

Ray Windfarm Fund CIC Board Meeting

Date 23rd March 2023

Kirkwhelpington Memorial Hall

Time 7.00pm

1. In attendance

Action

David Burn, (DB) Chair; Katie Wood (KW); Martin Chilvers (MC); Deb Walton (DW); Peter Ramsden (PR); Mark Neale (MN); Sarah Crone (SC); Paul Cowie (PC); Martin Dickson-Green (MDG); Joanne Willis, (JW) CDO (Minutes)
Apologies Chris Robson (CR); Lesley Gosling (LG); Sarah Lunn (SL)

2. Presentations from Andy Dean, Community Action Northumberland and Matthew Baker, Sycamore Net Zero and Northumberland County Council Net Zero and Sustainability

CAN has been in operation since 1951 and is a part of a nationwide network. Their current initiatives involve helping to make village halls more sustainable and achieve Net Zero targets, community led housing initiatives, rural employment hubs, fuel poverty and energy advice and supplying items such as LED lightbulbs, slow cookers, insulating tape and reflectors behind radiators. They are also particularly focused on off grid rural homes both off the gas supply network and those off electricity grid, of which there are 300 in Northumberland. There are now 30 Warm Hubs in Northumberland and CAN have received further funding from Northumberland County Council to set up another five. Would RWF help to fund feasibility studies for community buildings within our area who wish to have sustainable energy supplies. Tarsset Village Hall is currently having solar panels installed on their roof, would other community buildings be interested? Potential future projects involve district heating funds.

Matthew works for Northumberland County Council tackling the Net Zero targets and is also a resident of Whittington parish. He gave a presentation which focused on the energy usage in Kirkwhelpington parish. He would like to look at ways that within our rural communities we can lower our energy usage and costs, bearing in mind that after 2026 homes with off grid gas connections will be banned from purchasing new kerosene boilers, and must instead use air or ground source heat pump systems. One of the proposed ideas were using a district heating fund, where connections are close together and close to the source, a centralised heat station. This will require studies to be undertaken of the suitability of villages, investment in infrastructure and a lot of community involvement. He would like to create a CIC, to investigate some of the proposed solutions to the rural energy situation.

Andy and Matthew left the meeting at 8pm.

3. Minutes of the last CIC meetings 23rd February 2023 and matters arising

Accepted as a true record.

4. Notes of Virtual ARC 16th March 2023

Accepted as a true record.

5. Minutes of Virtual F & GP 14th March 2023

Accepted as a true record.

5. Declarations of interest

None

6. B4RN Update

No progress has been made with installation of broadband to Barrasford build. Decided to inform B4RN that they will be required to reapply for funding, as it has been 10 months since funds granted and nothing has begun.

7. Applications

- **235 £9,600**

Scoring system discussed on the assessment sheet, applications required to score over 60 to be successful in their application. JW to keep a spreadsheet of scores so Directors can access the information easily. Impact/ community benefit should have the most weighting.

CR's financial analysis discussed, and the questions posed answered by JW. Sole trader business with the potential to offer cost savings to residents within the area. Score 70.

Unanimous decision to award the full amount with conditions that the business must offer a discounted rate to a community building within the AoB once a year and the business should look to employ an apprentice.

- **264 £15,000**

The state of the access road is something that is of vital importance to the community run golf club and to the café operating within the clubhouse. It is having an impact on both the business and golfing and social participants to the club. The club hosts many community events and has been very proactive in undertaking fundraising to contribute to the cost of the repair using a local firm from Birtley. Score 89.

Majority decision to award £15,000.

8. School Summer term award

KW presented the report on the schools funding awarded for the spring term. Most schools had spent the extra funding on transport to swimming, which resulted in parents either making no contribution or a voluntary amount. Some had helped specific families with breakfast and after-school club provision. KW would like to continue the additional funding for the summer term to help to alleviate the cost-of-living crisis within families. In addition to this Bellingham Middle School, Chollerton Pre-school and North Tynies had also been contacted and it is proposed to extend the funding for them for the summer term. JW to request bank details and transfer the grant awards and ensure schools receive publicity guidance to reference the RWF.

KW

JW

Unanimous decision to support the full funding proposed for all the Primary, First, Pre-schools and Middle School.

9. Update on PEF presented to ARC 275

JW

Since a full application was invited following the ARC on 16th March, the applicant informed JW that they will not be permitted to run a supplementary equine business from their premises due to British Horse Racing Association rules, therefore they will not be able to open the arena for the public, as such the community benefit will no longer be provided.

All agreed that the application cannot proceed. JW to inform applicant.

10. Corsenside Director Nomination

JW

Corsenside have nominated a prospective Director, Alison Thomson, while not a Parish Councillor they will relay information to the Parish Council. JW to invite Alison to attend the next CIC meeting in April and to email RWF CIC paperwork.

11. Position of RWF CIC Chair

DB will be standing down as Chair in July after serving 3 years in the role. Nominations to stand as Chair to be accepted at the next CIC meeting.

12. Publicity – Vattenfall funded video

The video celebrating the fund featuring JW and two grant recipients H2o Trails and F&L Brewery was played to the meeting. DB would like to extend his thanks to Vattenfall for an excellent promotional video.

13. AOB

- DB proposed that the £5,000 limit for payments to successful grant applicants using a verbal verification of bank details be raised to £10,000. For amounts over £10,000 JW to continue to set up an initial payment and once informed this has been received to transfer the remainder of the grant award. This will cut down on the administrative burden for JW and the accountants with year-end reconciliations.

All agreed to raise the amount to £10,000.

- A meeting between CR, MDG, MN and JW was held on 22nd March by Zoom to discuss RWF hardware and the need for new iPad. It was decided JW would meet with MDG to see whether the RWF website had a password protected page, where meeting documents could be uploaded, and Directors could access them this way. Potential to roll out Wi-Fi to all village halls to enable Directors to access documents when attending meetings, MDG to research costings for this.
- DB requested that a draft of the 5-year plan be ready for the April CIC meeting.
- JW attended the dementia training organised by Caroline from Church and Community Partnership Tynedale at Hexham Abbey. Potential to help to make all community spaces dementia friendly, to work with Caroline and SL on what is required.

Closed 9.10pm