**Wales Committee**

**Draft Minutes**

**held on**

**16th March 2023**

**Attendees:**

**Members**

Simone Lowthe-Thomas Wales Committee Chair

Nicola Russell-Brooks Wales Committee Member

Trystan Pritchard Wales Committee Member

Kate Young Wales Committee Member

Gwenllian Lansdown Davies Wales Committee Member

Fadhili Maghiya Wales Committee Member

Thomas Andreas Morgan Youth Voice Wales

**Officers**

John Rose The National Lottery Community Fund

Rob Roffe The National Lottery Community Fund

Andrew Owen The National Lottery Community Fund

Inge Deane The National Lottery Community Fund (Minutes)

Ruth Bates The National Lottery Community Fund

**Guests**

Mark Purvis (England Deputy Director) The National Lottery Community Fund

Stuart Fisher (Finance Director) The National Lottery Community Fund

Lisa Tomos The National Lottery Community Fund (Item WBM.23.03)

Dave Gittins Severn Wye (Item Rural Futures)

Sue Rice Bro Partnership (Item Rural Futures)

Sally Williams The National Lottery Fund (Item WBM 23.05)

James Eul Nico Cymru (Translator)

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
   1. SLT welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting no apologies had been received. The Chair outlined that translation equipment was available for all items other than those which had virtual attendance, where questions should be asked in Welsh and English.
2. **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 14th December 2022.**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 14th December 2022.

1. **Matters Arising**
   1. RR highlighted the activity to share learning from the Helping Working Families programme and noted that the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) had recently shared papers regarding Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). The short timescales for the use of SPF funding were noted, potentially limiting the ability of communities to engage. JR indicated that all 22 local authorities appear to be operating differently and officers are attempting to establish an understanding of how funds will be used.

**ACTION:- JR to circulate SPF report following the meeting.**

* 1. JR also noted that a discussion of risk management would be brought to a future meeting.

**ACTION: JR to organise a discussion on the Funds approach to risk at a future meeting.**

1. **Agreements by written procedure**
   1. The Committee noted that WBM 23:01 Sustainable Steps Wales Action Grants:- Committee Terms of Reference had been agreed by written procedure
2. **Declarations of Interest**
   1. Kate Young declared a disqualifying interest in the Supporting Great Ideas application from Cwmpas.
3. **Financial Overview (Stuart Fisher)**
   1. SF gave an overview of factors affecting The Funds income, grant distribution and cashflow management.
   2. The Committee noted the relatively low overhead cost cap of 7.75%. SF explained this was monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure the target was met whilst maximising opportunities to invest contingencies where appropriate.
   3. The Committee noted the challenging public spending context and potential pressure on The Fund to provide more support to communities. SF highlighted that discussions are ongoing with UK Government and that the need to balance the need to respond to immediate pressures with the longer term needs of communities.
4. **Portfolio Update**
   1. The Executive Team provided a short update on activity between December 2022 and March 2023. Andrew Owen highlighted that in addition to our on-going assessments of National Lottery Awards for All and People and Places significant awards had been made under the Sustainable Steps Wales Action grants and Helping End Homelessness (Rural) programmes: Committee considered three applications and there was general consensus that the three applications were of a higher quality than Round 1, with panel members observing that had additional budget been available they could have funded a third project.
   2. Andrew Owen provided an update on The Funds cost of living response in Wales and reported that demand shows no sign of slowing.
   3. The Committee questioned the extent to which applications were from organisations that had not received an award before and the need to alter the focus of our cost of living response from focusing on immediate needs toward longer term resilience and sustainability.
   4. AO indicated that the majority of awards were to existing or returning customers.

**ACTION: AO to provide a more detailed break down of the Cost of Living response.**

**ACTION:- RB/AO to review web based guidance on cost of living funding and adapt to reflect a greater need to focus on resilience and longer term sustainability.**

* 1. RB highlighted Customer Satisfaction statistics and areas of potential improvement. The Committee reflected that clear guidance on impact measurement would be useful, and may need to be developed once the Funds UK wide strategy is confirmed.
  2. RR gave an update on the Knowledge and Learning activities including external facing events outlining the impact of the Rural Futures and Helping Working Families programmes.
  3. JR noted that this last quarter has been extremely busy with programme commitments. Demand is high, stimulated by additional applications associated with the Kings Coronation, Windrush and Eurovision. He reflected on forthcoming feedback on employee engagement and highlighted that the new UK Strategy will be presented to the UK Board at the end of March for approval. RB highlighted that the UK Board visit in June will focus on the Strategy Renewal.

