accurate
- We will still correspond by post if you do not have access to the internet

8. Our Evaluation process

We need to know that our funding has been spent effectively and that your activity has added value to its target audience.

One-off activities

We need you to complete an evaluation form which is attached to your original application

- You can get another copy from our web site or our customer services team
- We need you to assess your activity against our objectives and the outcomes you predicted at the beginning of the project.
- It does not matter if you do not achieve the set outcomes, as we understand that things can happen to change those, but we do need to understand how the outcomes changed and what happened as a result

Longer term projects

If your project is due to take longer than 6 months or something happens to delay your activity in any way, we need to be informed of your progress.

We need you to tell us:

- Where you are up to with your activity
- Whether you have spent any of the funding we gave to you
- What you have spent the funding on
- How much longer your activity is expected to take
- Any problems you have encountered in delivering your activity
- Any unexpected outcomes that have emerged

The progress report form is attached to your original application but you can get another copy from our web site or our customer services team

In some circumstances we are able to offer support to your project in a practical way through the involvement of one of our Community Engagement Officers, especially for groups working at a local level. Do not wait until you need to fill in a progress report if you need advice or support. Contact us if you need help as we want to assist you to make your activity as successful as possible

9. How to contact us

www.muir.org.uk

Here you will find a link to FoMG



pages to access the application pack, and other useful information about our charity

Customer Services team 0300 123 1222

This is our main contact number.

A member of our customer services team will be able to send out an application pack, take a message or put you through to one of our Community Engagement Officers.

fomg@muir.org.uk

Use this email address to make enquiries or to submit your application form

Other useful contacts

Fax	01244 404026
Textphone (Minicom)	0300 123 3005
Text Relay	18001 (followed by the number you wish to contact)

You can also send your completed application or write to us at:

The Community Engagement Officer
Friends of Muir Group
PO Box 136
Frodsham
WA6 1AW