
Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2024
Time: 2.00 pm
Location: via Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

1.	Welcome
2.	Apologies for Absence
3.	Minute (Pages 3 - 4) Consider Minute of the Meeting held on 14 December 2023 for approval and signature by the Chair. (Copy attached.)
4.	Berwickshire Funding Table 2023-24 (Pages 5 - 6) Overview from Gillian Jardine, SBC Communities and Partnership Team. (Copy attached.)
5.	Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund (Pages 7 - 14) Consider recommendations from Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund Assessment Panel. (Copy attached.)

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**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP**

MINUTES of Meeting of the
BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP
held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 14
December 2023 at 5.30 pm

Present:- Councillors J. Anderson, J. Greenwell, D. Moffat, A. Orr and M. Rowley

Apologies:- Councillor C. Hamilton

In Attendance:- Community Co-ordinator, Community Engagement Officer (A. Boyle) and
Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen).

1. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 30 August 2023.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair.

2. **BAP PLACE MAKING WORKING GROUP**

The had been circulated copies of a report by Keith Dickinson, Chair of the Berwickshire Area Partnership Place Making Working Group that reported on the progress of the working group and made recommendations for future Place Making activity. The working group proposed that their activity was to be succeeded by a community-led peer support network which would provide a space for shared learning, support and guidance to communities that were developing plans for their area. The network would be open to all interested communities who would benefit from participation in the network and not restricted to Berwickshire. The network would be convened by Beth Landon from Borders Community Action in her role as Capacity Building Lead for Berwickshire and Cheviot. A standing item at Berwickshire Area Partnership meetings was suggested so that time was made available to hear from the proposed network and that community-led developments were discussed. Ms Landon advised she would be happy to speak on behalf of the Network and that a peer support meeting was scheduled for 1 February 2023.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED the achievements of the working group;**

(b) **AGREED:**

(i) **To establish a community-led peer support network to support communities with ambitions to develop a plan for their area;**

(ii) **A standing agenda item should be introduced to the Berwickshire Area Partnership so that time is available at each meeting to hear from the network and discuss community-led developments within the Berwickshire community, with time also given for updates on local place plans and to consider themes and actions which could be incorporated into wider Berwickshire/Borders wide-plans; and,**

- (iii) **Support the flexibility to reconvene the Berwickshire Area Partnership Place Making Working Group if there was a need to reactivate its activity in the future.**

3. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Berwickshire Area Partnership would be held on Wednesday 7 February. The meeting was to be moved to a Wednesday to allow people to attend who may normally have other commitments such as community council meetings.

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm.

Berwickshire Funding 2023/24

7 February 2024

Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) 2023/24	
	£
Opening balance as of 01/04/2023	£ 50,185.00
Plus ring-fenced Horse Time carry forward from 2021/22	£ 4,500.00
Total available	£ 54,685.00
Less:	
Ring-fenced Horse Time carry forward from 2021/22	£ 4,500.00
NSF applications awarded since 01/04/2023	£ 35,801.00
NSF applications that are assessed and await decision	£ 15,814.25
Sub-total	£ 56,115.25
Funds remaining if assessed applications are successful	-£ 1,430.25
NSF applications still to be assessed	£ -
Potential Overall Position	-£ 1,430.25

Other sources of grant funding - Berwickshire			
Grant Type	Available	Awarded	Remaining
Local Festival Grants	£ 14,060.00	£ 6,550.00	£ 7,510.00
Annual Support Grants (Community Councils)	£ 13,680.00	£ 8,460.00	£ 5,220.00
SBC Small Schemes	£ 70,415.00	£ 49,642.00	£ 20,773.00
SBC Enhancement Trust	£ 2,494.23	£ 2,000.00	£ 494.23
SBC Welfare Trust	£ 13,057.65	£ 6,161.00	£ 6,896.65
	£ 113,706.88	£ 72,813.00	£ 40,893.88

Summary of applications						
No.	Date	Fund	Organisation Name	Amount	Project	Status
1	23/07/2023	NSF	Berwickshire Swap	£ 3,132.00	Berwickshire Swap	Awarded
2	18/07/2023	NSF	Abundant Borders	£ 913.00	Berwickshire Garden Maintenance	Awarded
3	18/07/2023	NSF	ReTweed	£ 4,941.00	ReTweed Community Courses (Gavinton, Cranshaws & Coldstream)	Awarded
4	19/07/2023	NSF	Leitholm, Eccles & Birgham Community Council	£ 2,664.00	Connecting Leitholm	Awarded
5	21/07/2023	NSF	Swinton & Ladykirk Community Council	£ 400.00	Spring bulb planting & refurb of football goals on the Green	Awarded
6	23/07/23	NSF	Allanbank Arts (A Heart For Duns)	£ 2,250.00	Creative Club	Awarded
7	23/07/2023	NSF	Cockburnspath After School Club	£ 5,000.00	Cockburnspath After School Club	Awarded
8	18/07/2023	NSF	Foulden Mordington Lamberton CC	£ 2,100.00	AED for Lamberton in adopted phone box	Awarded
9	24/07/2023	NSF	Eyemouth Museum Trust Ltd	£ 5,000.00	Maintenance of Eyemouth Museum's historic windows	Awarded
10	20/07/2023	NSF	Eyemouth Harbour Trust	£ 5,000.00	Sea Garden Project & Art Wall	Awarded
11	26/07/2023	NSF	Paxton House Trust	£ 4,401.00	Paxton House Community Garden	Awarded
12	20/11/2023	NSF	Coldingham Primary PTA	£ 5,000.00	Purchase of Loose Parts store and play equipment	Assessed
13	25/11/2023	NSF	Coldstream Gateway Association (Coldstre	£ 1,000.00	Courthouse Place Car Park Flower Beds	Assessed
14	30/11/2023	NSF	Sea the Change	£ 5,000.00	Berwickshire Bikes	Assessed
15	30/11/23	NSF	Swinton and Ladykirk Community Council	£ 414.25	Refurbishment of benches, SEG Banner, Safety wear & equipment	Assessed
16	12/04/23	NSF	Coldingham Community Council	£ 4,400.00	PA System	Assessed
Total				£ 51,615.25		