**ACTION: JR to bring further information relating to the Employee Survey to the next meeting.**

1. **Supporting Great Ideas.**

AO introduced the paper.

* 1. **Institute of Welsh Affairs:** The proposal sought to build on existing networks, experience, and research to explore the barriers and challenges facing communities across Wales when acquiring and operating assets through a community-led approach. Working through a partnership approach with Development Trusts Association Wales and Coalfields Regeneration Trust, advice and support will be delivered to communities to help deliver practical solutions to the challenges identified.
  2. The committee declined to support the application noting that there is a need for support for communities around asset transfer/ asset purchase but felt that the balance of project is too heavily focused on research element. They highlighted that a significant body of knowledge about the challenges of asset transfer and support needs of communities already exists, although the committee acknowledged that less appears to be known about asset transfer of private property. The Committee also felt that there is sufficient knowledge about barriers/ challenges to asset transfer to be able to provide support to communities from the start and felt this should have been the primary purpose of the project. They reflected that, in order to affect change, the project needs to be more closely linked others with experience of transferring assets and groups like Ystadau Cymru.
  3. **The Committee agreed to encourage a reapplication but with a greater focus on practical support for communities.**

KY left the room (Disqualifying DOI).

* 1. **Cwmpas:** The proposal sought to create positive social change on a national scale in Wales. Building on a pilot programme, the funding will be used to provide a widespread and impactful leadership programme for third sector leaders in Wales, enabling social leaders to be more effective and resilient and to make a long-lasting and positive impact in the communities where they work.
  2. The Committee noted that this was an ambitious but much needed project and that the lead partners would need to consider carefully how they market and target community leaders at both executive and trustee/ board level, to ensure a wide reach and connect with those who are not already engaged with infrastructure support bodies.
  3. They noted the importance of linking with, learning from and complementing other leadership initiatives such as those run by Academi Wales and People and Work.
  4. **The Committee subsequently agreed to Fund the full sum requested of £450,000 noting the need for significant additional match funding and that this would be a condition of grant.**

KY re-joined the meeting

* 1. **Child Poverty Action Group:** The proposal sought to use participatory methods to engage with school communities across Neath Port Talbot, Monmouthshire, Cardiff, and Powys, and raise the voices of 7,500 young people and their families affected by poverty including those voices that are inadvertently excluded by existing engagement mechanisms. The project will create opportunities for young people and families to have their say and empower them to bring about positive change within their schools and the Welsh education system.
  2. The Wales Committeenoted that this was a well thought through project, highlighting the enormity of the challenge of tackling child poverty, and the need to ensure strong links to policy makers and practitioners including Welsh Government, The Wellbeing of Future Generations Office, and Children’s Commissioner, in order to inform next child poverty action plan.
  3. **The Committee agreed to fund the project to the full sum requested of £350,000.**
  4. AO highlighted 2 applications were expected for the June Committee
     + British Deaf Association: £150,000
     + Wales Council for Voluntary Action: £75,000

