

# **Report of Neighbourhood Support Fund Assessment Panel**

## **BAP Meeting on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

### **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 2023/24**

Berwickshire Area Partnership, Neighbourhood Support Fund, Assessment Panel (NSF AP) met for the first full meeting of the financial year, between 11am and 1pm on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Approximately £50k was available for distribution through the Neighbourhood Support Fund during the 2023/2024 financial year. It should be recorded that this is half of the £100k NSF allocated last year.

Initially there were 27 applications to this round, however during the process two were withdrawn. The panel were faced with assessing 25 applications, to a value of circa £118k. Significantly more than the funding available for the whole year. After some discussion the Assessment Panel decided to base their discussions on the assumption that about £35k might be allocated during this round. This should ensure that about £15k funding will be available for a second round of applications later in the year.

It is good to know that more communities have become more aware of the NSF and have made applications. But again worrying that many deserving applicants will be disappointed that their strong applications did not receive support. It is a concern that future application rates may decline as the success rate of worthy applications continues to fall, largely due to financial constraints.

### **Panel Membership and**

We are pleased that two new members have joined the Assessment Panel this year: Nicky Seed and Bob Hope.

During the last meeting the Chair initiated a discussion on the make-up of the Assessment Panel membership especially the question of the spread of Assessment Panel membership. There was specific discussion around the need to avoid a

perception of impartiality, should there be several members of the panel from one community council area. It was agreed that, although every effort should be made to recruit as widely as possible, it was important not to have arbitrary geographical or demographic barriers to prevent people applying to become members of the assessment panel.

There are still two vacancies on the panel and future applications are welcome from all members of the Berwickshire community. The Panel believe that further recruitment of panel members would be beneficial and allow for some succession planning. Should more than two additional panel members be identified consideration could be given to additional responsibilities for those additional panel members. An example could be the undertaking of evaluations of outcome of past awarded grants. The Panel therefore request that BAP agrees to the appointment of up to two additional Assessment panel members to operate in a some backup roles where appropriate.

Anyone interested in joining the panel should contact Gillian Jardine [GJardine@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:GJardine@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 9<sup>th</sup> 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. A review of Area Partnerships by SBC was paused last year, due to the local elections, but discussions to plan for the review of the Area Partnership, including our delegated powers request, are underway. The endorsement by the BAP for devolved powers has been shared with SBC.

### **Assessment of Applications**

I have outlined below the assessment process:

- The Assessment Panel members involved were Keith Dickinson (Chair), Andrew Mitchell, Kathy Huffman, Jim Hettrick, Nicky Seed, Bob Hope, John Greenwell and Mark Rowley.
- Recognising the need for transparency, panel members made declarations of interest related to a number of applications.

- Prior to the meeting SBC officers checked that applications complied with the published Eligibility Criteria.
- In view of the record number of applications, each was initially scored and ranked by three panel members.
- Where there was an identified difference between the initial three rankings, a fourth member assessed and ranked the application.
- Applications were blind marked, according to the published criteria and SBC officers tabulated and circulated all marks and rankings prior to our meeting.
- Initially a group of applications, that were highly supported by all who had assessed them, were considered. After due consideration all were considered worthy of support and of high priority.
- A second group of applications, that were broadly supported, were considered and provisional recommendations made.
- Before final recommendations were made panel members were given the opportunity to consider in detail any of the remaining applications.
- There were clearly applications that were considered fundable but considered to be of a lower priority and they could not be supported due to the funding constraints.
- The volume of applications, this funding round, tested the process and the panel. However, although the assessment task was demanding, we moved relatively smoothly to a consensus and agreement on our recommendations.

The minutes of the assessment panel meeting can be seen in **Appendix 1** below, which includes a brief description of applications supported and some individual feedback from our deliberations. Our recommendations are summarised in **Appendix 2**.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- 1. It is recommended that BAP approve the awards detailed in Appendix 2**

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL  
BERWICKSHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL**

MINUTES of Meeting of BERWICKSHIRE  
COMMUNITY FUND ASSESSMENT PANEL held  
via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August at  
11.00.

