



**MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 7 OCTOBER 2022 @ 10:00 am**

NI Committee	
Paul Sweeney	<i>NI Chair</i>
Sandra McNamee	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Nick Garbutt	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Observer	
Norman McKinley	<i>Incoming NI Committee member</i>
Staff	
Kate Beggs	<i>NI Director</i>
Alison Fraser	<i>Senior Head of Funding</i>
Norrie Breslin	<i>Head of Knowledge & Learning</i>
Michael Liggett	<i>Head of Knowledge & Learning</i>
Stuart Fisher	<i>Finance Director (until 12:20)</i>
Joanie Arthurs	<i>Comms & Engagement Officer (for item 3)</i>
Mark Creaney	<i>Funding Manager (for item 5)</i>
Nuala Macauley	<i>Funding Manager (for item 5)</i>
Gillian Irvine	<i>Funding Manager (for item 5)</i>
Bronagh Anderson	<i>Comms & Engagement Manager (for item 5)</i>
David Mulholland	<i>Knowledge & Learning Officer (for item 6)</i>
Jacqui Maxwell	<i>Governance Officer</i>

1. Opening Remarks

1.1 Chair's Welcome & Updates

- The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming new Northern Ireland committee member Norman McKinley, who will take up his post on 1st November. He also welcomed Stuart Fisher, the Fund's Finance Director. Introductions were made.
- The Board will be visiting Glasgow next week for various project visits and Board meeting.
- The UK Funding Committee meeting will also take place early next week.
- In relation to last week's People & Communities and Empowering Young People decision meeting, the Chair acknowledged the great team effort pre and post meeting.
- The Chair also confirmed that the People's Projects programme will be closing today.

1.2 NI Director Updates

- Recent SMT appointments.
- New committee members induction and all committee training (safeguarding, conflict of interests, Funds IT systems), will be arranged as soon as possible.
ACTION: K. Beggs/J. Maxwell
- Strategy Renewal - phase 1 has been completed and phase 2 has started, which consists of 12 deep dive areas, (a number of NI team members are involved in this work). There will be an update going to Board in October and December.
- The organisational transformational project has now been more aligned with the strategy renewal process.
- Cost of living - the team are working towards the implementation of grant variations.

- The Dormant Assets Act has now received Royal Assent. Department of Finance are holding a stakeholder event on 12 October to consider policy directions before the end of the Ministerial mandate.
- Staff Engagement - work is on-going and we are being thoughtful on how we manage workloads and support staff.

2. Governance

2.1 Apologies

These had been received from:

- Kate Clifford, Cara Cash-Marley and Charles Mack (*NI committee members*)
- Anne-Marie McClure (*new NI Committee member*)
- Victoria Richardson and Ajuma Salifu (*Youth Voice Team*)
- Hannah Sankannawar (*Boardroom Apprentice*)
- Amanda Doherty (*Senior Head of Communications & Engagement*)

2.2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2.3 Committee Quorum

Jacqui Maxwell confirmed that the committee was quorate for today's meeting, with 50% membership in attendance (*i.e. 3 members including the Chair*).

2.4 Previous Minutes

The minutes from the 12 August 2022 business meeting was formally agreed.

2.5 Actions List

The actions list was noted.

2.6 NIC Meetings Timetable 2022/23

Members noted the updated timetable, which now included 2023 dates. Jacqui confirmed that she will be in touch later this month to confirm the dates and diary appointments will then be sent. **ACTION: J. Maxwell**

- 2.6.1 The Chair stated that we will further discuss and consider the 2023 Away Day at the start of the year. **ACTION: NI Chair**

3. Communications Report

- 3.1 Committee noted the report for Aug-Sep 22, which covered the following headings:

- Media and digital highlights
- Grant announcements
- Customer engagement
- Public Affairs

- 3.1.1 Committee acknowledged the very busy period since the last report and commended the team on the excellent work and activity covered. It was recognised that the storytelling was a way of thanking Lottery players and informing them where the money is going.

