

Report of Community Fund Assessment Panel

for BAP Meeting at 6.30pm on Thursday 3rd March 2022

Introduction

This paper outlines the recent review of applications undertaken by the Berwickshire Area Partnership Community Fund Assessment Panel (BAP AP). It gives a brief description of the process and the applications considered. It goes on to make recommendations for consideration by the BAP.

BAP AP met for the third full meeting of the financial year, between 2:30-5.30pm on Thursday 17th February 2022. This was the most challenging of our meetings to date as we needed to review 18 applications with a total value of circa £75k but the fund available was under £40k. Outlined below is a brief description of the process:

- The Assessment Panel members involved were Keith Dickinson (Chair), Anne McNeil, Andrew Mitchell, James Anderson, Rachel Parker (voting members) and Cllrs John Greenwell and Mark Rowley (non-voting members). Helen Laing was unable to join the meeting.
- Our aim throughout has been to assess all applications in a fair, robust and consistent way.
- We fully recognise the need for transparency and all panel members made declarations of interest where appropriate.
- Prior to our meeting SBC officers checked that applications complied with the published Eligibility Criteria.
- We blind marked all 18 applications, according to the published criteria and our individual marks were tabulated and subsequently circulated before our meeting by SBC staff.
- At the meeting we began with a review of all applications. There was strong agreement on about half the applications. In the other cases there was initially some difference of opinion.
- The overview allowed us to focus on these differences and helped us explore varying opinions and move to a shared understanding and agreement.
- The SBC councillors, contributed to the discussion, but neither scored the projects nor took part in the final decision making.
- Following a discussion of each application we were able to move relatively smoothly to a consensus and agreement on our recommendations.
- We did not require to take a vote on any application.
- The total value of all applications was significantly less than the fund available, we needed to consider the applications as a collection of applications and made our judgements, and recommendations, in relation to the available funding pot.

A brief description of all the applications considered and some individual feedback from our deliberations, can be found in **Appendix 1**

Review of BAP Assessment Panel

We had intended to review the operation of the AP prior to this meeting of the BAP, but due to the pressure of assessment work involved in our last AP meeting we were unable to undertake a full annual review. Nevertheless, we intend to have a special meeting to evaluate our recent operation and report on our findings to the next BAP meeting. In the meantime, I have indicated below a few general points.

Additional Panel Members

A member of the Assessment Panel recently stood down, because of pressure of work. This means that there are currently 3 vacancies on the panel. We will continue to seek to appoint further members to the panel and anyone interested in joining the panel should contact Gillian Jardine GJardine@scotborders.gov.uk or James Purves JPurves@scotborders.gov.uk for further information.

Review of possible changes to the Guidance

There have now been two rounds of funding considered by the Assessment Panel under the new system and the AP feel that some minor changes should be made to improve the process and more particularly related to the application form. It is proposed that:

- the first question on the application form should be for a 50-word summary of what the project aims to achieve and how much it will cost.
- other questions on the form should more closely correspond to the guidance notes and marking schedule used by the assessment panel. No changes to the existing criteria are proposed.
- word limits should be added to some sections of the application form, to help both applicants and assessors focus on the published criteria.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1. It is recommended that BAP approve the awards detailed in Appendix 2**
- 2. It is recommended that BAP agree to the AP making minor amendments to the Application Form and Guidance Notes prior to the opening of the next round of applications.**

Appendix 1

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL BERWICKSHIRE COMMUNITY FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL

MINUTES of Meeting of BERWICKSHIRE
COMMUNITY FUND ASSESSMENT
PANEL held via Microsoft Teams on
Thursday, 17 February at 2:30pm

Present:- K Dickinson (Chair), J Anderson, A McNeil, A Mitchell, R
Parker,
Councillors J Greenwell, M Rowley

In Attendance:- Locality Development Co-ordinator G Jardine and Community
Engagement Officer James Purves

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the third meeting of Berwickshire Community Fund Assessment Panel. There were no introductions to make but it was noted that Davey Scott is no longer able to continue in his role as assessment panel member and has stepped down. It was agreed that SBC and the assessment panel/ Area Partnership will continue to promote the opportunity for new members to join the panel.

2. UPDATE ON DECISIONS MADE AT DECEMBER BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP

SBC confirmed that Eyemouth & District Community Trust had contacted SBC following the December meeting to discuss future funding applications and funding opportunities.

