

Ray Windfarm Fund CIC Meeting

Date 28th May 2026
Birtley Village Hall
Time 7.00pm

1. Ray II Discussion with Alison Daugherty (AD), Vattenfall Ray II Project Manager and Berry Jordan (BJ), Vattenfall Business and Community Investment Advisor

Berry introduced Alison as Ray II project manager, ordinarily this meeting would have taken place prior to the community consultation events, but due to the CIC meeting schedule of alternate months this was not possible. Alison gave an overview of the Ray II project to date, which is at the scoping stage for the environmental impact assessment and this will be completed by July 2026, the three community events held last week and feedback received. The consultation process will take place in 2027-28 and involve the local community and stakeholders. Due to the size of the project, Ray II is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), the planning permission required is a Development Consent Order (DCO) issued by the planning inspectorate. Vattenfall will apply to the Planning Inspectorate, who will examine the plans and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero who would make the final decision. The turbines will be 230m to tip, larger than the existing turbines at Ray and with a potential for 20, the approximate Community Benefit Fund would be in the region of £800,000 per year. The community will also play a fundamental part in deciding the best way for the funds to be distributed, area of benefit etc through extensive consultations. Director's questions were answered and it was emphasised that within the local community it was difficult to seek volunteers for community groups/ charities/ parish councils etc and this should be considered.

AD left the meeting at 7.40pm, BJ remained for the entirety.

2. In attendance

Action

Sarah Crone (SC) Chair; Shirley Stuchfield (SS); Alison Thomson (AT); David Burn (DB); Sarah Lunn (SL); Peter Ramsden (PR); Chris Robson (CR); Charlotte Hird (CH); Martin Dickson-Green (MDG); Katie Wood (KW); Deb Walton (DW); Martin Chilvers (MC); Berry Jordan (BJ); Jo Willis (JW) CDO (Minutes) and Kevin Appleby (KA) due to replace MC as Otterburn representative

Apologies Louise Crennell (LC); Phil Lawless (PL); Paul Andrew (PA)

3. Declarations of interest

No changes. SL declared in interest for application 557 Church and Community Partnership

4. Minutes of the last meeting 26th March 2026 and matters arising

Accepted as a true record.

5. Minutes of F & GP 12th May 2026

Accepted as a true record.

6. Notes of ARC 21st May 2026

Accepted as a true record.

7. Grant Analysis for 2025-2026

JW gave an account of the grant analysis. The money remaining within the Community Benefit Fund is £19,889 if the decisions to continue the final 3rd year of multi-year funding to North Tyne Youth and the support for the Adapt bus service is agreed this evening, this includes the remaining funds in the SDF, EAT and transport funding allocations. There is

currently an underspend in the administration costs.

8. Applications

- **557 Church and Community Partnership Mental Health First Aid £3,000**

Request for funding to cover the cost of Mental Health First Aid training for 20 individuals across the area of benefit. Those undertaking the course are active within their communities and organise events such as soup and a pudd, craft sessions etc. CCP will pay for the hall hire and refreshments on course days. The request has arisen from several mental health crisis situations recently, where community members were unsure how to help. It will allow local communities to become more resilient and assist and signpost people to organisations able to help.

SL left the room.

Scoring - Impact 38 Organisation 18 Engagement & Inclusion 20 Planning & Delivery 18 Total=94

Unanimous decision to award full grant amount.

- **561 The Cheviot £15,000**

Request for funding towards the cost of extensive refurbishment of the pub including, relocation of the cellar, kitchen and guest room refurbishment. This is a very large project with match funding provided by the applicant, though confirmation that these are secured is required. The project would result in the creation of nine jobs and ensure the pub, food offering and guest rooms attract tourists and locals to the village helping the local economy. Directors felt the application needed to be more specific about the costings and what the grant would be spent on, how would the new owner ensure the business remained sustainable and better managed than the previous tenant. Majority decision to defer a decision to July CIC, to ensure the required information on costings and secured funds are provided and there would then be some hard figures on trading.

Defer to July CIC.

- **563 Kirkwhelpington PC £750**

Request for funding towards a recycled plastic picnic bench and hard standing within the playpark area in Kirkwhelpington village. This will be used by local families and walkers passing through the area. JW to enquire about the VAT situation and adjust amount accordingly if necessary.

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

Unanimous decision to award the full grant amount.

- **567 Forum Cinema Supporters Association £1,500**

Request for funding towards the cost to replace the platform lift to ensure that people with mobility issues are still able to access the cinema and it remains accessible for all. Approximately four people per day use the lift, with the cinema also offering dementia friendly screenings too. This is the closest cinema for much of our area of benefit and matched funding has been secured for the remainder of the project cost.

Scoring - Impact 38 Organisation 18 Engagement & Inclusion 18 Planning & Delivery 18 Total=92

Unanimous decision to award the full grant amount.

9. North Tyne Youth Grant - Final Year of Three

The monitoring form for the second year had been circulated and all Directors agreed it was a worthwhile organisation to continue to support. The work they do with children and young people across the area in the many youth clubs and lunch time clubs at schools is invaluable and allows our children and young people opportunities to socialise outside of school which

helps with transitions, mental and physical health and general wellbeing and gives them experiences they would not get due to our rural location. KA was involved at the start of NTY and said the work they had done to date and the organisation had exceeded all the expectations of those who had started NTY and this was largely due to the excellent youth workers who as well as work with the children had also learned how to apply for grant funding which was essential to the running of the organisation.

Unanimous decision to award the third £25,000 grant.

10. Adapt Community Transport

The Byrness- Morpeth/ Otterburn-Morpeth weekly bus service invoice is due for payment. Adapt have provided user numbers. The service shows regular usage very week and as rural transport was one of the priorities of the community in the CAN survey, Directors agreed to continue funding the service. The alternate pickups of Byrness one week and Otterburn and Kirkwhelpington the next have worked well after the initial confusion.

Directors unanimously agreed to award £11,260.

11. Northumberland Wildlife Trust Funding request

JW

JW has received an enquiry from NWT regards the Rothbury Estate purchase, which was discussed via email and determined a verbal discussion would be better. Directors gave differing viewpoints on the community benefit of a potential application, the ability to monitor the benefit delivered and the Estate falling outside the area of benefit. It was agreed the best course of action would be to invite a Preliminary Enquiry Form, as we have accepted PEFs previously from applicants outside the area of benefit delivering community benefit to those inside. Advise they must clearly identify the benefit for those living within our community.

BJ advised it would be helpful for Directors to review the CAN report and 2022 community consultation report which defines the priorities of people residing across our area of benefit. JW to circulate.

12. Vattenfall Windfarm Director visit

Potential date agreed for a director visit between 20th-23rd July, BJ to confirm with site manager and report back.

13. Amendment to July CIC meeting date

JW is unable to make 23rd July CIC as on annual leave. All agreed 30th July meeting date.

14. AOB

- JW to circulate a doodle poll for a celebration event for the four Directors due to leave after serving 9 years on Board. Liaise with AT to book room at The Gun.
- Wallington Demesne PC bus shelter replacement enquiry discussed. The current shelter is missing a window, other than that it is in good order. Suggest can apply to Small Donations Fund to replace the window.

Closed 8.50pm