



Water Quality Monitoring Network Funding Guide

Challenging the pollution crisis

The Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN) has two aims ...

- To engage anglers and angling clubs in better understanding the state of their waters.
- To empower anglers and angling clubs to address the pollution blighting their waters.

The WQMN data has already demonstrated that a significant proportion of our waters across England and Wales are experiencing ongoing persistent pollution. This is not unexpected given that under the last Water Framework Directive assessment only 14% of rivers in England achieve Good Ecological Status^{*1} and none achieved Good Chemical Status.

Whilst the WQMN data does not necessarily identify the actual sources of pollution, in its annual report on progress against the targets set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan DEFRA identifies the major pressures that cause water bodies to fail to achieve Good Ecological Status. The most recent progress report indicates that after the physical modification of rivers (a factor unavoidable in many urban environments), the main three drivers preventing water bodies achieving Good Ecological Status are ...

1. agricultural pollution (affecting 40% of water bodies),
2. sewage and wastewater (affecting 36% of water bodies),
3. and run-off from towns, cities, and transport, referred to as urban diffuse pollution (affecting 18% of water bodies).

Having recognised that their waters are polluted what can anglers and angling clubs do to address the pollution and its sources?

In many cases the causes of poor water quality and sources of pollution will be outside the control or remit of angling clubs and therefore they will need to undertake local campaigns to highlight the issues and demand action from government, regulators, and polluters. The WQMN Campaigning Guide is full of practical advice on how to run a successful campaign.

In some cases, it might be possible to undertake practical habitat work that reduces or intercepts pollution before it enters our waterways; or instream habitat enhancements that can help to mitigate the effects of pollution. The Angling Trust, in collaboration with a range of other organisations, will be providing guidance and advice on how to undertake such habitat works. But these kinds of practical habitat work often require funding.

This short guide is designed to help angling clubs to raise the funds necessary to undertake practical habitat enhancements.

[^{*1} Good Ecological Status (GES) is a metric for assessing the health of the water environment. It is assigned using various water flow, habitat, and biological quality tests. Failure to meet any one individual test means that the whole water body fails to achieve good ecological status. This indicator, and the statutory framework that supports it, have been retained in UK law after the UK's departure from the European Union.]

How to secure funding

Applying for funding can be a daunting process and angling clubs will not always be successful first time around. But following a few simple steps can help to optimise the process and increase the likelihood of success.

1. **Organisation and preparation**
2. **Potential funding sources**
3. **Identifying funds**
4. **Application process**
5. **Optimising applications**
6. **What to do if unsuccessful?**

Further information on funding with details of schemes like the Fisheries Improvement Programme and a range of other funding opportunities can be found on the Angling Trust website - [Funding](#)

1. **Organisation and preparation**

Two things will help you to get started:

- Appoint a Fund-Raising Officer
- Write a Development Plan

Appoint a Fund-Raising Officer

Most angling clubs will have a Chairman, a Secretary, a Membership Secretary and maybe a Conservation Officer but very few clubs appoint a standalone Fund-Raising Officer. Fund raising ends up being part a wider role, isn't a priority, is often overlooked, and falls outside the skillset of those responsible for it.

Appointing a Fund-Raising Officer helps to avoid these issues and will help to give funding a real focus within the club.

Here are some skills and competencies a good Fund-Raising Officer will need:

- **Great interpersonal skills**
Building rapport with potential donors can make them more likely to contribute to your cause. Strong interpersonal and communication skills can help create and maintain effective relationships with donors. Strong written and oral communication skills are also vital, fundraisers may need to write effective grant applications, appeal letters, and sponsorship pitches.

- **Commitment to the cause**

When a fundraiser is truly passionate about the cause they're raising funds for, it shines through in their work. It can also be highly inspiring for donors.
- **Determination and resilience**

No matter how creative your fundraising campaigns are, you may not always see donations rolling in. A successful fundraiser can immediately go back to the drawing board and come up with new ideas to raise funds.
- **Perseverance**

Every fundraiser will be rejected by donors to some degree. Being able to put it aside and not become disillusioned or demotivated after getting a "no" can be difficult, but a fundraiser with perseverance will go after the next "yes" instead.
- **Adaptability**

Fundraisers must be versatile and innovative. Knowing how to respond when situations don't play out as expected is another great quality. Donors won't always behave as you anticipated. Learning from the results and taking steps to get a different outcome next time means you can keep on being innovative, even after setbacks.
- **Can tell compelling stories**