3. ASSESSMENT PANEL REVIEW

Due to the full agenda of this meeting, it was agreed that the assessment panel would arrange a further meeting to review the full role and function of the assessment panel. However, the panel agreed they would request approval of the Area Partnership in March to edit the application form and guidance notes for the opening of the 2022/23 Community Fund.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was agreed that due to the number of applications to be assessed, panel members would make their declaration of interest when the relevant application is due to be assessed and omit themselves from the discussion.

5A FUNDING AVAILABLE

SBC confirmed the balance of the Community Fund and the total value of the 18 applications received.

5b OVERALL REVIEW OF MARKS

The Chair provided an overview of scores received and commented that there was similarity in scoring for some applications and a wider scale of scoring for other

applications. The Chair proposed a process for reviewing the scores and assessment of the 18 applications which the panel agreed to.

5C REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS 1-18

1. Berwickshire Youth Piping

An application from Berwickshire Youth Piping requesting £5,000 was received for a project to help fund professional tuition in piping and drumming to advance the musical education of the young people of Berwickshire. This application had strong and broad support

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £5,000.

2. Berwickshire Marine Reserve

An application from BMR requesting £4,990.05 was received to extend their pilot project Lobster Hatchery and Marine Education Centre, covering rental and staff costs. This was a clear application for a good community based environmental project.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £4,990.05

3. Abundant Borders

An application from Abundant Borders requesting £2,448 was received to provide fruit trees for communities across Berwickshire and to offer training in their care to individuals at sites across Berwickshire. This clearly defined project had strong support.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £2,448.

4. Connect Berwickshire Youth

An application from Connect Berwickshire Youth requesting £5,000 was received to partial fund their Office Manager's cost. Although the aims of Connect are well supported by the panel, some concern was voiced related to the likely impact of an Office Manager on the delivery of services to individuals. The panel would like to see what difference a reduced award will make to the community.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £2,000 to contribute towards salary costs.

5. Horse Time (Individual Therapy)

Declaration of interest noted by Rachel Parker

An application from Horse Time (Individual Therapy) requesting £4,500 to fund individual trauma therapy sessions. The aims of this project were clearly defined and strongly supported. The work was recognised as meeting a clear need and was particularly valuable to individuals within the community.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £4,500

6. Horse Time (Resilience Workshop)

Declaration of interest noted by Rachel Parker

An application from Horse Time (Resilience Workshop) requesting £4,500 was received for part funding a six-week Resilience and Regulation Workshop Programme. Initially there was some reluctance to support a second application from the same body. Nevertheless, upon revisiting this second application from Horse Time, its quality was recognised and therefore in the final analysis, well supported. The panel felt that before awarding this grant it would be reasonable to clarify some details and seek a statement of progress on the Individual Therapy application.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £4,500 on the condition that further information on project delivery and participant numbers is received and that the impact of two month's delivery of Horse Time's Individual Therapy programme be submitted to SBC before the Resilience Workshop grant is released.

7. Survivors Unite

An application from Survivors Unite requesting £5,000 was received for part funding towards additional administrative support, IT equipment and specialist Counselling time. This was not considered a strong application and lacked detail on identification of specific need in Berwickshire.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Survivors Unite. The panel felt the Community Fund is not the most appropriate fund for this project.

8. Eyemouth and District Community Trust

An application from EDCT requesting £4,032 was received to employ a part time fund-finder to assist and support the board with grant applications. This application lacked clarity on what precisely would be delivered. It conflated the aims and deliverables of the application with the wider Community Trust objectives and did not provide confidence that an award was justified.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to EDCT. The panel recommend EDCT seek support from BAVS for the development of future funding applications.

9. Birgham Community Trust

An application from Birgham Community Trust requesting £5,000 was received towards the costs of replacing their slate roof and replacing roof windows with Velux windows. It was noted that the Community Trust had significant unrestricted financial reserves and the Community Fund was seriously oversubscribed.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Birgham Community Trust. The panel recommends that the Trust approach the Federation of Village Halls.

