

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