

Ray Windfarm Fund CIC Meeting

Date 23rd January 2025

Kirkwhelpington Memorial Hall

Time 7.00pm

1. In attendance

Action

Sarah Crone (SC) Chair; Lesley Gosling (LG); David Burn (DB), Martin Chilvers (MC); Peter Ramsden (PR); Sarah Lunn (SL); Chris Robson (CR); Shirley Stuchfield (SS); Martin Dickson-Green (MDG); Joanne Willis (JW) CDO (Minutes)

Apologies Alison Thomson (AT); Deb Walton (DW)

Non-attendance Phil Lawless (PL); Katie Wood (KW)

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Minutes of the last meeting 28th November 2024 and matters arising

Accepted as a true record.

4. Notes of ARC 16th January 2025

Accepted as a true record.

5. Grant Analysis

CR confirmed that adjustments have been made to the live document and it now tallies with the bank balance. There are funds remaining in the SDF and EAT Bursary allocations which could be added to the main pot. There is approximately £80,000 remaining with five months of the grant year.

6. Applications

- **452 Scots Gap Community Group £3,500**

Request for funding towards the cost of a replacement boiler to enable the Methodist Chapel to continue with its weekly programme of events including 'Friday at the Gap'. The organisation has applied for a grant from the Community Foundation and will supplement with their own funds.

Scoring - Impact 40 Organisation 18 Engagement & Inclusion 18 Planning & Delivery 15 Total=91

Unanimous decision to award full grant amount.

- **389 First & Last Brewery**

This grant was agreed in June 24, however the company originally intended to supply the marquee has gone into liquidation. This has resulted in the amendment of plans, resulting in a timber framed structure, which can be unbolted and dismantled therefore semi-permanent with marquee sheeting. There will be no change to the agreed grant amount.

Directors agreed to the change in plans on condition that planning permission is not required.

7. School Funding

JW

Unanimous decision to continue the spring term grant allocations to primary and first schools in the area, Bellingham Middle School and the nursery and wraparound care facilities. JW to ask whether RWF plaques can be installed in school reception areas, illustrating the RWF support given to school visitors

8. EAT Bursary

The EAT Bursary requires approval from four Directors, but if there are any applications that raise contentious issues, they will be discussed at an ARC meeting, the decision will then be made whether the whole Board need to discuss the application at a CIC meeting. Some recent enquiries have raised different questions, which has led to this discussion. The EAT Bursary is a means for us to 'Level Up' and ensure young people and those wishing to retrain or become apprentices are given the opportunities that those living in urban areas have access to.

A recent enquiry was received from a local business regarding the increase in wages, pensions and National Insurance for apprentices after the autumn budget and can the RWF help to alleviate these costs? As stated in the EAT guidance, the grants cannot fund the salary of apprentices, but can cover incidental expenses such as equipment, travel, specialist clothing etc that the apprentice needs to complete their work or college days associated with the apprenticeship.

9. Community Transport

MC
JW

The transport subgroup met on 7th January with Mick Marston of Derwent Valley Car Club who outlined their successful community transport initiative, where EVs are purchased, kept in a central location and hired by the end user or a bank of volunteer drivers can use the vehicles to drive those requiring transport to appointments, shopping etc. While it was an interesting initiative it is labour intensive due to the ongoing operating commitments and not something the RWF could commit to.

The Church and Community Partnership are piloting a volunteer driver scheme in our area and have begun to recruit more volunteer drivers and are interested in growing the pilot. MC to meet with them and organise a meeting of Otterburn, Elsdon, Rochester and Byrness PCs.

PR received word from a Scots Gap Councillor that the Adapt bus that used to run from Belsay to Morpeth has now ceased, is there a possibility that the Byrness to Morpeth route we fund could be diverted to pick up from Kirkwhelpington, Cambo and Scots Gap. Directors agreed that as Byrness has an existing Adapt service on a Monday to Hexham we could seek to reroute the Wednesday bus to Morpeth beginning in Otterburn, picking up in Kirkwhelpington, Cambo and Scots Gap. The Adapt service must be promoted through PCs and social media. JW to speak to Adapt.

10. Director positions

JW

After receiving several applications for the post of Director, interviews were carried out by SC, SL and MDG. A successful candidate has been invited to become a RWF Director.

11. Website/ Social Media

SC
JW

SC has contacted Berry Jordan and is waiting for confirmation whether Vattenfall are able to support the publicity and social media promotion financially. JW to share new website link for Director feedback.

12. Shared Drive Documents

JW

After SS had requested appendices for the Governance Handbook, JW asked whether Directors would like all relevant Governance documents and policies to be uploaded to the Shared Drive. JW will work through the documents ensuring everything is up to date,

policies are reviewed by the F & GP in the first instance and then approved by the CIC, as an ongoing exercise.

13. B4RN Project Update

JW

MDG informed Directors the Kirkwhelpington cabinet went live today, with contractors now at Knowesgate. B4RN are waiting for some landowners to sign wayleaves but it is hoped the first connections will begin in February. There is still investment needed for the Woodburn's section of the network. JW to share any B4RN posts on social media.

14. 457 Coquetdale Squirrel Group

**JW
SC**

This Preliminary Enquiry Form and supporting information was discussed at last week's ARC meeting and Directors declined the enquiry as the community benefit was not sufficient. JW has received an email yesterday objecting to the reasoning for the decline of the application and that correspondence had not been received in a timely manner from RWF. JW had explained to the applicant there had been a mix of IT and human error and had apologised for the delay in responding. All Directors agreed that they would not support the application as the community benefit was not clearly defined. JW to consult the Complaints policy to ensure we have responded correctly and share this with the applicant. To liaise with SC on a response to the applicant.

15. AOB

JW

- We may receive a resubmitted application from Chollerton PCC who are restricted by time as have additional grants agreed with timescales to drawdown the funding. JW gave an incorrect deadline of February 13th for documents for a CIC meeting on 27th February, which are now bi-monthly and so the next CIC would be March 27th. Directors agreed to a Teams CIC on 27th February if the application is submitted.
- We have received a letter of thanks including photographs from NT & RCP for the RWF grant awarded towards the cost of replacement windows for Station House, JW to scan and circulate.
- On reviewing the website content, JW has found wording which states that grants for individuals would be considered between £500 to £1,000, this falls outside the three Funds. To remove from the website.
- The Chatty Café Bellingham no longer falls under the umbrella of North Tyne & Redesdale Community Partnership and is operating in its own right. The grant awarded has been transferred to their own bank account.

Closed 8.25pm