



MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 2023 @ 10:00 am

NI Committee	
Paul Sweeney	<i>NI Chair</i>
Kate Clifford	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Nick Garbutt	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Anne-Marie McClure	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Norman McKinley	<i>NI Committee member</i>
Staff	
Kate Beggs	<i>NI Director</i>
Alison Fraser	<i>Senior Head of Funding</i>
Amanda Doherty	<i>Senior Head of Comms & Engagement</i>
Michael Liggett	<i>Head of Knowledge & Learning</i>
Jenny Fitzgerald	<i>Funding Manager (for Item 6)</i>
Jacqui Maxwell	<i>Governance Officer</i>

1. OPENING REMARKS:

1.1 Chair's Welcome & Updates

- The Chair acknowledged the recent Dormant Accounts announcement and the significant amount of work involved.
- UK Board effectiveness review work was ongoing and a Vice Chair and Senior Independent Director have been appointed.
- The UK Chair position will be advertised in the next couple of weeks.
- UK Board to virtually meet with country committees in April 2024 to discuss the new strategy and to also consider arrangements to meet face-to-face later in the year (possibly September in London). This will also mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Fund.

1.2 NI Director Updates

Kate Beggs covered the following points:

- A lot of activity is taking place on strategy implementation, with a number of significant workstreams underway and progress towards the production of a new Corporate Plan.
- Portfolio reviews are taking place across the UK to translate the strategy into portfolios and new programmes. This is linked to defining the community led missions and how they will be reflected in programme design.
- The second version of the outcomes framework was released to colleagues last week and work is on-going, including external testing with stakeholders.
- A Deputy Director for Impact has been appointed to operate across the Fund UK-wide and will be invited to talk to committee as soon as possible.
- In relation to Dormant we are continuing our relationship with Arts and Business and have

met with the Department of Finance Permanent Secretary to discuss future policy directions and advise on the learning from Phase One of the programme.

- Allwyn representatives visited Belfast last month and shared their digital ambition and investment for the future of the Lottery.
- Planning has started for the UK Board and SMT visit to Northern Ireland on 26/27 June. More details will be available in due course, regarding committee member attendance and input.

2. GOVERNANCE: *(Chair & Jacqui Maxwell)*

2.1 Apologies

Cara Cash-Marley - *NI committee member*
Hanah Sankannawar - *Boardroom Apprentice*

2.2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2.3 Previous Minutes

The minutes from 13 October 2023 business meeting were formally agreed.

2.4 Actions List

The updated actions list was noted.

- Kate Beggs confirmed that regarding the Dormant Accounts action from October, an internal lessons learned exercise will be undertaken before Christmas and reported back to committee at the 9 February meeting. **ACTION: K. Beggs/A. Fraser**

2.5 NIC Meetings Timetable 2023/24

Committee noted the updated timetable. Jacqui Maxwell will send calendar invites next week and suggest May dates for the Away Day to replace 7 June. Members to confirm their availability for the meetings as soon as possible. **ACTION: J. Maxwell/NIC**

- 2.5.1 The Chair asked committee to consider whether the Away Day should be 1 or 2 days; the agenda; meeting format and any creative ideas about a suitable venue (e.g. support a community owned facility). **ACTION: NIC**

- 2.5.2 Committee confirmed their availability for the February meeting in Derry. Details on timings and venue will be confirmed as soon as possible. **ACTION: Officers/Chair**

3. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT - *(Amanda Doherty)*

- 3.1 Committee noted the report for October & November. The main headlines were as follows:

- Stakeholder & public affairs engagement; *(the Communications Team were working on a stakeholder plan for the next 6 months)*
- Media
- Project visits
- Digital
- Customer satisfaction
- Awards for All changes

3.2 NI Funders Forum

Amanda, Alison and Anne-Marie had recently attended the NI Funders Forum annual conference. Anne-Marie thought it had been a very positive day and was great to witness a body of people working collaboratively. It was also confirmed that Amanda had been appointed as the new Chair of the Forum. The Chair thanked Amanda and Alison for the amount of Forum work they

undertake and congratulated Amanda on her appointment. It was agreed that the Fund's involvement in the Forum shows leadership in the sector and being able to evidence and share findings collectively.

3.3 Project Visits

Committee fed back on their project visits as follows:

- Norman - Forward South
- Nick - Prison Arts Foundation
- Anne-Marie - Simon Community
- Paul - Resurgam Trust & Rathfern Community Regeneration Group

3.4 Regarding certain complexities of need and elevating projects insights, how are they connected both locally and articulated across the UK? Committee noted the importance of convening and joining the dots on what needs to be discussed at a community level whilst looking for a common denominator. The Fund can bring people together for discussions and invite key stakeholders to various events, rather than having smaller private conversations.

3.5 It was suggested that committee members should be interviewed by the Communications Team after certain project visits. This would allow them to give their observations, especially where there are gaps in the system to help inform the sector. Amanda confirmed that this will be further discussed at committee members' media training on how best they can represent the Lottery.