10. Sea the Change

An application from Sea the Change requesting £5,000 was received to partial fund a part time Project Manager. After some detailed consideration it was agreed that the clear and worthy aims of Sea The Change had been conflated with the benefits to be derived from the appointment of a part-time manager. In a highly competitive application process, it was unclear what added value this application would deliver.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Sea the Change

11. Eyemouth Parish Church

An application from Eyemouth Parish Church requesting £5,000 was received towards the cost of regenerating their building for a new generation. This would represent a modest contribution to a very ambitious project. Questions were raised related to the suggested users of the refurbished hall space and the likelihood that the necessary funding would be achieved.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Eyemouth Parish Church

12. Eat Sleep Ride

An application from Eat Sleep Ride requesting £4,500 was received to provide an afterschool activity programme for children and young people and their families. The panel were very supportive of the overall aims of Eat Sleep Ride. However, they felt this proposed expanded portfolio of social service, counselling, youth work and mindfulness coaching might be better delivered in partnership with other existing providers.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Eat Sleep Ride

13. Gordon Village Hall

An application from Gordon Village Hall requesting £1,000 was received to install an LED system of lighting within the hall. The application was clear but the financial position indicated a fairly healthy unrestricted balance.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Gordon Village Hall. The panel recommends that Gordon Village Hall approach the Federation of Village Halls.

14. Reston Concert Band

An application from Reston Concert Band requesting £2,072.74 was received to cover venue hire costs and music equipment. There was broad support for this modest request which should provide community benefits in Reston and beyond.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £2072.74.

15. Duns Tennis Club

An application from Duns Tennis Club requesting £2,000 was received for repainting and upgrading work to the three tennis courts. Following some discussion, this modest request to support a valuable local facility gained general support from the panel.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £2,000.

16. A Heart for Duns

Declaration of interest noted from Anne McNeil.

An application from A Heart for Duns requesting £5,000 was received for a one-off project to replace equipment and improve the facilities within the Volunteer Hall. Following detailed discussion, the panel considered the request to provide tables and chairs, for the very well used Volunteer Hall, to be worthy of support.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £5,000.

17. Borders Talking Newspaper

An application from Borders Talking Newspaper requesting £4,857 was received for a contribution to the annual costs of running the Borders Talking Newspaper. The panel supported this application which was based in Berwickshire and achieved a lot with the help of a wide network of community volunteers.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of £4,857.

18. Live Learn Earn

An application from Live Learn Earn requesting £5,000 was received to create artwork to be sited within the Eyemouth community locality. This application was discussed thoroughly. On balance it was agreed that it was insufficiently clear what would be delivered and by whom. It was therefore unclear what impact the application would have.

DECISION NOTED that:

It was agreed to recommend that Berwickshire Area Partnership not award funding to Live Learn Earn.

5d DECISIONS AND REPORT TO AREA PARTNERSHIP

It was agreed 10 applications would be recommended to the Area Partnership for funding which would leave a funding balance of £2,620.21.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TBC.

The meeting concluded at 17:20pm

Appendix 2

Berwickshire Community Fund - Recommendations

Applicant	Requested	Awarded	Decision
Berwickshire Youth Piping	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	Approved
Berwickshire Marine Reserve	£4,990.05	£4,990.05	Approved
Abundant Borders	£2,448.00	£2,448.00	Approved
Connect Berwickshire Youth project	£5,000.00	£2,000.00	Part approved
Horse Time 1 Individual Therapy	£4,500.00	£4,500.00	Approved
Horse Time 2 Resilience Workshop	£4,500.00	£4,500.00	Conditional
Reston Concert Band	£2,072.74	£2,072.74	Approved
Duns Tennis Club	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	Approved
A Heart for Duns	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	Approved
Borders Talking Newspaper	£4,857.00	£4,857.00	Approved
Total Approved		£37,367.79	
Survivors Unite	£5,000.00		Declined
EDCT	£4,032.00		Declined
Birgham Community Trust	£5,000.00		Declined
Sea the Change	£5,000.00		Declined
Eyemouth Parish Church	£5,000.00		Declined
Eat Sleep Ride	£4,500.00		Declined
Gordon Village Hall	£1,000.00		Declined
Live Learn Earn	£5,000.00		Declined
Total Declined	£34,532.00		

TOTAL FUND REQUESTED	£74,899.79
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Summary of position at end of this round of assessment and awards

Community Fund Available	£39,988.00
Total request	£74,899.79
Applications Approved	£37,367.79
Applications Declined	£34,532.00
Balance	£2,620.21