



WRITING LETTERS TO TRUSTS

What are Charitable Trusts?

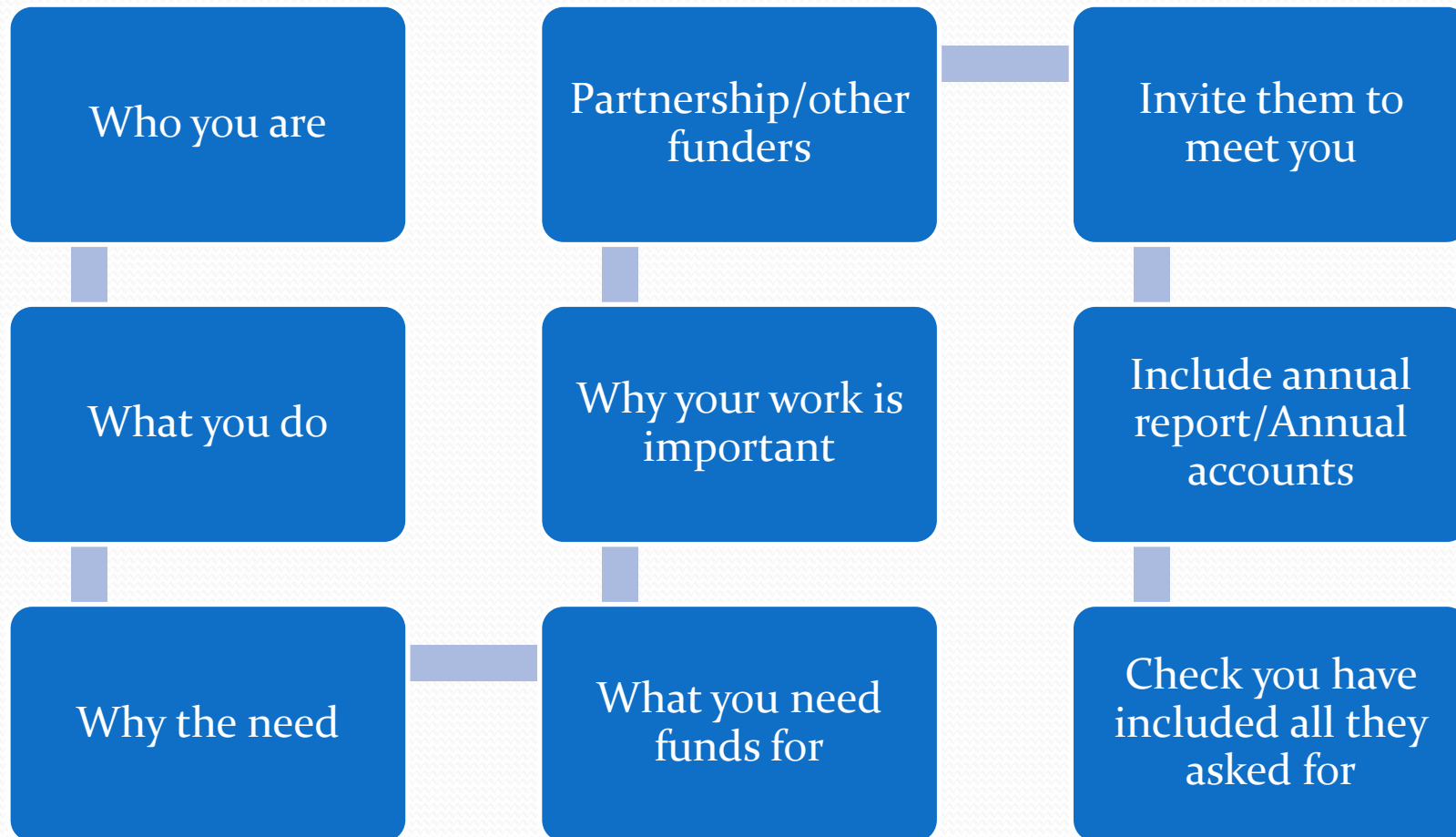
- Bodies set up to do good by distributing money that is the interest from invested capital
- They have a board of trustees are responsible for distribution
- British Charitable Trusts give away approximately £750 Million a year, mostly to capital projects and rarely to revenue costs eg wages and utilities
- An average of 1 in 20 appeals receive funding (may be geographically limited)
- The majority of trusts only meet once or twice a year ensure your letter arrives at the right time for you and the trust
- Many trusts do not have application forms so you will need to write a letter