3.6 The Chair reported that it was evident during the visits, how the Funding Officers were held in high regard and that projects really appreciated their relationships with local officers and the support they give.

4. **PORTFOLIO UPDATES - (Alison Fraser)**

NI Portfolio & Pipeline Reports

4.1 Committee noted the figures for Awards for All; People and Communities and Empowering Young People, which compared application and award data for 1 April-15 November 2022/23 -v- 2023/24.

4.3 **Awards for All Uplift:**

- 85 applications had been received since the 15 November uplift to £20K, of which 59 requested more than 10K and generally for a period of 12-13 months.
- We have seen a slight increase in weekly numbers (normally around 23; 42 for w/c 13 Nov & 36 w/c 20 Nov). The average grant size had also increased from 8K to 15K during this period.
- Further analysis will be undertaken to help committee review the budget considerations for next year. **ACTION: A. Fraser**

4.4 **Pipeline:**

- The PAC and EYP pipeline is healthy up to end of the financial year and we are on track to commit the £22 million budget.
- 12 applications will be presented at the December meeting.
- We currently have 36 applications for March, as this number may reduce, the extra meeting on 1 March will be kept under review. If we proceed with two meetings the applications will be split evenly across P&C and EYP, as per current practice.

5. NI PORTFOLIO REVIEW - (Kate Beggs)

5.1 ***Committee noted the paper, which provided an update on the portfolio review to date and an outline proposal for a refreshed responsive funding offer, which reflected the community-led missions in the new strategy - It starts with community.***

5.2 There was overall agreement from committee on the direction of travel and agreement that we need to be transparent and specific around our communication about the new programme.

This will be a change in approach as we will not be able to fund all the projects we have previously funded.

5.3 **Committee's feedback on each of the paper's questions as outlined in Section 2, was as follows:**

- 1) **Do NI Committee agree that we should move to one programme and focus on two of the four missions?**
 - Overall agreement with this approach recognising that we will contribute to the other two missions but they are not identified priorities.
- 2) **Do NI Committee agree with these priorities and the initial theory of change?**
 - Overall agreement with the priorities but some of the wording needs sharpened particularly the children and young people priority as it is currently too broad. e.g. difficult times - prefer transitions/milestones.
 - Liked the preventative approach to health and reducing health inequalities - effecting social change through preventions and the upstream model .
 - Happy with the initial theory of change recognising it will develop as the fund wide outcomes framework is updated.
 - Do we need to have a Great Ideas type programme for ideas that sit outside these priorities?
- 3) **Do NI Committee agree in principle with the proposal that we close EYP and PAC to applications in the timescale outlined and are they content that we have a six-month window when we are not open to applications on our standard responsive programme? We will still be making decisions under PAC and EYP and organisations will be able to apply to us under National Lottery Awards for All, Sustainable Community Buildings and Dormant Phase Two.**
 - Understood the reason for this approach while recognising this would be a challenging message to give to the sector, particularly in the current context. This is one of the key risks and need a bit more detail on how we will mitigate this risk.
 - Supportive of the proactive management of the pipeline going forward.
 - Appreciate the difficult conversations that funding staff have to have with customers when internally we know that change is coming.
 - How many organisations have funding that will be ending during the period we are closed to applications ? Do we need to communicate with them in a different way?
- 4) **Do NI Committee agree that organisations should only have one live grant at a time on our standard programme? They can hold multiple grants across programmes.**
 - Would like to see the data that shows how many organisations have had two concurrent grants - one for PAC and one for EYP. Will there be any unintended consequences of this rule?
 - Need to be clear that organisations can only be the lead on one grant but can be a partner on others. This could also help encourage collaboration.

- 5) Do NI Committee agree with the proposed grant size and that organisations should be able to apply for revenue and capital funding ? We would not fund new builds but would consider refurbishment costs where there is a clear link with project delivery.
- Data provided by K&L does not support the need for a medium grant programme and therefore agreed it is more about the communication and entry point on website for up to £200K and over £200K with a proportional approach taken in relation to the amount of funding requested.
 - Agreed with capital and revenue proposals.
 - There was some discussion around the upper limit and whether it should be £500K rather than £600K. Need to look at the data re current grant sizes.
- 6) What are NI Committee's views on the proposed grant length of five years?
- Happy with five years but suggested the option of a further two-year funding as an incentive to work in collaboration.
- 7) Do NI Committee agree with the proposed statements - is there anything missing?
- Discussed the point about orgs needing to demonstrate that they have a proven track record and would this exclude fresh/new organisations with different approaches. Agreed that this would be covered in the proportional approach and likely they would initially be directed to Awards for All or delegated grant size.
 - Confirmed that climate impact would take into account the circumstances of the group but was something that we needed to be directional on to ensure it is embedded in our grant making as outlined in our strategy. Supporting Community Buildings would support us on this journey.
 - Should something around sustainability/exit strategy after our funding ends be included?

