

fun palaces

**FUNDING YOUR
FUN PALACE**

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HOW DO WE PAY FOR OUR FUN PALACE?

Most Fun Palaces (around 80%) are made with little or no extra money. They are hyper-local, so the first move is always to ask around your own area before you go looking further afield.

What some Fun Palaces have done in the past:

- Brockwell Lido Fun Palace asked local businesses for sponsorship, which brought in money and plenty of help in kind.
- Leighton Buzzard Fun Palace got sponsorship from a local estate agency to help cover costs.
- Whitstable Museum of Fun went to a local council meeting, asked for money to cover workshop costs, and got it.
- BedPop Fun Palace in Bedford had sponsorship from a local company, and several local venues gave their spaces for free.
- Lambeth Libraries ran 11 hyper-local Fun Palaces with Arts Council funding.
- Dragon's Den Fun Palace in Sittingbourne worked with their local Rotary group to bring water and electricity to a venue that had none.
- Plenty of Fun Palaces got small local government grants, borrowed a venue, or were hosted by a venue that covered the costs itself.

Your Local Council

Talk to your councillors. Invite them to your meetings. There are nearly always local funds they know about that you won't find on your own. Getting to know local politicians is worth your time. They took the job because they care about the place, so show them you do too.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

If your Fun Palace touches on local history, local stories, or digital heritage work, it's worth talking to them. [Grants start at £10,000](#), so this one suits a larger, heritage-led Fun Palace rather than a small first event.

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The Arts Councils

All four UK arts councils believe everyone should get to experience and make art, which is very Fun Palaces. Read the guidelines on their sites, and try to get a call or meeting with someone in your regional office. The connection is useful even when the funding isn't an exact fit.

- Arts Council England: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>
- Arts Council of Wales: <https://arts.wales/>
- Creative Scotland: <https://www.creativescotland.com/>
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/>

National Lottery Awards for All

The National Lottery Community Fund gives grants for projects that bring people together and improve their communities, which describes a Fun Palace almost word for word. You don't need to be a registered charity, and smaller groups are prioritised. Applications are open all year and you'll usually hear back within about 16 weeks, so apply in good time before October.

- England: £300 to £20,000.
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england>
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own Awards for All. Start here and choose your nation: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding>

Alec Dickson Trust

If you're 30 or under and making a Fun Palace, the Alec Dickson Trust backs young people running volunteering and community projects. Grants of up to £500, with trustees meeting roughly every three months. <https://www.alecdicksontrust.org.uk/>



Co-op Local Community Fund

Co-op members choose which local causes get a share of the fund. Your group needs one Co-op member to apply (anyone can join online or via the app), and you need to be a not-for-profit. Application windows open at set times each year, so check the dates.

<https://causes.coop.co.uk/>

People's Postcode Lottery Trusts

The old single People's Postcode Trust is now a set of regional trusts covering Scotland, Wales and the regions of England. You apply to the trust for your area, and you can request up to £50,000 spread over three years depending on your income. Priority goes to groups in the most deprived areas and to those led by and for marginalised communities. Search your postcode to find your trust and its current funding round. <https://www.postcodetrust.org.uk/>

People's Health Trust - Active Communities

Active Communities funds small, local projects genuinely designed and run by local people, which is a good match for a community-led Fun Palace. Grants run from £5,000 to £40,000 for projects lasting up to two years, for groups with an income under £350,000. Different areas open at different times of year, so check whether yours is open.

<https://www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/funding/active-communities-programme>

Aviva Foundation - Communities Fund

The Aviva Community Fund is now the Communities Fund, run by the Aviva Foundation. It uses crowdfunding plus match funding: Aviva matches each donation you raise up to £250, to a maximum of £25,000 a year. It's open to small organisations with an income under £1 million. Funding is capped each year, so apply early in the cycle.

<https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/>

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Finding what's available locally

There's no longer a single government postcode tool that does this well. The quickest routes are:

- Your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or volunteer centre, who keep lists of live local funding.
- The National Lottery Community Fund's funding finder: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding>

Other UK nation-specific funders

- Foundation Scotland: <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/>
- The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/scotland>
- Community Foundation for Northern Ireland: <https://communityfoundationni.org/>
- Community Foundation Wales: <https://communityfoundationwales.org.uk/>

Creative Lives

Not a funder themselves, but Creative Lives keep a useful, regularly updated set of information about funding and resources for community creativity. <https://www.creative-lives.org/>

A note on all of this: funding bodies change their names, amounts and deadlines often. Always check the live website before you apply, and drop the team a line at hello@funpalaces.co.uk if you have questions.

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Fun Palaces without funding

It might feel impossible to make a Fun Palace with no money, but there's a lot you can do to gather the bits and pieces you need. Above all, remember: it's fine to keep your Fun Palace tiny.

Need pens or pencils? Ask your neighbours for a materials amnesty. Most people have something stashed at home they'd be glad to pass on. Use noticeboards, local Facebook groups and Nextdoor (<https://nextdoor.co.uk>) to ask for what you need.

Cheap and free sourcing ideas

These come from our sustainability toolkit, because what's easy on the budget is usually good for the planet too.

- **Hygglo** (formerly Fat Llama) - rent almost anything from people nearby. <https://fatllama.com/>
- **Library of Things** - borrow equipment at low cost. <https://www.libraryofthings.co.uk/>
- **Repair Cafe** - free spaces up and down the UK where you can fix things together. <https://www.repaircafe.org/>
- **The Restart Project** - Restart Parties where people teach each other to repair broken and slow devices. <https://therestartproject.org/>
- **Scrapstore** - free or cheap art materials, with stores all over the UK. Search for your nearest one.
- **Schools, colleges and universities** - can their arts, science or sports departments lend you kit or pass on resources they no longer need?
- **Arts centres** - often have spare scissors, pens, paper and other crafting supplies.

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Activities that need very few materials

Teach someone a language. Build junk sculptures. Swap gardening tips or the best local foraging spots. Choreograph a dance together. Run a Fun Palaces community walk. Hold a poetry or writing session (all you need is pen and scrap paper). Build a bug hotel from found materials. Share stories from your local culture or community.

The Fun Palaces website has plenty more low-cost ideas for what might happen at a Fun Palace if you need more inspiration!