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Report of Neighbourhood Support Fund Assessment Panel BAP Meeting on Wednesday 7th February 2024

Introduction

This paper outlines the recent work undertaken by the Assessment Panel for the Berwickshire Area Partnership, Neighbourhood Support Fund. It gives a brief description of various activities and a review of recent applications. It goes on to make recommendations for consideration by the BAP.

Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund 2022/23

Berwickshire Area Partnership, Neighbourhood Support Fund, Assessment Panel (NSF AP) met for the second full meeting of the financial year, at 11am on Wednesday 17th January 2024. Only £50.2k was available for distribution through the Neighbourhood Support Fund during 2023/2024. Following the awards made in the first round of funding this year circa £14.4k remained (an additional £4.5k was ring fenced for an earlier an earlier approved award). In summary we had circa £14.4k available to distribute between five projects, together seeking a total of £15.4.

It is clear that more applications are being made by communities taking on activities that were in the past provided by SBC and other statutory bodies. Communities are willing to take on these roles, commit a lot of time and effort and save SBC a great deal of money. This needs to be recognised and volunteers deserve to be supported adequately through the NSF.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that the NSF was halved this year. As a result, many deserving applicants from both rounds, will have been disappointed that their strong applications did not receive support. It is hoped that this situation can be reversed when setting the NSF budget for next year.

Panel Membership

We are pleased that two new members have joined the Assessment Panel this year: Nicky Seed and Bob Hope. Having been a party to the development and implementation of our assessment process over the past four years, and Chair

of the Assessment Panel since its inception, I feel it is time to stand down. This will be my last report as Chair of the Assessment Panel.

There is always a need to recruit additional members and attain a full complement of panel members. Anyone interested in joining the panel should contact Gillian Jardine GJardine@scotborders.gov.uk or James Purves JPurves@scotborders.gov.uk for further information.

Attaining full delegated powers for the Assessment Panel

At its meeting on 4th March 2021 the BAP agreed to the following recommendation:

“We recommend the creation of a sub-subcommittee of the BAP with full delegated powers to undertake the assessment of applications and subsequently make awards.”

At the BAP meeting 9th June 2022 our recommendation that “the Neighbourhood Support Fund – Assessment Panel receives full delegated powers to make and communicate its decisions to applicants” was again endorsed by the BAP.

At the BAP Meeting on Thursday 9th February 2023, we reiterated this request. We continue to feel that it would be beneficial to uncouple the work of the Assessment Panel and the BAP and move to three equally spaced application periods on an annual basis. We could then publish these dates well in advance and deal with applications more timeously.

We have over the last three years proved that we can undertake the role of an Assessment panel fairly and robustly. None of our recommendations have ever been overturned and our processes have been widely praised. It is therefore time for the Assessment Panel to be given full delegated powers.

Recommendation 1

We seek BAP support to request that SBC agree that:

1. The Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund – Assessment Panel receives full delegated powers to make and communicate its decisions to applicants.

2. The NSF assessment process moves to a cycle of three, equally spaced, funding rounds each year, with the prospect of applicants receiving a decision within four weeks of the closing date for applications.

Assessment of Applications

I have outlined the assessment process many times, as I have recorded in my reports over the past three years. Suffice to say we have a very robust system of assessment that recognises the need for: transparency; appropriate declarations of interest; applications to comply with the published Eligibility Criteria and blind marking of all applications. We have managed throughout to achieve a strong measure of agreement on applications and move relatively smoothly to a consensus and agreement on our recommendations.

The minutes of the assessment panel meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024 can be seen in **Appendix 1** below. These minutes includes a brief description of each application and some individual feedback from our deliberations. Our recommendations are summarised in the minutes.

Recommendations 2

It is recommended that BAP approve the awards detailed in Appendix 1 - MINUTES of Meeting of BERWICKSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 17th January 2024 11.00.

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Appendix 1

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL

MINUTES of Meeting of BERWICKSHIRE
NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND
ASSESSMENT PANEL held via Microsoft Teams
on Wednesday 17th January 2024 11.00.

