

# Ray Windfarm Fund CIC Meeting

Date 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025  
Birtley Village Hall  
Time 7.00pm

## 1. In attendance

**Action**

Sarah Crone (SC) Chair; David Burn (DB), Martin Chilvers (MC); Peter Ramsden (PR); Chris Robson (CR); Shirley Stuchfield (SS); Phil Lawless (PL); Lesley Gosling (LG); Katie Wood (KW); Alison Thomson (AT); Sarah Lunn (SL); Joanne Willis (JW) CDO (Minutes)

**Apologies** Martin Dickson-Green (MDG); Deb Walton (DW); Cris Hartley (CH)

## 2. Declarations of interest

Raised at the F & GP meeting, forms completed from all attendees. This should be a live document of any additional groups and committees Directors are part of, then conflicts of interest should be announced in a meeting.

## 3. Minutes of the last meeting 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and matters arising

Accepted as a true record.

## 4. Notes of ARC 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Accepted as a true record.

## 5. Minutes of F & GP 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Accepted as a true record.

## 6. Grant Analysis

The reserve figure was raised at the F & GP meeting, Vattenfall encourage a reserve is maintained, this is currently £10,000. All agreed this should be 50% of yearly administrative costs and therefore raise it to £15,000. There is currently approximately £61,000 remaining in the budget, minus the £5,000 reserve increase which leaves an approximate figure of £56,000 to spend before the grant year ends.

## 7. Applications

- **439 Melissa's Beauty Box £7,000**

Request for funding towards the cost of relocating and developing an existing beauty therapy business in Bellingham. The business has been trading for several years and has the chance to relocate to a front street property, allowing the expansion and increase of services offered, including a potential hairdresser position, which the AoB does not have. The applicant hopes to increase the services and employment offered, which will allow her to offer mobile services at home for the elderly and those unable to attend due to mobility issues. CR agreed the business produced realistic and progressive forecasts.

**Scoring - Impact 35 Organisation 18 Engagement & Inclusion 18 Planning & Delivery 18 Total=89**

**Unanimous decision to award full grant amount.**

- **446 Kirkharle Creative £9,000**

CR expressed a conflict of interest.

The application is for the upgrade of the children's play park at Kirkharle Courtyard, and an e-charging unit for bicycles has been added since the PEF stage. Directors have discounted the e-charging pod from the current application, as there is only one quote, the need has not

been sufficiently identified and more information is required; this could be applied for later. The Creative will contribute 10% of the costs towards the playground update. Directors discussed whether the playpark could be considered a community facility, this was agreed as anyone from across the area could use it without having to pay.

The total project cost for the playpark upgrade is £6,445, Directors agreed to the 10% contribution from Kirkharle Creative and award £5,800.50.

**Scoring - Impact 35 Organisation 18 Engagement & Inclusion 15 Planning & Delivery 15 Total=83**

**Majority decision to award £5,800.50.**

- **465 Lander Mason £5,000**

Request for funding towards the cost of a second-hand van. The vehicle will be used for Lander Mason and to move equipment for BAAFest, a festival organised by Lander Mason in Bellingham. CR stated that the governance and financials of the business were sound.

Directors agreed that this was something that represented the arts in our area. Though the benefit was limited to the few days per year of BAAFest, as many of the school's tuition, performances and private tuition take place outside the area of benefit.

**Unanimous decision to decline the application due to insufficient community benefit.**

- **470 Hannah's Pet Services £3,000**

Request for funding towards a second-hand van to allow the business to operate. The current vehicle is old and requires much maintenance, this would lessen the cost to operate and ensure that clients services are delivered. For the customers who are unable to walk their dogs but keep them to ensure they are not alone, this is a valuable service. The applicant has revised the cashflow and requested grant amount after it was declined at the last meeting. CR advised the cashflow now shows business growth and is more realistic.

**Scoring - Impact 30 Organisation 15 Engagement & Inclusion 18 Planning & Delivery 15 Total=78**

**Majority decision to award the full amount.**

- **479 Cambo First School £7,787**

Request for funding towards the cost of installing a bike and scooter track in the school Grounds to help the physical and mental wellbeing of the children. The proposal has been worked on by the school staff, pupils and National Trust representatives who lease some of the land to the school. The NT have given permission for the track, though a licence has not yet been granted.