Storytelling is a vital element of fundraising, but it's not always easy to deliver the right message to the right donors at the right time. Compelling stories can appeal to your donors on an emotional level, which can make them more likely to give.
- **Ability to research funders/donors in depth**

Approaching donors with the right message is a key part of successful fundraising, and being able to perform in-depth research to understand your supporter base makes that a lot easier to achieve.
- **Motivates others**

Donor rejection can be demoralising, fundraisers can motivate others to feel confident and enthusiastic — even if fundraising activities don't always go to plan. Being able to motivate donors is also a big plus point — particularly for inspiring them to take action and to continue supporting you in the long term.
- **Creative thinking**

Adding plenty of creativity to fundraising campaigns can help keep donors engaged. Creative thinking can also help counteract campaign slumps in donations and engagement. Switching things up and trying a different approach to inspiring donors can keep donations flowing throughout campaigns.
- **Technical skills**

Ability to use technology to undertake research and complete applications.

Write a Development Plan

The Committee will need to write an effective Development Plan for the club. The Development Plan helps to focus the club on those things that need to be changed and improved and where additional funding will be required. It helps to build consensus within the club on the things that need to be changed and improved and to focus limited resources. An initial survey to establish what members want will help to shape the Development Plan which should be adopted at an Annual General Meeting.

A Development Plan will include:

- Club strengths and weakness
- Changes and improvements required to address the club's weaknesses
- Priorities
- Actions
- Resources and funding required

A Development Plan may cover aspects such as:

- Habitat improvements
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Portfolio of waters
- Stocking
- Administration
- Membership
- Bailiffing

The Development Plan should have clear concise goals that will help the club focus on the habitat improvements required to address poor water quality, and to focus the efforts of the Fund-Raising Officer.

It is also important to make sure the Development Plan is achievable. Habitat improvement projects can often involve a lot of different stakeholders and various permissions may need to be gained. Always consider the views and opinions of those other stakeholders and that the projects can achieve the necessary permissions.

The Development Plan should help you to clarify the following before you start looking for funders and filling out applications ...

- What do you want to do?
- How much will it cost?
- Why is your work important?
- How will you know if you are doing a good job?

2. Potential funding sources

There are numerous different sources of funding available to angling clubs to support campaigning and habitat improvement projects.

The following list is a useful starting point:

- Fisheries Improvement Programme - <https://anglingtrust.net/funding/fisheries-improvement-programme/>
- Parish Councils
- Local Authorities
- Airports - <https://anglingtrust.net/funding/is-your-fishery-or-club-near-an-airport/>
- Woodlands Trust - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>
- Heritage Lottery Fund - <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/our-work/landscapes-parks-nature/habitats-species>
- National Lottery Community Fund - <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/>
- Sport England Small Grants - <https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/our-funds/small-grants-programme>
- Co-op Local Community Fund - <https://co-operate.coop.co.uk/missions/LocalCommunityFund>
- Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty - <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/about-aonbs/aonbs/overview>
- HS2 Community Fund - <https://hs2funds.org.uk/>
- Landfill Communities Fund - <https://grantscape.org.uk/landfill-communities-fund-lcf/>
- Biffa Award - <https://www.biffa-award.org/>
- Veolia Environmental Trust - <https://www.veoliatruster.org/funding/>
- National Highways - <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/designated-funds/>
- Friends of the Earth - <https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/apply-funding>
- Matthew Good Foundation - <https://www.matthewgoodfoundation.org/apply-2/apply-grassroots-funding/>
- Environment Agency
- Natural Resources Wales
- Water Companies

3. Identifying funds

The first step in identifying potential funding will be to undertake an internet search.

There are bespoke search engines that can help such as ...

Grants Online - <https://www.grantsonline.org.uk/search/grants>

You can also talk to organisations that are involved in similar activities in your area as they may be aware of potential funding streams. Bear in mind they may be competing with you for those funds ...

- Other local angling clubs, fisheries, and riparian owners
- Local Rivers Trust - <https://theriverstrust.org/about-us/member-trusts>
- Local Wildlife Trusts - <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-trusts>
- Local Catchment Partnership - <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/catchment-management-plans/>
- The Wild Trout Trust - <https://www.wildtrout.org/>
- Environment Agency/NRW Fisheries Team

It is worth looking at other local habitat improvement projects, not just on rivers, to see where their funding came from. If possible, talk to the fund raiser for the project and see what worked for them when applying.