Decision to make an Application

- Make sure that at as many as possible members of your management committee are involved in the decision to make the application and make sure the process of sending out applications is supervised.
- Ensure you RESEARCH the trust to make sure it is applicable for your needs and you meet their criteria and target the appropriate organisations for your application
- Be clear about what you are applying for – general demands for money are unlikely to be met

Structuring your letter





Structuring your letter - content

Think about questions that are usually asked on application forms . It is a good idea to organise your letter in the same format. The main sorts of questions would include;

- Why are you applying to this trust?
- How does the project meet the aims/priorities of the fund you are approaching?
- What type of organisation are you?
- How do you know there is a need for your project?
- How do you ensure that the beneficiaries have their say?

Structuring your letter – content continued...

- How much money do you need to run the project and how much are you asking the trust for?
- What plans are in place post trust funding?
- What implications will occur if the project is successful? How will you ensure sustainability?
- How will you monitor and evaluate your project?
- Cheque made payable to – this should be to a bank account in the name of the group, that requires at least two signatures on cheques?



Your Letter's Style and Layout

When structuring your letter think about those trustees that will be looking through all the applications and trying to find the ones that they can support. It will be beneficial to spend some time thinking about how you are going to structure and layout your letter.

Top Tips

- Use letterhead paper if your organisation has it or clearly write the organisation's name and address at the top for strong visibility.

Style and Layout Top Tips

continued...

- No more than two side of A4
- Type out the letter or write it with clear, neat handwriting in black/dark ink
- Single line spacing
- Times New Roman or Arial font
- Margin space
- **Avoid using emboldened font or underlining use *Italics if you want to emphasise something*. Keep bold and underlining for headings.**
- Use white or pale yellow paper.

All in the Detail

- Make sure you address the letter to the correct person and trust, if you seriously want £10, 000 stay away from using;

‘Dear Sir/Madam’

‘Ms Margaret Hyde, Esmee Fairburn Charitable Trust.... Dear Sir....’

‘Timothy Clerk, Chain to the Trustees’

‘Timothy Chain, Clerk to the trustees ... Dear Mr Chain’

- Always ensure the letter is signed and dated
- Enclose all of the information which the trust has asked for don't miss anything out
- Acknowledge any previous grants from the trust
- Avoid abbreviations unless they are explained
- State £ amount clearly
- Always provide factual evidence- actual numbers



Emotional Appeals

Although it might be difficult you should stay away from making emotional appeals and trying to tug at people's heartstrings- it will not put your application at the top of anyone's pile. Avoid;

'Unless Smith Community Association can raise some help with funding urgently, we may well close down. We need £30,000 to pay for our rent and other expenses by the end of the year.'

Be cautious about using the words '**urgent**' or '**emergency**' in your applications. Most trusts are not impressed if they have hurried an application through to find that the grant money given has not been claimed with the 'urgency' originally stated.

Phrases to avoid...

- ‘We work in the most deprived area of London’ - this may be true, but it does not tell the funders about the quality of the work you are going to do
- ‘Unique’ – are you sure about this?
- ‘Two of your trustees are well known to our chairman’- Not a good idea to use this and it will have no influence on the outcome and may alienate other board members
- Any help you can give us, however small, will be appreciated’
- ‘You will, I am sure, be familiar with the problems of worklessness’- Never make assumptions on people’s knowledge and understanding – make sure you have and can state your evidence.
- ‘A video showing our work is enclosed which gives a clearer demonstration of what we do’ - will the board have access to the resources and the time to do this



Use the Guidelines & don't leave all the work for the trust to do!

- Ensure you read all of the guidelines set out by the trust before you embark on applying.
- Follow the guidelines thoroughly throughout your application
- Meet the deadline
- Make yourself a checklist
- Trust staff are very busy and remember that you want something from them rather than the other way around, but they do want to give the money away.



Before posting

- When a draft of the letter is ready get someone else to look over it- check that it reads right (flows) includes all the necessary information and spelling/grammar.
- Ensure all supporting documents are enclosed
- Once your application has been sent, keep the trust informed and up to date if there are any significant changes to your organisation

Success!!

- If your application is successful do not miss out on the opportunity to continue the relationship with the trust.
- Some trusts will mail an in depth letter proposing funding and asking for acknowledgement within 14 days. **DON'T MISS THIS DEADLINE** 10% of organisations do!
- Make sure you have a set of audited accounts and annual report to send
- Pass all information and details on to any new staff
- Inform trust of any significant changes in relation to the funding or project.