**Scoring - Impact 38 Organisation 18 Engagement & Inclusion 15 Planning & Delivery 15 Total=86**

**Unanimous decision to award full amount, on condition the grant will not be transferred until a licence is from NT issued.**

- **484 Keith Anderson Woodland Services £1,700**

**JW**

CR expressed a conflict of interest.

Request for funding towards the computer equipment costs for the business conducting tree surveys across the area and producing reports for customers. Directors expressed concerns about whether community benefit was sufficient and would the business impact on other existing tree survey businesses. JW to request an analysis of competitors to the business.

## **8. Schools summer term**

Agreed to award full amount to all schools for the summer term. To include on July CIC agenda, due to the financial struggles our schools are facing. The donations awarded have not been increased for five years, this should be discussed.

## 9. 24/25 Surplus Fund

Awarded this evening £39,337.50, increase to reserve figure of £5,000 and two Small Donations Fund awards have been agreed via email but not included in grant analysis totalling £1,000. £45,337.50 has been agreed this evening including the two SDF grants.

## 10. Grant Monitoring

- **348 Bellingham Parish Council**

The additions to the playground have been well received and the PC have displayed a RWF plaque, ensuring users know about our contribution, which helps to raise awareness of the Funds.

## 11. Policy Reviews

- Bullying & Harassment
- Conflict of interest – Directors have completed register of interest forms during the meeting.
- Disciplinary  
Accepted and approved.

## 12. Succession Planning

Cris Hartley has resigned due to his unease with business applications. Directors felt he would have complimented the Board and were saddened to hear this. Business applications make up a small proportion of the grants awarded, the two awards this evening were the first this grant year to businesses. All Directors agreed that our area requires healthy businesses to provide employment and services that would otherwise be outsourced. Five Directors are due to retire from the Board next summer – DB, KW, LG, MC and PR of those 3 are representatives of their Parish Councils, DB for Birtley, MC for Otterburn and PR for Bavington. Active steps should be made to begin the recruitment process for PC representatives for the three parishes. JW to investigate how long Directors must stand down before putting their names forward to rejoin. The Company Secretary and Vice Chair positions will also become available when MC and DB stand down.

**JW**  
**DB**  
**MC**  
**PR**

## 13. Twentyseven Design Progress

SC and JW have held meeting with twentyseven design who have redesigned the RWF logo, the RWF logo also now includes 'Ray Wind Fund Community Grants' to ensure what we do is clear. Case study videos are being scheduled with several grant recipients to highlight the community benefit delivered.

## 14. B4RN Update

MDG gave a report on the Kirkwhelpington project. There are 68 currently connected in Kirkwhelpington, fibre blowing and splicing teams are currently working on route 2 over the Ray Estate. Listed building consent is required from the National Trust before house kits can be fixed to properties in Cambo. More sign ups are required in the Kirkwhelpington area to hit the government funding cap. 213 properties have been

connected in Barrasford with more properties due to be connected in both Kirkwhelpington and Barrasford builds next week.

## 15. AOB

JW

- **Show Fund Meeting**

Should we repeat the village show meeting held last year? JW to ask whether Elsdon, Corsenside, Kirkwhelpington would like to meet to discuss the shows, information sharing and potential funding. Bellingham and Rochester show to be invited though their outstanding monitoring forms must be returned.

- **Chollerton First School EAT Bursary**

This was discussed at the ARC meeting, the difference in costs for the course was £750. Directors happy to fund the increase as this was outside of the school's control.

- **Chollerton First School Community Benefit Fund Application**

The school has responded to requests for information from the ARC meeting. The Local Authority will not fund any structural works on the building as it is owned by the Diocese. As most of the required amount, £97,000 has been pledged by the Diocese Directors have invited a full application. JW to advise.

- PL enquired about replacing information boards for St Oswald's Way, which dissects some of our area, though only one board is present within the Area of Benefit. Only the funding of this board would be considered.

**Closed 9.30pm**