1. **Sustainable Steps Young People (WBM 23.03)**
   1. LT gave an introduction into the paper and highlighted the recommendations set out for Committee to consider.
   2. The Committee questioned the rationale for targeting under-represented groups. LT explained that this was a result of detailed research and engagement. JR highlighted that historically there have been many employment initiatives sometimes competing for participants, and that this approach will target specific groups less engaged in environmental employment.
   3. The Committee also reflected that the definitions of green jobs and green skills needed to remain broad in order to ensure they were not overly restricted. They questioned the rationale for complementing the Welsh Governments focus on apprenticeships with alternative approaches but agreed that a complementary approach would reduce the likelihood of competition or duplication.
   4. Taking into account this feedback the Wales Committee agreed:-
      1. the definitions of green jobs and green skills presented in the paper;
      2. that Round 2 should focus on eliminating barriers to green jobs for young people with an additional focus on women, Black, Asian and Ethnic minority communities, disabled people and lower socio-economic backgrounds;
      3. that the programme includes the provision of additional support for participants such as a job coach service.
      4. that the programme should complement the Welsh Government's investment in apprenticeships by supporting flexible and alternative entry routes into employment.
      5. that the programme should include an element of raising awareness of the opportunities and pathways available for under-16s.
   5. A more detailed paper presenting detailed programme design proposals would be prepared for the meeting.
2. **Rural Futures (Dave Gittins and Sue Rice)**
   1. DG and SR explained the background to the Rural Futures programme, work undertaken, achievements, lessons learnt and next steps. SR noted that all information is on the [Rural Futures website](https://ruralfutures.wales/).
   2. The committee asked whether any new organisations were applying for funding for projects. DG explained that there will be applications submitted in the near future, generated by the work communities have been doing in recent years.
   3. The Committee reflected on the programme highlighting the importance of:-
      1. community connectors/catalysts,
      2. longer term funding,
      3. the role of connectors in helping communities achieve their desired outcomes
      4. the need to collect further qualitative information on the impact of the approach on behaviours within the supported communities
      5. the potential to share key points of learning at events such as GOFOD3, or with the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner.
   4. They added the importance of ensuring the evaluation reflects the cultural richness and resilience of Welsh language communities and were keen to understand what facets were specific to tackling poverty in rural as opposed to urban areas and asked that these points were reflected in learning from the programme?
3. **Prevention and Early Action (WBM 23.04)**
   1. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this paper until June.
4. **Wales Annual Equity Diversity and Inclusion Update (WBM 23.05)**
   1. SW gave an introduction into the paper. The Committee reflected that the fund may require more detailed information from applicants, in order to understand how they were being inclusive.
   2. The Committee agreed with the recommendations for further work, noting that the UK Strategy Renewal proposals will include embedding EDI in all aspects of the Fund’s work.
5. **Final Grant Budget 20-23/24 (WBM 23.06)**
   1. AO gave an introduction into the paper, which built upon the draft presented in December 2022.
   2. The Wales Committee agreed the recommendations, specifically;
      1. Maintain the National Lottery Awards for All (NLA4A) budget for 2023/24 at £6m, with a review later in the year following the completion and implementation of the Fund’s Strategy Renewal.
      2. Maintain the People & Places (P&P) budget for 2023/24 at £23m.
      3. Maintain the Supporting great ideas budget for 2023/2024 £3.5m.
      4. Allocate £5m to address the Cost-of-Living crisis in 2023/2024. This will include extending Helping Working Families projects by a period of up to 24 months, subject to grant holders submitting suitable plans.
   3. The Committee noted the future years indicative budget (24/25 to 27/28), including likely proposals to
      1. increase in the NLA4A budget.
      2. Reduce the People and Places budget noting it had been higher than normal during the last 3 years.
      3. Maintain the Supporting great ideas budget for 2024/25 to 2025/26
6. **Forward Work Plan (WBM 23.07)**
   1. SLT highlighted that UK Board will held on March 30th. Board visit planned for June which will be in Cardiff and include project visits and engagement with Wales Committee and the Youth Voice Team.
7. **Feedback from Corporate Meetings**

**Strategy Renewal**

* 1. JR provided an update on the direction of travel of the Funds Strategy Renewal, noting that the proposals will go to UK Board at the end of March.

1. **UK Board and UK Funding Committee**
   1. SLT reflected on the establishment of Board sub-groups to support the executive on Strategy Renewal, Stakeholder Engagement and Employee support.
   2. SLT provided an update on the progress of the current open CAF projects and new energy efficiency programme.
   3. SLT highlighted the current review of the role and scope of the UK Fund in the context of the Strategic Renewal.
2. **Any Other Business**
   1. SLT invited comments for project visits to be sent via email to RB/JR.
   2. SLT highlighted that all Wales Committee members should be using their TNLCF email accounts In order to meet the Funds IT security requirements.
   3. SLT stated that the Deloitte survey and questionnaire on Committee effectiveness have been sent out and need to be completed by all members.
   4. SLT suggested setting up a WhatsApp group. Members happy to do this are required to notify SLT of their preferred contact number.
   5. KY recognised and led Wales Committee to congratulate JR on his recent New Year’s Honours achievement.