

2020/2021 Community Fund: Interim Assessment Form

Locality: Eildon

Ref. No.: CF2021-EIL-15

Organisation Name: Interest Link Borders

Funding Requested: £5,000.00

ABOUT THE GROUP

Organisation Structure	Constituted
Annual Accounts Balance	£200,252.00

Are any funds ring-fenced, if so why & how much?

- £113,342 represented grants restricted to specific projects
- £86,910 unrestricted reserves
- Group target reserves of three months operating costs. Currently £10,000 above this amount.

Interest Link expect to have an unrestricted fund surplus in 2020-21, because projected expenditure is £275,000 (£20,000 less than that for 2019-20).

Has the applicant successfully applied for SBC funding within the last three years? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
SBC Funds received	Financial Year	Amount (£)	What used for?
Eildon Localities Fund	2019	£6,129.00	Group activity costs
Scottish Borders Council – Service Contract	2019/20	£21,996.00	Salary & Office Costs (annual grant)
Have they recently applied to the Common Good Fund? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

ABOUT THE PROJECT	
Project brief	<p>Interest Link are looking for funding to continue the development of an existing volunteer befriending project which supports up to 45 socially isolated children, young people and adults with learning disabilities living in Eildon/Central Borders annually. 50 family carers will also benefit from respite.</p> <p>Support is now online and through other distance methods. Because statutory activity and respite services are not operating the need has grown and support for members is now much more frequent than usual. This is expected to continue until 100% of services are back face-to-face.</p> <p>Staff hours have increased due to more Zoom sessions, these will continue until the transition back to face to face delivery.</p> <p>The Group are projecting a shortfall in salary funding in Central Borders for 2021-22 and are applying for a one-off grant of £5,000 for project staff costs. They may require to fund around £6,200 from unrestricted reserves, as shown in the funding application.</p>
Project Start Date: DD/MM/YY	01/04/2021
Total Expenditure (£)	£61,791
Community Fund Request (£)	£5,000
10% organisation contribution	

Any Other Contribution?		
Other Funding Sources	Amount (£)	At what stage?
National Lottery Community Fund	£23,000	£12k secured, £11k decision March 2021
Children in Need	£8,900.00	Secured
Gannochy Trust / Robertson Trust	£14,400.00	Secured
Better Breaks / Bank of Scotland Foundation	£4,291.00	Decision March 2021
Community Fund Outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities have more access to better quality local services or activities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities have more access to a better quality environment <input type="checkbox"/> Communities have more pride in their community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities have more access to better quality advice and information <input type="checkbox"/> More local groups or services are better supported to recover from financial difficulty	
Action Plan priorities	<p>The project meets the following priorities:</p> <p>Increase learning opportunities and skills development across a wide range of subjects and vocations and ages</p>	

ASSESSMENT	
<p>What need/demand has been evidenced for this project/activity?</p>	<p>Interest Link members have lifelong conditions that affect their development and means they need help to understand information, learn skills and live independently. Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome, autism, epilepsy and sensory impairments are often involved.</p> <p>Most children are taught in additional needs units and lack opportunities for friendships, art, drama or sport, crucial to wellbeing and personal development. In adulthood as few as 0.75% live with a partner or spouse and 4.5% are in employment (2019 Learning Disability Statistics). Day Centre social opportunities have reduced as a result of Covid and being out in the community on their own can feel intimidating. Family carers often have a lifelong role which is difficult to sustain, causes financial hardship and isolates them from their communities.</p>