5.4 The paper to be presented at the 9 February meeting will include the following:

- Critical timeline
- Main risks about the proposed change to our programme and how will they be mitigated - are there different options for NIC to consider?
- Grant size
- Projects that have funding coming to an end when we close
- Consideration regarding sustainability
- EDI considerations

ACTION: K. Beggs

6. DORMANT ACCOUNTS - (*Jenny Fitzgerald joined then meeting*)

6.1 *Committee noted the paper, which set out the funding proposal for the Phase Two grant programme.*

6.2 Committee's feedback on the points outlined in Section 3 was as follows:

- An alternative to the suggested name 'Access to Resilience' to be sought for Phase Two of the programme. Committee will feedback suggestions, but it will remain as the working title. Programme branding is required by the end of December. **ACTION: NIC/Officers**
- Consider making consultants ineligible, building strength through community to community is much more impactful
- Grant size agreed up to £150K over maximum of 3 years.
- Agreed that payments to participate are eligible and appropriate, (e.g. NIHE pay £25 per meeting for tenants groups).

- Supporting organisations with under £250K income was the right option.
- Using a toolkit to measure baseline and identify needs/progression was necessary. Identify a toolkit to signpost to. **ACTION: Officers**
- Use project examples for external communications (without using organisation names).
- To help promote the programme, organise a series of events for potential grant holders so we can clearly articulate what we are hoping to achieve.
- Will grassroots groups participate in this kind of support? Certain support organisations are struggling with low numbers attending their training provision.
- How will we ensure support organisations don't perceive the programme is to fund on-going work & staff costs? We will need to consider this when identifying application questions and assessment criteria.
- Agreed that we need to try to address this gap in funding from Dormant to date - if the quality and quantity of applications is poor, we may not commit the £5m available.
- The programme will launch at the end of March with final sign-off at the 9 February committee meeting.

6.3 The Chair acknowledged the work undertaken for Phase 2 to date.

7. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS - *(Alison Fraser)*

7.1 Committee noted the paper, which provided an update on the programme and the proposed launch in February 2024.

7.2 *Alison gave an overview on the main points of the paper:*

- The support contracts required and tender process.
- The programme will be opened for applications using a three local team approach. Southern will be the first team opening on 7 February 2024, North-Western on 11 September and Eastern on 8 January 2025.
- 2 stage application process - 1. Expression of interest; 2. Complete carbon literacy training; engage with professional support; apply for funding.
- We are considering lifting the annual income eligibility criteria from £250K to less than £500K.
- It is planned to launch the programme on 18 January at an organised event.
- After discussions with Sport NI, we will still consider sports clubs, but they must not solely focus on delivering sports activities or be affiliated with a governing body of sport.
- Buildings need to be open and well used by communities. A pro-forma has been developed to ask the key questions regarding numbers and opening hours etc.

7.3 *Committee endorsed the paper, the proposed launch date of 18 January and opening for applications on 7 February.*

8. LEARNING & IMPACT APPROACH *(Michael Liggett)*

8.1 *Michael gave a verbal update on the next steps as follows:*

- Work on defining the impact function would be top of the agenda for the K&L team.
- The 3 areas to concentrate on - 1. Listening ear; 2. End of grant review; 3. Team reflections.

- In 2023, 47 grant holders had come to the end of their projects and we have put in place plans to interview 10 of these.
- The end of grant forms are currently not fit for measuring impact and the UK Evaluation Team & Knowledge & Learning Teams, need to be involved and take ownership of designing a new form.
- Information and data will be logged, which will allow us to take forward more convening work and be much more targeted about learning.
- Team Reflections 6 monthly reviews - to look at where grants were made and where applications are coming from. This will help to identify cold spots and where the greatest need is. Who are the people furthest away for good health and wellbeing?

8.2 ***The main points of discussion were as follows:***

- Community Development & Health Network have a level of knowledge and learning on what is and what is not working in the areas of health. It was reported that some members of the Knowledge & Learning team had attended the CD&HN Elevate training.
- The Bristol Accord tool is a wheel of well-being for communities. There are 8 elements involved and a great method to measure.
- Inspire people where excellent performance has been involved and what were the conditions that enabled this (search learningfromexcellence.com).

8.3 The pilot will take place in February and a report will come to committee, possibly for the April business meeting. **ACTION: M. Liggett**

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

9.1 Next Meeting

PAC and EYP Decision Meeting - Fri 15 December.

9.2 Committee Appraisals

One-to-one NIC appraisals will be organised for January 2024. Regarding the circulated form, members agreed that a shorter version would be preferred. **ACTION: Chair/NIC/J. Maxwell**

The meeting finished @ 2:45

Paul Sweeney .

Signed: _____
Paul Sweeney, NI Chair

Date: 9 February 2024