



**MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2022 @ 10:00 am
(VIA TEAMS)**

NI Committee/Boardroom Apprentice	
Paul Sweeney	<i>NI Chair</i>
Sandra McNamee	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Cara Cash-Marley	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Charles Mack	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Kate Clifford	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Nick Garbutt	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Shaun Kennedy	<i>Boardroom Apprentice (Observer)</i>
Staff	
Alison Fraser	<i>Senior Head of Funding</i>
Amanda Doherty	<i>Senior Head of Comms & Engagement</i>
Norrie Breslin	<i>Head of Knowledge & Learning</i>
Michael Liggett	<i>Head of Knowledge & Learning</i>
Joanie Arthurs	<i>Comms & Engagement Officer (for item 4)</i>
Mark Creaney	<i>Funding Manager (for item 6)</i>
Jacqui Maxwell	<i>Governance Officer</i>

1. Opening Remarks & Updates

1.1 Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked all those involved in producing the papers and the meeting organisation. He updated committee on Kate's recent knee fracture and that the management team/relevant staff were covering in her absence. John Rose, Wales Director was supporting the NI Directorate during this time.

Committee members wished Kate Beggs a speedy recovery and they will be kept updated on progress. Members offered their support to the Chair and staff.

1.2 NI Director's Update

Committee noted the update.

2. Governance

2.1 Apologies

These had been received from Kate Beggs, NI Director.

2.2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2.3 Previous Minutes

The minutes from the 8 October 2021 meeting were formally agreed.

2.4 NIC Meetings Timetable 2022

Members noted the updated timetable.

- 2.4.1 The Chair suggested that the decision meeting on 11 March could be held using a hybrid model, given that Funding Officers will also be in attendance. Details will be confirmed as soon as possible taking into account future health guidelines and logistics.
- 2.4.2 Kate Clifford confirmed that she was unavailable for the 12 August business meeting and an alternative August date will be suggested. **ACTION: J. Maxwell**
- 2.4.3 The Chair confirmed that the NIC strategic away day on 19/20 May, will be an overnight format. He requested that members consider suitable venues so that arrangements can be made as soon as possible. **ACTION: NIC/J. Maxwell**

3. Portfolio Updates:

3.1 NI Portfolio Overview Report Apr - Sep 21

Committee noted the report. Main discussion points were as follows:

- This report gives an overview across the local teams.
- Applications to NL Awards for All from schools have decreased, as they now need to demonstrate a wider community access, but schools were able to apply to the Living Places & Spaces programme and a number had been received.
- It was also confirmed that the Fund does not collect data to identify the gender of project beneficiaries, unless the project is gender specific.
- Committee also noted the decrease in applications for young people with disabilities under the Empowering Young People programme. Alison and Norrie confirmed that we will be reviewing the data to inform future outreach work, but that we have historically funded young people with disabilities under EYP and other programmes.
- The digital divide and cyber security, especially for smaller groups and their capacity to write and submit applications, was a concern. It was noted these issues will be discussed as part of the Portfolio Review.
- We are in a strong position in Northern Ireland to be able to support groups to consider our funding programmes through local team engagement.
- Committee also reported that over the previous two years, certain small groups have primarily been fire fighting to keep venues open, whilst not being able to use them.
- There could also be an increase in mental health applications, especially for young people post pandemic.

3.2 NI Portfolio & Pipeline Reports

Committee noted the reports. The main discussion points were as follows:

- Ten applications are scheduled to be submitted for the 11 March decision meeting.
- Committee noted the graphs and that North Down & Ards continued to be a cold spot.
- Alison reported that a significant number of Awards for All applications had been received from this area and there was a new Funding Officer working on engagement in that area.
- We are currently revisiting the pipeline to get a better idea of where potential applications stand.

4. Communication, Stakeholder & MLA Reports

4.1 Committee noted the *Communications & Engagement report for Oct 21-Jan 22*, which covered the following headings:

- Media and digital highlights
- Customer engagement
- Public Affairs

4.1.1 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- Communications team staff changes and recruitment.

- National media are not currently interested in grant announcements but we get strong local coverage.
- Digital engagement with the BBC has been excellent.
- Strong customer satisfaction survey results (highest across UK) has been a great endorsement for local team working.
- Focussing on stories in local media to promote Awards for All by profiling success stories and the local Funding Officers.
- Amanda confirmed that we have been delivering media training to funded projects for the previous 15 years to encourage meaningful story-telling. It was acknowledged that there needs to be support for the organisation and people putting their story out and to consider the risks involved.
- Amanda confirmed there is an stakeholder engagement plan for councils engagement through local teams and this is reviewed regularly.