3.2 **Stakeholder Engagement Report - (Joanie Arthurs)**

This paper gave a review of stakeholder engagement between January and September 2022. It also outlined proposed engagement over the coming months around key priorities.

- 3.3 The paper headings were as follows:

- How we engaged with stakeholders
- Review of the year so far
- Next steps
- Stakeholder meetings January - September 2022

3.4 The main discussion points were as follows:

- i) The NI Customer satisfaction scores were very positive, small grants 95%, others 90%, (which included both those receiving and not receiving grants). This reflects highly on the Funding Team and how they manage relationships.
- ii) There are now more opportunities for face-to-face engagement with grant holders, the sector and government departments.
- iii) Committee are invited going forward, to feedback on any omissions or gaps regarding our engagement.
- iv) Need to be mindful that we may not have an election or a functioning government and engaging with local authorities may become more significant.
- v) It was noted that the short and long term future is now very hard to predict and the Fund needs to be flexible and responsive to the various challenges.
- vi) Sandra McNamee thanked Joanie for organising the recent committee member project visits.

4. Portfolio Updates

4.1 NI Portfolio & Pipeline Reports - (Alison Fraser)

4.2 ***Awards for All***

Alison reported that demand for Awards for All is steady. With regard to the cost of living response, the Fund is considering eligibility and is likely to revert back to allowing organisations to hold more than one grant over a 12 month period and up to £20K per year (as per our COVID response). This will impact on the programme demand/budget and will need to be kept under review.

4.3 ***Forecasting***

The Funding team are about to start the annual forecasting exercise with Finance colleagues to review our unallocated budget and programme budgets for future years.

4.4 ***Empowering Young People***

There has been an increase in the quality of applications and this will help to inform our strategy renewal conversations.

4.5 ***People and Communities***

The programme is very healthy and demand is high, the budget will be kept under review.

4.6 ***Programme Pipeline***

Committee commented on the very healthy list of projects and noted that the pipeline report is also to be used for committee to declare any conflicts of interests sooner rather than later.

4.7 ***Committee acknowledged the very useful and informative reports.***

5. Local Team Engagement Summary (Bronagh Anderson, Nuala Macauley, Mark Creaney, Gillian Irvine)

5.1 NI Committee was invited to:

- Note and discuss the contents of the report.

5.2 Bronagh Anderson gave an overview of the paper.

5.3 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

The types of enquiries being received, the trends and the quality of applications.

- i) Lower capacity or first time callers are now contacting us about what funding is available.
- ii) Most enquiries come in via the main enquiry line (managed by the NI Business Support Team) or received directly by Funding Officers.
- iii) Groups are working in a different way because of COVID. In some instances, they have moved from face to face to virtual delivery.

- iv) A lot of capacity was lost during COVID and groups are still trying to recover, with volunteer numbers being especially hard hit.
- v) Funders Fairs are normally organised by networking agencies and colleagues from the Funding team attend to give advice. Most enquiries are very basic and if they are not suitable for Lottery funding we can signpost.
- vi) Regarding the current cold spots, we continue to review our data. Some projects based in Belfast have broader reach and are benefitting people in smaller cold spots and/or ethnic communities.
- vii) We are also working with helper agencies to access difficult to reach groups and promote the fact that the Awards for All application process is relatively easy to complete.
- viii) We have made inroads in cold spots over the years via our local team working and having colleagues based out in local communities.
- ix) The Chair reported that he had recently met with the Chairs of the other Lottery distributors - Heritage, Arts & Sports and will highlight this conversation at the next meeting. (Lottery distributor Communications Teams also meet as do the Directors via the Lottery Forum).
- x) Kate Beggs reported that the Lottery Forum is due to meet later this month and she will report back on conversations.
- xi) Mark Creaney updated committee on the progress made on the environmental messaging and asking projects to consider their carbon footprint.
- xii) Communities will be impacted if buildings need to close for the winter because of heating affordability. There needs to be somewhere for communities to go and projects should think about how best to deliver to the people that need their help during these very difficult times.
- xiii) Groups need to be more climate aware and try to save money over the next 3-5 years. Community groups survival will be the main concern, they need to become more fuel independent and generate their own energy.
- xiv) Climate Action fund colleagues are in Northern Ireland next month and will visit projects in Derry and Belfast.
- xv) Spending cuts in Council areas will mean a reduction in what funding is available. The fact that groups will be unable to deliver projects, will also have a negative impact on the NHS as well as other statutory services.