Present:- K Dickinson (Chair), Andrew Mitchell, Jim Hettrick, Kathy Huffman,  
Nicky Seed, Bob Hope and Cllr M Rowley.

Apologies:- Cllrs J Greenwell and J Anderson

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

### **1. WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced Bob Hope and Nicky Seed as the two new members the assessment panel.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL**

The Chair initiated a discussion on the make-up of the Assessment Panel membership especially the question of Berwickshire community perception.

There was then a discussion among those in attendance as to the future recruitment of new members to the panel.

There was specific discussion around potentially how “community perception” of impartiality may be compromised if there were several members of the panel all from one community council area.

All the members understand that they can, if necessary, make a Declaration of Interest, regarding any application.

After a thorough discussion it was agreed that, although every effort should be made to recruit as widely as possible, it was important not to have barriers to prevent people applying to become members of the assessment panel. There are still two vacancies on the panel and future applications are welcome from all members of the Berwickshire community.

### **3. PROJECT ASSESSMENTS**

#### **BERWICKSHIRE SWAP**

An application from Berwickshire Swap requesting £3131.72 was received for storage, shelving and laundering equipment at their new premises. The panel noted all the good work that Berwickshire Swap is involved in and the application scored highly.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£3131.72**

#### **ABUNDANT BORDERS**

An application requesting £913.00 was received for additional, portable sustainable grass cutting equipment for garden maintenance in Duns, Eyemouth, Foulden and Ayton and to maintain primary school beds at Cockburnspath. The panel felt strongly that this was a very worthwhile project to support given its modest cost for a high community impact.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area

Partnership award a grant of **£913.00**

**RETWEED**

An application requesting £4,941.00 was received for their Community Courses at Gavinton, Cranshaws and Coldstream. The panel are all aware of the good work that ReTweed has already been involved in and the application scored highly among panel members.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£4,941.00**

**LEITHOLM, ECCLES AND BIRGHAM COMMUNITY COUNCIL.**

An application requesting £2,664.00 was received for their Connecting Leitholm project. The panel's comments were supportive of the project, highlighting how well the community council had engaged with their community re the aims of the project so that it had the community behind it.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£2,664.00**

**SWINTON AND LADYKIRK COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

An application requesting £400.00 was received for Spring bulb planting & refurbishment of football goals on the Green. The Assessment Panel were very supportive of this project in that it was very cheap, cost effective and would make a highly visible difference. Some panel members also commented that these small, low cost funding applications allowed scarce community funding grants to be spread out over a wider number of applications.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£400.00**

**ALLANBANK ARTS VIA UMBRELLA GROUP AHFD**

An application requesting £4,750 was received for their Creative Club project. The Assessment panel discussed this application at length and whilst it was generally supportive of the aim of the project, they were not supportive of recommending approval of £2,500 staff costs and questioned how the success of the project would be measured. It was agreed to recommend funding for the items of expenditure excluding the staff costs element.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a Partial grant of **£2,250.00**

**COCKBURNSPATH AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

An application requesting £5,000.00 was received for the development of the Cockburnspath After School Club. This application scored highly with assessment panel members who felt that supporting the After School Club was also supporting the future and viability of the primary school itself. The panel stated that many after school clubs were finding it difficult to be financially sustainable. The panel was strongly supportive of this project.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£5,000.00**

**FOULDEN, MORDINGTON AND LAMBERTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

An application requesting £2,100.00 was received for their Automated External Defibrillator (AED) project for the Adopted phone box in Lamberton. The panel felt that the location of the phone box meant that the AED would protect a lot of people as it was also in close proximity to Eat Sleep Ride's premises where there was a large number of people.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£2,100.00**

### **EYEMOUTH MUSEUM TRUST**

An application requesting £5,000.00 was received for repainting and maintenance of Eyemouth Museum's historic windows. The panel were generally supportive of this project which they felt would keep the museum building safe which was a high priority, they felt, given its central location in Eyemouth.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£5,000.00**

### **EYEMOUTH HARBOUR TRUST**

An application requesting £5,000.00 was received for their Sea Garden & Art Wall project. The panel were generally supportive of this project given its central location in Eyemouth and its clear aims and ambitions. The panel were supportive of its multi-generational appeal with the significant involvement of school students in delivering the project.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£5,000.00**

### **PAXTON HOUSE TRUST**

An application requesting £4,401.00 was received for their Community Garden project. The panel had varying views of this project but through discussion agreed that it would be sustainable for the environment and educational with many groups of school children currently visiting Paxton House.