	<p>Currently social isolation, lack of opportunity and pressure on families has increased as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Coupled with most activities and respite, schools, college, supported employment schemes, day centres not currently being open there is a greater need and demand on this service.</p> <p>Interest Link currently have 60 members registered within Central Borders and the group aim to support 50 of these individuals.</p> <p>The project will aim to be a development of existing work that has taken place which will result in a blend of distance and face-to-face befriending.</p>
<p>What benefits will be gained from the project/activity and how well does the project/activity meet the outcomes of the scheme?</p>	<p>An increase in the number of staff hours that Interest Link can offer will allow them to continue to offer increased support to 10 members who are involved in 1 to 1 provision and the 35 members that are involved in the befriending groups. Part of the role of the staff will be to support volunteers and to provide training. Interest Link has 45 volunteers, 10 of whom are under 25.</p> <p>As a result of increased demand and need Interest Link have provided support on a more frequent basis, usually each week as opposed to fortnightly. The group also maintain contact with ongoing social media interaction and activities between meetings. This will help to provide more support to carers.</p> <p>Many members need support to use Zoom and their carers are also in need of activities as a result Interest Link have made the sessions into family events. They have also been able to source tutors nationally to broaden activities, for example The Reptile Experience from Essex. Activity materials and cooking ingredients are delivered to members' and volunteers' homes and the organisation have provided iPads and internet connections to those who without the equipment or connections.</p> <p>Members who cannot access Zoom still have activity materials delivered and are linked in with volunteers who provide a mixture of telephone, social media and letter writing contact.</p>

<p>What support and involvement of the wider community is there for this project/activity?</p>	<p>Interest link are connected with organisations across the Scottish borders. They have just surpassed 30 years as an organisation (1990 – 2020).</p> <p>They cover Central Borders, Roxburgh, Tweeddale and Berwickshire.</p> <p>Interest Link works closely with local schools & Borders College to reach potential members and recruit volunteers.</p> <p>They also work with the SBC/NHS Learning Disabilities Team, third sector providers such as Brothers of Charity, Ark Housing & Streets Ahead to reach members and liaise on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Other organisations involved include Borders Additional Needs Group, Youth Borders, Volunteer Centre Borders, the Co-op, Tweedbank allotments, Borders Care Voice, Learning Disabilities Providers Group and the Youth and Families Specialist Network.</p> <p>Representatives from some of the above form a Central Borders committee that assist and advise staff.</p>
<p>What efforts have been made by the applicant to secure other sources of funding for the project/activity?</p>	<p>The group have secured repeat funding for 2021-22, from previous funders and new applications are also pending. St. James Place Foundation are not making grants and some others (e.g. Baily Thomas Charitable Fund) are taking longer to process applications. It's likely that some funders will have less income/more applications and make smaller grants (e.g. Better Breaks, National Lottery Community Fund).</p> <p>Interest Link will continue to source funds from as wide a range of sources as possible, both within Scottish Borders and externally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local fundraising events and donations • Local trusts & Funds (e.g. Hayward Sanderson, Selkirk Common Good Fund) • Scottish Borders Council service contract (funds 7% of core budget) • National Trusts such as Gannochy, Garfield Weston & Robertson Trust

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations (e.g. Bank of Scotland Foundation) • National Lottery Community Fund • Children in Need • Scottish Government programmes (e.g. Better Breaks) <p>The organisation aim is to secure regular moderate size grants from a large number of funders rather than rely too heavily on large grants from a few sources. This approach has sustained them for 20 years.</p>
<p>How will the impact and success of the project be measured? What happens at the end of the project/activity or when the funding is spent?</p>	<p>Members will develop their friendships with volunteers & each other and be able to pursue their interests, participate in community activities, make choices, and develop independence. This will reduce their social isolation and greatly improve happiness/wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>The measure of success for the Members will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More friends • Improved happiness/mental wellbeing, • Greater confidence • Increased self-esteem • Better social & communication skills <p>The measure of success for Carer will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved wellbeing, • More opportunities to enjoy a life outside of their caring role • Greater sustainability of that role <p>The Organisation will measure these outcomes using existing tools, developed with ESS and including:</p> <p>Annual questionnaires for members, carers and volunteers about whether the organisation has made an impact on them and the person they care for/support.</p> <p>More examples can be seen at https://www.interestlink.org.uk/evaluation.htm</p>
<p>Quotes received for items of expenditure</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Have appropriate permissions been sought/granted?	n/a
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SBC OFFICER ASSESSMENT

The application meets the criteria of the Community Fund.

Additional Terms and Conditions:

Scottish Government coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance must be adhered to with a protocol for safe participation in the programme and use of resources developed, and all participants agreeing to adhere to this protocol.

We would seek the group to particularly report on:

Number of activities provided to members

Number of members supported to access provision