6. Participatory Grant Making Learning - (*paper 21- Norrie Breslin & David Mulholland*)

6.1 This paper provided learning from development and delivery of the participatory grant making pilot programme with ethnic minority communities, and options for next steps.

6.2 *NI Committee was invited to:*

- Note and discuss the contents of the paper
- Discuss and agree options for next steps outlined in paragraphs 3.14, 3.15.

6.3 Norrie Breslin and David Mulholland gave an overview of the paper.

6.4 *The main discussion points were as follows:*

- i) It was important to convene and listen to people, we can't assume we are experts.
- ii) Participatory models are being explored across the fund in different areas, which is both interesting and challenging work to help build relationships and understand the barriers.
- iii) PGM is something that we need to explore, understand the parameters and discuss what the limits are regarding minority groups. We do not have the lived experience to make these judgements and having a level of understanding is of profound importance as a committee.
- iv) Committee asked for further information on the options, limits and constraints around participatory grant-making. This is also being explored in a specific deep dive as part of the Strategy Renewal and an update will be brought to a future NIC Business Meeting.
- v) Separately, it was agreed that we should continue to develop on our work to date with the Steering Group. Options for next steps will be considered as per the paper and brought to a future NIC meeting.

ACTION: NIC/NISMT

- vi) Committee thought this was a very interesting report and welcomed that the Fund was undertaking work in this area.

6.5 Committee agreed the options for next steps outlined in paragraphs 3.14, 3.15.

Stuart Fisher left the meeting a 12:20pm

7. Youth Voice Team - (Norrie Breslin)

7.1 Norrie gave a verbal update as follows:

- The YVT are undertaking research work and visiting projects in October that are working with young people, (both funded and non-funded).
- The questions to be asked are: What are the issues for young people in your community; What are the challenges; What help and support do you need to overcome the issues.
- A separate survey will also be sent out next week to funded and non-funded projects that support young people.
- The NI YVT will be travelling to Birmingham next weekend to meet with other YVTs across the Fund and the Strategy Renewal Team.
- All the above information will be collated to generate an output and be brought back to committee at the 9 December business meeting. **ACTION: N. Breslin**
- Committee noted the staffing resource and time required to deliver the YVT programme.

8. Living Places & Spaces (paper 22)

8.1 This paper provided committee an update on third party funding opportunity with Department for Infrastructure.

8.2 The Committee was invited to:

- Note the content of this paper;
- Approve continued work with Department for Infrastructure on the delivery of round two of the Living Places and Spaces programme.

8.3 **Committee approved the continued work with the Department and delivery of round two.**

9. Any Other Business

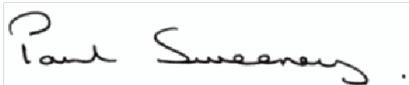
9.1 Next Meetings

- P&C/EYP decision meeting - Fri 2 December
- NIC business meeting - Fri 9 December

9.2 Farewell to Sandra McNamee

The Chair, committee and staff thanked Sandra for her excellent work and contribution over the last 7 years as a NI committee member, her time as Interim NI Chair, sitting on the UK Board and her lead role on the Supporting Families programme. It had been a pleasure to work with her and she will be very much missed.

The meeting finished @ 12:45 pm



Signed: _____
Paul Sweeney, NI Chair

Date: 9 December 2022