Sometimes it might be worth looking for other local campaigns that are undertaking wider habitat improvements that could encompass your project.

Joint bids are also worth exploring. Joint bids attract more money, apply more pressure, and get granted more often. Other water users, community groups and other campaigns will also be concerned about the state of our waterways. Don't just focus on fish and fishing, think about the improvements you are looking to make will impact on and benefit invertebrates, birds and mammals, the wider environment and people's quality of life. Think of the wider economic benefits that would arise from your projects.

It may also be possible to work with local farmers and land managers to access Defra funding through the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme ...

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-land-management-update>.

ELMs pays farmers and land managers to deliver significant and important outcomes for the climate and environment that can only be delivered by farmers and other land managers in the wider countryside.

These include:

- creating and restoring a broad range of wildlife-rich habitat
- improving water quality, by reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution from agricultural activities
- increasing resilience to flooding and drought through nature-based solutions such as natural flood management

Different funds will have different minimum and maximum funding limits. Breaking bigger projects down into bit sized chunks might mean smaller funds or aggregating a number of small projects into a larger project might mean you can access larger funds.

Some donors work on a match funding basis where donations have to be matched by funds from the angling club. This can be on a 50:50 basis, 60:40 and so on. Building up club reserves will help to access these types of funding. Sometimes the value of the matching can be in kind, where the club matches the funding value with resources (club members time and effort) rather than cash.

Each funder has their own priorities. You need to find one who is looking to fund the kind of thing you want to do. Key things to think about are:

- Read the funder's guidelines carefully.
- Is the funder only interested in new activities?
- Is the funder only interested in project funding?
- How much money will the funder give?
- Will the funder give grants in time for your project?

Before you apply check you have all the documents and information the funder will ask for.

4. Application process

Before rushing into filling out the application forms and submitting them, take time to carefully read the application form AND any guidance that goes alongside it. Many people skip the guidance and go straight to the application, **DON'T**.

Do your research. Find out as much as you can about the funder, their priorities, the kinds of project they have funded previously.

When the funders read through an application, they will often be scoring it against a set of key criteria. The higher the score the more likely the application will be successful. By identifying their criteria and meeting them fully you can increase the likelihood of the application being successful. Create a checklist including the key criteria.

Make a note of any key words or phrases that the funder uses in the application guidance and use these in the application. Add these to your checklist.

Once you are sure you have identified all the key criteria, words, and phrases you can start to complete the application. Use your checklist whilst you are completing the application and before you submit it.

Make sure you have expressed a clear need for the project and the work to be undertaken.

If you are asked to submit a budget, make sure you are specific about what will be done and be as accurate as you can be with costings. Include quotes if you are asked to do so. Do not include any non-specific items in your budget, such as 'contingency costs' or 'miscellaneous'.

If there is public meeting as part of the decision-making process make sure you attend and encourage as many club members, collaborators and supporters to be there.

Is there a deadline for the application? If so, meet it.

5. Optimising applications

- Read the application and accompanying guidance thoroughly.
- Give yourself time to do the necessary research as well as completing the application.
- Identify the key decision-making criteria and make sure you have met all of them.
- Make a note of any key words and phrases and use these in the application.
- Write in plain English. Use short sentences and avoid acronyms and jargon. Be positive.
- Be specific about what you plan to do.
- Be clear and concise but always use the allowed word count.
- Answer all the questions.
- If allowed include supplementary information and examples to illustrate your case. But don't anything they haven't asked for.
- Use your checklist to make sure you have met all the key criteria and used all the key words and phrases.
- If the form is online, write your answers in a Word document or similar, so that you can save them as you go along and share them with other people.
- Get someone else to read through the application and offer constructive criticism.
- Write down you login and password and put reminder of closing date in your diary two weeks ahead.
- Keep a copy of your completed form.

6. What to do if unsuccessful?

Whilst it is always disappointing to not be successful, failure can be a great opportunity to learn and improve.

Remember, serial successful applicants are also serial unsuccessful applicants. Throw more darts, hit more targets. It's a numbers game.

Always ask for feedback and if possible, talk to the decision maker so that you can identify why the application failed. Sometimes funders will allow you a second chance to apply taking on board their feedback.



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Angling Trust, Eastwood House, 6 Rainbow Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8DQ

Email: admin@anglingtrust.net

Tel: 0343 507 7006