



The Society of Merchant Venturers' Charity Committee - Guidance for grant applications

Our grant giving committee meets four times throughout the year to consider applications for charitable funding. The following guidance explains the criteria by which decisions are made. Please read these notes before submitting your application. Meeting dates for the current calendar year can be found [here](#).

What can you apply for?

We strive to support charitable and community activities, projects and services that fulfil the following:

- Aim to improve the lives of local people by addressing specific needs and disadvantages within their communities
- Address the concerns and priorities of the people they seek to benefit
- Where possible, include the active involvement of people from within the community in designing and delivering the activity
- Complement existing local charitable and community activities.

Who can apply?

Our grant programme is primarily designed to support small not-for-profit organisations or community groups with charitable aims. Applicants must be based and working in Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, North Somerset or South Gloucestershire. Any grant awarded should be spent in the area that the application came from.

Whilst there is no limit to the size of organisation that can apply, we will prioritise our funding where it can make the greatest impact.

Organisations applying need not be registered charities but do need to have charitable purposes, have a management committee comprising at least three unrelated people, a set of rules under which the organisation operates and a bank account in the name of the organisation, with at least two signatories. Community Interest Companies (CIC) and social enterprises will be supported where:

- their work has a demonstrable social benefit
- the organisation has a minimum of three directors (Registered at Companies House), the majority of whom are not paid employees. The majority should also be unrelated
- the salaries and benefits of any paid director must be approved by a majority of non-executive directors and must be reasonable and proportionate to the work they do and the financial position of the organisation
- the organisation has an asset lock and designated asset lock body with objectives which are both charitable and similar to the CIC
- the organisation is limited by guarantee, rather than limited by shares.

How much funding is available?

In general, grants of up to a maximum of £5,000 are available. In exceptional circumstances, members of the committee may consider applications for larger grants, should the work of an organisation be of particular significance.

Repeat applications

Organisations can be awarded a maximum of £5,000 in any 12-month period. The committee will consider funding over an extended period of up to three years, subject to the organisation meeting delivery criteria during years one and two.

What sort of grants may be made?

Grants can be for capital equipment or ongoing revenue costs, but grants are unlikely to be made towards the cost of an existing salaried position. If you would like to discuss your application before submitting it, please contact Julie Newman at Quartet Community Foundation, julie.newman@quartetcf.org.uk.

How does the grant-making process work?

The Society of Merchant Venturers grant giving committee meets a number of times during the year, typically in January, April, July and October. Closing dates for applications during the year ahead are available on our [website](#). You should be informed of the decision on your application within six weeks from the date of the relevant committee meeting.

To apply, please complete the application form that is available on our [website](#).

Exclusions

We do not usually make grants for the following:

- Individuals
- General appeals (under this process; please contact enquiries@merchantventurers.com if you are fundraising for a specific project in the Greater Bristol area)
- The direct replacement of statutory funding
- Political groups or activities promoting political beliefs
- The promotion of religious beliefs
- Animal welfare
- Arts projects with no community or charitable element
- Sports projects with no community or charitable element
- Medical research, equipment or treatment
- Projects that take place before an application can be processed
- Activities that raise funds for other organisations.

Supporting documents

In addition to completing an application form, please provide the following:

- A copy of your constitution / governing document / set of rules
- The contact details of at least three members of your Management Committee / Board of Trustees / Board of Directors
- A copy of a bank statement or other evidence of a bank account in the name of your organisation (the bank account must have at least two signatories. Alternatively, if you belong to a small organisation that does not have a bank account, another charitable organisation can look after the funds for you, but you must provide written authorisation from the organisation that will do this)
- A copy of your most recent annual accounts of financial records that show your organisation's balance of funds, income and expenditure. If you do not have financial records covering a full year then you will need to provide the records you currently have. Low priority will be given where more than six to eight months of expenditure is held in reserves. Local branches of national organisations should explain why their request is not funded by the national budget
- A safeguarding policy if your organisation works directly with children or vulnerable adults.

Please be aware that applications without the supporting documents will not be submitted to the committee for consideration.

We hope that you have found this guidance helpful, but if you have any further questions, please [contact us](#).