Present: - Keith Dickinson (Chair), Andrew Mitchell, Jim Hettrick, Kathy Huffman,
Nicky Seed, Bob Hope, James Anderson

In Attendance: - Community Co-ordinator G Jardine and Community Engagement
Officer Ali Boyle

Apologies: - John Greenwell

1. WELCOME

KD welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

KD asked those present to promote membership of the panel to others to see if they would like to be involved – any interested parties to be passed contact details of GJ who can provide more information. KD noted that he would be standing down as Chair of Assessment Panel after then next BAP meeting. Anyone interested in stepping up as Chair to contact GJ.

JA advised that he had not been sent scoring sheets and GJ explained that a decision had been made historically that Elected Members were not asked to score applications as they cannot take decisions when they are not in a public meeting. KD welcomed the willingness of Elected Members to be fully engaged in the assessment and scoring process

3. BALANCE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND

The current balance of the Berwickshire NSF is £14384 with applications totalling 15,814.25.

There is also an additional £4500 which has been ringfenced for a Horse Time 'Resilience and Regulation' application which had been carried over from the Community Fund 21/22.

4 PROJECT ASSESSMENTS

COLDINGHAM PRIMARY PFA – LOOSE PARTS PROJECTS

An application from Coldingham Primary PFA requesting £5,000 was received for the purchase of a Loose Parts Hub which would be sited at Coldingham Primary School playground.

Discussion took place regarding the application, the panel were supportive however a possible issue with requirement for planning permission identified. – This has been communicated to the group and the panel requested that the group be supported if necessary to manage this process.

Recommendation

It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership **award** a grant of **£5,000.00** subject to necessary planning permissions being obtained. Funding not to be issued until these are in place.

COLDSTREAM GATEWAY ASSOCIATION (COLDSTREAM IN BLOOM)

An application requesting £1000.00 was received for their Courthouse Place Car Park Flower beds project for the purchase of perennial plants.

Recommendation

It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership **award** a grant of **£1000.00**

SEA THE CHANGE

An application requesting £5000.00 was received to part fund a coordinator to take forward their Berwickshire Bikes Project. Our guidelines state that some salary costs specific to projects can be applied for. However, the panel feel it would be better to focus support on the delivery of specific elements of the proposed project.

The application was discussed at length by the panel with some members expressing their support, while others questioned whether the project was at too early a stage for the fund to be able to support.

It was suggested that had the application been looking for more specific items rather than a development coordinator that the application may have been more successful. NS suggested that BAVS may be able to help with the development work for the project and offered to link in with the group if they wish.

Recommendation

It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership **do not award** a grant on this occasion.

SWINTON AND LADYKIRK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

An application requesting £414.25 was received for the refurbishment of village benches, a Swinton Enhancement Group Banner and Safety wear and equipment.

Recommendation

It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership **award** a grant of **£414.25**

COLDINGHAM COMMUNITY COUNCIL

An application requesting £4,400 was received to purchase a PA system.

There was some discussion regarding this application as it had been received a few days past the deadline. JA explained that there were extenuating circumstances which led to the late application. KD noted that he felt that if an application came in late, but not so late that its inclusion in that round of funding would affect the effective administration of the other grants, then it could be deemed as acceptable. Council Officers to make a judgement call upon this and only circulate valid applications to the panel.

The panel were generally supportive of the application as it would allow the group to become more self-sufficient, potentially lead to more events being held for the community and that the purchase of the PA system would allow community members to be trained in its use giving community members a chance to learn a new skill.

Recommendation

It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£4,400**.

HORSE TIME RING- FENCED FUNDS

The Panel discussed and viewed the evaluation form and agreed that the ring-fenced funds could now be released as the conditions for the second payment had been met.

5. EVALUATION OF THE BERWICKSHIRE NSF AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

KD asked the panel for feedback regarding their experience of following the NSF Assessment Panel Process.

A general discussion took place, and the panel felt that overall, the process worked well and made the following positive observations:

- Blind scoring is good.
- Clear and fair process.
- Plenty of opportunity for discussion which allows for consensus decision.

The Panel made the following suggestions for possible areas of improvement:

- Having a larger pool of panel members to ensure that all areas of Berwickshire were represented and to ensure that enough panel members were available to make decisions.
- Providing more support to inexperienced applicants regarding the completion of their applications.
- Possible further development of the application form to ensure that the specific information requested in the application form clearly relates to the assessment criteria.
- Panel members being sent copies of the evaluation forms of completed projects so they can see the effectiveness of projects and the value of the NSF.
- Asking groups for details of volunteer hours projected/used to carry out projects within the application and evaluation.
- Making a representation to the council to request a larger budget as it was felt that often community groups are looking for financial support to carry out work that historically would have been carried out by the council.

KD requested information regarding the total number of applications received and the amount of funding requested from the NSF over the past year. AB to compile.

6. NEXT ROUND OF FUNDING

GJ asked the panel to discuss, should community funding be available in 2024/25, when they would like to reopen the fund and how many funding rounds they would like to have next year.

KD suggested 3 equally spaced application rounds per year.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 12:30 pm