

The Howard Fund

What it is, how AYRS will use it, and how you can apply for a grant

AYRS Committee

In April 2005, Mr Donald Howard, a member of AYRS, died, and having no family, left his estate to be divided amongst a number of charities, one of which was, to our surprise, the Amateur Yacht Research Society. Of his residual estate, we were left 30%, some £42000, with the instruction that the Committee use the money to “provide funds as grants to members for further development of their practical ideas”.

Having thought about it long and hard, the Committee have decided that we will do this in the following way.

How will we distribute the money?

In principle, we could give it all in one hit, but we think it would be more use if we made the money last over a number of years. Firstly, this will allow us to earn interest on the capital, which we can add to the fund; secondly, it will allow people time to think about what they need and when. So we have decided that we will distribute about £5000 each year, which means we can go on for about nine years. This will usually be a number of small awards.

We have also decided that the projects to which we give grants: a) have to be practical (as Mr Howard required); b) they have to further nautical science or knowledge of nautical science (to be in keeping with the objectives of AYRS); and c) that grants will be awarded on merit and according to need, after review by the Committee and any panel of experts they may appoint. Needless to say, neither the members of the Committee nor their family and close associates, nor anyone else involved with the decision process will be eligible to apply.

How to apply

Applications for grants should *preferably* be in writing (see overleaf for alternatives), and will need to be submitted by a given date each year. For 2009, this date is **1st December 2008**.

Applications need to include:

- a) Name and address of the applicant, executive summary of the application, etc
- b) Details of the project, (suitable for publication), containing
 1. A description of the project as a whole
 2. Its contribution to nautical science (this may be the most important bit)
 3. Progress so far
 4. What the money requested will achieve (probably the second most important bit).

As with the John Hogg Prize, clarity of thought, and an appreciation of the audience will probably help us, and technical details may be best reserved to an appendix (but they ought to be there if they are known, although we will be prepared keep these details confidential if requested).

c) Some kind of costed project plan/budget statement - which we will normally keep confidential - i.e. what is to be done in total; the total cost of the project (with some indication of the reliability of this estimate!); what has been/is to be done when (with some indication of the likelihood of success); spend so far; forecast spend to completion year by year; the amount requested, and when it is wanted (as the grant could be spread over a number of years), and where any other funding is coming from. Any commercial interests must be declared.

d) An indication of what might go wrong with the project, things that might cause it to be delayed for example, and what the applicants propose to do to minimise the risk, and to handle the consequences if things do not go according to plan.

Part (a) is obviously administration; (b) should tell us what the project is about, why it's worth supporting, how much has already been done, and what our grant will add. Parts (c) and (d) give us an idea of how well the project is being managed. Clearly if detail is lacking here, then we must question whether the applicants have thought enough about what they are doing for us to have the confidence that the money will achieve what they expect.

We think it will take us about three to six months to evaluate the proposals, so a successful application should receive a grant in the first half of the following year. Applicants may choose to apply for grants to be spread over a number of years, and may (re-)apply in more than one year, but past performance will be taken into account! We should like to expose applications to the membership, by publishing them in Catalyst, or on the AYRS website, or both, so it would be helpful if applications were prepared with that in mind..

Remember that if you apply then you need to convince us that what you want to do with the money is sufficiently worth doing, that you stand a reasonable chance of doing it, that it's more worthwhile than other suggestions, and that the money will make a difference.

If we think your application is incomplete, we may come back and ask for extra information, or suggest you change your project plan, either as a pre-requisite to further consideration or to the eventual award of a grant.

Feedback after awards

We need to know, so we can tell others, that the money we grant has been well spent. We will require the successful applicants to come back to us, to report on the success (or otherwise) of their project, and to tell us what they managed to do with the money. Ideally too, they should do this in a form we can report to the membership, in Catalyst.

Clearly we do not expect 100% success with members' projects. Sometimes they may simply not achieve the contributions to nautical science that they expect to do. Sometimes they may find that their project management is inadequate, and they run

out of money or time. Sometimes though they will achieve glorious success. Either way we need to know, both to avoid funding work that's going nowhere, and to ensure that we have greater success in sorting the good ideas from the bad in future.

So we are going to require regular progress reports, either in writing, or perhaps in the form of a project blog if we can work those onto the website (or you could use your own website).

What next?

Well, now that the Committee have decided what they are going to do, the rest is up to you! We need applications, and although the deadline is set, it would be helpful if we had them before then, if only so that we can begin the evaluation process, and feed back to you any points that we think need clarification before the cut-off date.

Send your application to:

**Hon Secretary,
Amateur Yacht Research Society,
BCM AYRS,
London WC1N 3XX, UK,**

to arrive as soon as possible.

You can also send it by email, to <office@ayrs.org>, preferably as a PDF file (with all the fonts embedded!), but Word documents, Powerpoint, Excel or HTML files are acceptable (but don't blame us if our browsers are not the same as yours, and make a total mess of what you send), as are videos. Don't assume we will be able to download material from the WWW when we read your application; as not all of us have permanently online Internet connections, and, anyway, we might be looking at it on a train!

For further guidance see the notes on sending articles to Catalyst.

Footnote: Intellectual Property:

AYRS is willing to consider applications for grants under a non-disclosure agreement which will not prejudice applicants patent and other rights in the event that an application is unsuccessful. However, applicants must agree to place the nature and results of supported projects in the public domain, free for anyone to use, before any award is made.