

# Special Interest Groups – Grants.

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The term “SIGs” has become common currency amongst committee members – but will be a new one to many members. It stands for “Special Interest Groups”. We hope to encourage the formation of small groups within the Society that will specialise in areas of equipment or activity that are generally neglected by the majority of members, and the wider vintage radio community.

The first component we have put in place to encourage such groups are the **Grants for Special Projects**. Members may recall that I first put this forward at the 2003 AGM – and the meeting said: “*Fine – but go away and get the rules straight*”. Well, a small working group of the committee have done just that – and the full committee has now approved the rules for such grants – and these are provided below. Highlights of the scheme are:

- **£300 p.a. per group/project available**
- **Groups of three members minimum**
- **Any project within the scope of the Society is eligible**

What sort of thing will get a grant? Well, we want to try and encourage the areas of activity that *appear* to be somewhat neglected, judging by the spread of newsletter articles that we see. For example:

- Restoration of naval, RAF and early amateur/commercial sets from the lesser-known manufacturers;
- Equipment for other purposes than communication: e.g. GEE, Eureka, Rebecca, RADAR, IFF, mine detection, etc;
- Historical research;
- Co-operation with museums and other Societies;
- Restoration of pre-WWII equipment;

These are just hints. Nothing is precluded within the aims of the Society, but it is unlikely that a project to restore yet another WS19 or AR-88D will get approved.

One critic of this proposal rather unkindly wrote it off as “money for pet projects”. Actually this largely misses the point – we *do* want people with “pet projects” to come forward. Such people are enthusiastic and usually knowledgeable about something a bit obscure – that description fits the idea of our grants rather well.

One final word. The rules are not set in concrete. We will be monitoring the whole process carefully to ensure that it runs smoothly. If problems are found, we can change them, once we identify what the improvement should be.

**Don't be shy of coming forward with your ideas – no-one is going to shout you down. Its as new to us as it is to you – we are just itching to see what interesting things show up!**

## Rules for Grants

### 1. General

A sum of money, not to exceed £300 in any one VMARS' financial year (starting on 1st January) to any one group, may be made to groups of VMARS members who wish to pursue a project that is in line with the aims and objectives of the society, subject to the financial status of the society at the time of the request. The purpose of such grants is to encourage and facilitate activity by members in line with the Society's objectives.

- (i) The total amount of money allocated to such projects, both individually and collectively, will be decided by the committee, which will keep in mind the financial prudence required by the Society's constitution and guidance from the Hon. Treasurer.
- (ii) A grant to a group in one financial year, does not guarantee a grant in subsequent years.
- (iii) The committee reserves the right to refuse grants to groups where it is felt that the outcome of the project falls outside the objectives of VMARS or that group members interests may be incompatible with the stated aims.
- (iv) Grants will be evaluated principally by asking how well they fulfil the Society's Aims (as stated in clause 3 of the constitution), particularly sub-clauses a), d), e) and g) which have yet to be fully addressed.
- (v) In the case of complex projects, the committee may choose to provide payments in stages, after asking for evidence that the previous stage has been satisfactorily completed.
- (vi) The committee reserves the right to impose particular conditions on specific projects, where these are deemed warranted.

### 2. Allowed recipients of grants

The group applying for a grant may include non-members of the society, but must include at least three fully paid up VMARS members. During the lifetime of the project, the group will be expected to maintain a minimum of three fully paid-up VMARS members. If this requirement is not met, the committee will have the right to refuse further funding, and may recall funding already granted.

### **3. Mandatory contents of a grant request**

Money will need to be justified before any grant is made, by submitting a proposal in writing to the VMARS committee. This must include the following information:

- (i) a description of the expected outcome, indicating how this helps further the objectives of the society;
- (ii) a list of names and contact details of the people involved, including the co-ordinator, who will be the prime contact with the VMARS committee;
- (iii) a breakdown of costs showing the items to be purchased or activities to be funded with enough detail to show that the project proposed is viable;
- (iv) an outline timetable showing the major milestones in the project;
- (v) where assets are to be acquired, (a) an explanation of why purchase with a grant is required (rather than private purchase), (b) under what physical conditions the assets are to be maintained or stored, (c) the address where the assets will be stored and the name of the owner of that address, and (d) who will own the assets if it is anyone other than the group as a whole.

### **4. Reporting**

The group shall appoint one of their number as co-ordinator, who shall be a fully paid-up VMARS member. The co-ordinator shall act as spokesman for the group and shall be the main point of contact with the VMARS committee. Similarly, a specific member of the committee will be appointed as main contact for the group on behalf of the whole committee.

The co-ordinator will be required to report on the conduct and progress of the project, as follows:

- (i) as soon as a project and grant is approved, a description of the project shall be submitted for publication in the next available VMARS Newsletter, to keep members informed of what is being done;
- (ii) six monthly progress reports will also be required subsequently, for publication in the Newsletter;
- (iii) filling in a form to give the committee an update on activities just before each committee meeting (roughly every two months), which will include an itemised account of spending of the grant element of the project;

### **5. Right to view or enjoy assets or other outputs from grant-funded projects**

Where assets are acquired with help from a VMARS grant, members of the Society must be allowed access to view these assets at any reasonable time and with due notice. If a grant is used to fund historical or similar research, the results of that research shall be offered for publication initially in the VMARS Newsletter.

### **6. Avoidance of profit-making**

In keeping with the non-profit-making ethos of the Society, grants are not intended to enrich individual members of the Society. Where there is any expectation of income from a project financed by a grant, applicants should bear in mind the following conditions:

- (i) assets purchased with help from a grant may not be sold without the express permission of the VMARS committee;
- (ii) where the VMARS committee agrees to the sale of an asset, the committee may decide that the asset shall be initially offered to members of the Society via the Newsletter;
- (iii) the VMARS committee shall have the right to constrain the sale price of the asset;
- (iv) the VMARS committee shall have the right to require that the grant be repaid in full from the sale of the asset (however any amount realised in excess of the grant amount will remain with the group);
- (iv) Where a project produces information rather than hardware (e.g. historical research), the resultant IPR shall remain the property of VMARS. In general, permission will be given for publication of articles based on this information, provided the usual acknowledgements are also published. Where money is received by the group for publication elsewhere than the VMARS Newsletter, repayment of some or all of the grant may be required.

### **7. Dispute resolution and misconduct**

In the first instance, the VMARS committee will attempt to resolve any disputes arising from this scheme by private discussion with the group co-ordinator initially, and if necessary, with the group as a whole.

Where a dispute remains unresolved after such private discussions, and the committee judges that serious misconduct has arisen, sanctions that may be applied include, but are not limited to:

- (i) publication of a description of the situation and unresolved problems in the Society's Newsletter. The group will have the right of reply in the Newsletter;
- (ii) request for repayment of any grant money already provided to the group;
- (iii) referral of the VMARS members involved in the group to an AGM or EGM, where members of the Society will decide what sanction to impose.