4.2 Committee noted the *Stakeholder Analysis report (paper 13)*

4.2.1 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- It was confirmed the Chair had met with Professor Siobhan O'Neill, the Mental Health Commissioner, as part of his introductory meetings and there was another meeting arranged for Alison and Michael Liggett to meet with her later in this month.
- The Chair also confirmed that a meeting will be arranged on Kate Begg's return with Community Foundation NI to discuss common concerns, including mental health funding.
- There are no plans to produce a specific Northern Ireland Impact Report as the sample size of larger projects is too small to produce meaningful data.
- Norrie confirmed that we have asked for the raw data from the K&L UK team and working on a preliminary small grants NI report. This will use a sample size of approximately 200, be presented to committee and discussed internally.
- Newsletter to be sent to committee members. **ACTION: A. Doherty**

4.3 Committee noted the *MLA Survey report (paper 14)*

Joanie Arthurs gave an overview of the results.

4.3.1 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- Good direction of travel regarding the recognition of the National Lottery Community Fund.
- Working closely with communities through local team working has helped with recognition.
- Some elected reps would like to know more about the Fund.
- Very few critical and no negative comments.
- We will be working on an engagement plan for outreach work after the elections.
- Is there an opportunity to engage with various sectors (e.g. LBGTQ+) and organise focussed engagement/roundtables with policy stakeholders?
- What are the limits and objectives of the Fund's stakeholder engagement?
- Committee were reminded that we are a UK-wide organisation, meaning that programmes, including marking the Platinum Jubilee, are included in the programme portfolio to help bring communities together.
- As an organisation, we need to look more at impact rather than reach going forward.

5. Portfolio Review (*paper 12*)

5.1 Committee noted the paper:

5.2 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- We are refreshing the NI portfolio to launch in 2023.
- Preliminary discussions were started at the NIC October 2021 away day.
- Roundtable events with grant holders are in place for later this month and in March.

- The People in the Lead strap line has a wide interpretation and will be phased out, but we will not lose the essence of our responsive grant making and consider how to re-phrase.
- How can the Fund influence positive change? There is an appetite to be bold when developing a UK-wide strategy and a five to eight-year vision.
- A paper is going to the next UK Board meeting on 22 March. We will know more after this, to then further discuss at the April committee meeting and the May away day, whilst taking into account local and UK-wide considerations (e.g. impact -v- reach).
- How do we ensure that every penny makes a difference to people's lives using a robust knowledge base?
- This work is very timely and we are in a good position to engage and use this opportunity to feed into the strategic review.
- The work needs a lot of planning. Important to take the time and consider all the changes over the previous two years and those yet to come (e.g. cost of living).
- How can we work with other funders and any government departments.
- The way we work using the three local team format is an asset. There is connectiveness and knowledge of where the need is through the team engagement plans.
- Committee members were asked to explore the various questions in the paper and to consider conceptional thoughts going forward over the next few months.
- This can be further discussed at the 8 April business meeting when Faiza Khan (Engagement & Insight Director) and/or Emma Ackerman (Funding Strategy Director) will present to committee on the UK Strategy Framework Renewal.

6. Environment (*paper 11 & NI plan*)

6.1 Committee noted the paper and plan.

Mark Creaney gave an overview.

6.2 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- Will we be looking at how certain projects can reduce their emissions?
- We will include environmental considerations across all our programmes and during assessment, especially those requesting capital funding to build. This will result in some decision making challenges and can be further discussed at the March decision meeting.
- There could be crossover with Heritage Lottery and other funders.
- Regarding NI deforestation, there are campaigns to increase tree planting and will be a consideration going forward.
- Opportunity to promote how climate change can increase economic growth and review how the community sector can work more with the private sector.
- Rural areas do not have the transport infrastructure and there is a big difference in the urban -v- rural carbon footprint, which is a massive challenge. Though it was acknowledged that rural areas do have more opportunities when it comes to using land for environmental projects.
- We also need to be mindful of the expense involved promoting a green agenda and community affordability.

6.3 The Chair commended the members of the climate network for the amount of work undertaken to produce the NI environmental plan.

6.4 *The committee supported recommendations i & ii shown on page one of the paper.*

7. Young People - verbal update

7.1 *Norrie Breslin verbally reported as follows:*

- October 2021 recruitment campaign
- Conducted a follow-up campaign and recruited nine young people
- Currently completing an induction programme
- Very much about participation and being flexible on involvement

7.2 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- Committee were delighted that we have a new young people group and are happy to help with the induction process and training.
- The buddy system was very beneficial for mentoring.
- Participation training will be confirmed in due course

8. **Committee Members Training**

8.1 The Chair confirmed the Safeguarding training on Thursday 17 February via Zoom, being delivered by Volunteer Now.

8.2 The Chair requested that committee consider any training that they think will be beneficial to increase expertise and knowledge, e.g. governance and declarations of interest. Amanda has been working on a NI committee protocol with Nick Garbutt's input.

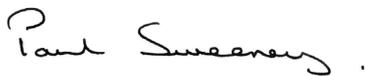
9. **Any Other Business**

9.1 Next Meeting

P&C & EYP decision meeting Fri 11 March 2022. *(Details to be confirmed).*

9.2 The Chair thanked all attendees for their input into a very important and meaningful meeting.

The meeting finished @ 1:00 pm



Signed: _____
Paul Sweeney, NI Chair

Date: 8 April 2022