

Changes to Grants Programmes

In recent years, the Arts Society has awarded grants exceeding the income allocated to this activity, resulting in a reduction of the surplus in the Patricia Fay Memorial Fund. We have now reached a point where this approach is no longer sustainable.

To bring grant expenditure into line with income while increasing the impact of our support, the Grants Committee has agreed to implement the following changes:

Main Programme

- Two-thirds (previously one-half) of grants in the main programme will be allocated to internal grants (applications from societies), with the remaining one-third going to external applicants.
- External grants will be limited to charities with an annual turnover of less than £1 million, ensuring our support has a meaningful impact.
- The maximum grant will increase to £2,000 for the autumn 2025 round, and to £3,000 in 2026.
- There will continue to be two grant rounds each year.

Community Grants

Community Grants were introduced after the pandemic to encourage renewed grant-giving by societies and to utilise surplus funds from the Patricia Fay Memorial Fund. These grants have achieved their objectives; however, as part of the rebalancing of our limited resources, The Arts Society centrally will cease funding Community Grants at the end of this calendar year.

We believe most societies, which share our charitable objectives, will be able to continue supporting these modest but valuable community initiatives from their own resources.

Small Society Grant

Following consultation with Area Chairs, we will continue to provide Community Grants to societies in genuine financial need, specifically those with reserves equivalent to less than six months' expenditure. This will ensure that, working together, The Arts Society and local societies can continue to support schools and grassroots projects throughout our network.

Zena Walker Fund

The Zena Walker Fund, which has been inactive in recent years, is proposed for reactivation with Board approval. The intention is to revive and continue postgraduate conservation scholarship work, in line with the Fund's original purpose and The Arts Society's commitment to supporting emerging talent in conservation.

Future Strategy Considerations

Looking ahead, the Arts Society aims to further strengthen and modernise its grants strategy through the following initiatives:

- Increase impact by awarding fewer, higher-value grants.
- Prioritise projects that generate positive PR and membership growth.
- Require grant recipients to permit footage and documentation of projects for promotional use.
- Incorporate AI into the application scoring process, with input from Isabel Cooper (Head of Marketing & Communications) to assess PR value.
- Focus on internal (society) grants that deliver clear, demonstrable local benefit.
- Review and refine application criteria and required supporting information to ensure transparency and efficiency.