**Decision NOTED that:-** It was agreed to recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership award a grant of **£5,000.00**

### **APPLICATIONS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL.**

**Note that it was stated at the Assessment Panel meeting that, due to a large fall in funding available from the Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund that some strong applications could not be recommended for funding.**

**The applications below will all be checked for suitability for other funding options that may be available.**

### **BERWICKSHIRE MARINE RESERVE**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for their "Celebrating Community Led Conservation, Eyemouth & St Abbs" project. The panel felt that this was not a strong enough application to recommend it for approval at the Area Partnership meeting.

**Decision NOTED that: -** the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

### **BORDER LINKS**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for their Disability Hub project. The assessment panel discussed this application at length and had questions re the suitability of the application for the Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund given that their premises are in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland.

**Decision NOTED that: -** after discussion the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

### **A HEART FOR DUNS**

An application was made requesting £4,897.00 for their Duns Warm Hub, Volunteer Hall, Duns project. The panel discussed this application and felt that a high part of the application was for venue hire and staff costs and the panel felt that other funding opportunities may be more appropriate than the Neighbourhood Support Fund. The panel were supportive of the good work that AHFD does and did consider part funding the project.

**Decision NOTED that: -** after discussion the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

### **BAVS**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for their "Border Wheels" project. The panel

discussed this application at length and there were a range of contrasting views. The panel could not agree that this Borders-wide restructuring was appropriate for the Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund whilst the high staffing costs making up most of the request was not well supported.

**Decision NOTED that:** - after discussion the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **DUNS TENNIS CLUB**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for replacement netting around the tennis courts. The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **EYEMOUTH ENHANCEMENT GROUP**

An application was made requesting £4,115.00 for their “Beautiful Eyemouth” project. The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **DUNS NEWSLETTER VIA UMBRELLA GROUP AHFD**

An application was made requesting £2,768.00 for their “Duns and District Community Newsletter.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **GREENLAW FESTIVAL TRUST**

An application was made requesting £3,100 for their “Greenlaw Floral Gateway Breakthrough Project”.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **OUTSIDE THE BOX DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT LTD**

An application was made requesting £4,980 for their “LINKS Eyemouth” project.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **DUNS PLAYFEST**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for their “Duns Play Fest 6” project. The panel stated that they had previously advised Duns PlayFest that the Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund was not appropriate for future applications for funding their productions.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **SCOTTISH SURFING FEDERATION**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for their “Gathering of the Clans, Pease Bay” project.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **EYEMOUTH FISHERMAN’S CHOIR**

An application was made requesting £1,095 for their “Replacement Electric Piano” project.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **AYTON HERITAGE**

An application was made requesting £1,776.00 for their “ St Dionysius Church” project. The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **LONGFIELDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, DUNS**

An application was made requesting £5,000 for their “Longfields Residents Mini Bus” project.

The panel did not award this application enough scores to put it forward for discussion given the limited funds available.

**Decision NOTED that:**-the panel agreed NOT to recommend the project for funding.

#### **4. FUNDING AVAILABLE**

As there is significantly less funding available from the Berwickshire Neighbourhood Support Fund than last year the panel was informed that SBC’s Communities and Partnership’s team will also explore other sources of funding that may be appropriate for applicants.

#### **5. DECISIONS AND REPORT TO AREA PARTNERSHIP**

It was agreed that the above 11 applications would be recommended to the BAP for funding.

#### **6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TO BE CONFIRMED

The meeting concluded at 13:15pm.