**Wales Committee**

**Minutes**

**held on**

**14th December 2022**

**Attendees:**

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| **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 |
| Nicola Russell Brooks  **Officers** | Wales Committee Member |
| John Rose | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| Rob Roffe | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| Andrew Owen | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| Elizabeth Watson | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| Ruth Bates | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| Rhun Dafydd  **Guests** | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| James Eul | Nico Cymru (Translator) |
| Chris Johnes | Building Communities Trust |

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
   1. SLT welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting no apologies had been received.
2. **Minutes from the Previous Meeting held on 14th September 2022.**
   1. The minutes from the previous meeting had been distributed, Chair highlighted a spelling mistake under point 1.2, therefore with this amendment noted, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 14th September 2022.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
   1. No declarations were noted.
4. **Portfolio Update**
   1. The Executive provided a verbal summary of key points in the presentation. In addition, AO highlighted that the 4 applications to the second round of Helping End Homelessness programme were currently in assessment, 19 applications had been received to the Sustainable Steps Action Grants which were due for decision in early February. Demand for cost of living report was healthy with £1.9m awarded so far and a further 13 applications in the pipeline. RB provided an overview of customer satisfaction results , public affairs work, outreach and work to recruit the new youth panel, and RR provided an overview of recent work including the production policy papers, and commissioning of research to better understand application trends in North Wales.
   2. The Committee highlighted: -
      1. The positive impact of social media content, in particular the “surprise” grant announcements. The Committee asked about the main challenges of engaging stakeholders with our communications. RB highlighted the need to ensure our content stands out from others and highlighted that the willingness of stakeholders to share content varies significantly.
      2. The work on identifying cold spots and the proposed use of visuals at Grant making Committees and the need to understand this data alongside local context, and consider how we can support smaller unincorporated groups. Committee welcomed the opportunity to promote the availability of funding programmes in their respective geographies and networks.
      3. The potential to share policy papers and access those produced by other organisations and networks. RR highlighted that this already happens with WCVA and the Wales Funders Forum.

**ACTION: RR to explore further opportunities for sharing policy papers.**

* 1. JR confirmed that staff Fund wide had recently received a thank you payment, to recognise the hard work of staff across the Fund. Phase 2 of the Strategy Renewal process had recently concluded. The next stage will consider phase 2 outputs and formulate the strategy for board agreement in March.

1. **Supporting Great Ideas.**
   1. AO took the Group through the paper, confirming that no pre-questions had been received note the status of potential future Supporting great ideas proposals

**Parent-Infant Foundation Ltd**

* 1. Chair invited questions from the Committee members regarding this paper.
  2. The Committee supported the application but sought assurances regarding the extent to which the applicant had fully considered engaging with specific groups, in particular parents of children with additional learning needs, and as an organisation based outside Wales that provision for supporting Welsh language communities was fully considered. AO confirmed that this would be discussed and agreed at grant set up if the award is made.

**The Committee agreed to fund the project to the full sum requested of £405,299.**

1. **Centre for Justice Innovation UK**
   1. Committee were mindful of the statistics listed in the paper and agreed the application was strong given the modest request but highlighted the need to capture the learning from this project given the potential for wider impact.

**The Committee agreed to fund the project to the full sum requested of £114,490.**

* 1. The Committee briefly discussed risk. JR highlighted that the Funds risk appetite was set by Board, and that identification and mitigation was undertaken by the executive team in relation to our funding and wider reputational risks.

**ACTION JR to provide a more detailed overview of the Funds risk management approach at a future meeting**

1. **Mental Health, Loneliness and Isolation.**
   1. RR introduced the paper which provided an overview of mental health issues, and loneliness and isolation in Wales, the support available, the policy context in Wales and beyond, and the funding response. It considered what we have funded in this area in the past and what we have learned from our funding and external evidence, offering additional analysis of our findings, suggesting some potential investment areas, and posed a series of questions for Wales Committee to consider.
   2. The paper highlighted the context and issues with regard to mental health in Wales, talking about the prevalence in Wales and the potential links with Covid together with the cost of living crisis. Mental health cannot be seen in isolation as it is often a result of other issues such as, low incomes, family difficulties, substance misuse Furthermore there can often be a reluctance to talk about this, particularly amongst some communities.
   3. The Committee noted the potential for community venues and more recently warm/hubs/spaces to provide opportunities for people to improve mental health/wellbeing.
   4. Committee queried whether young people whilst digital connected are not connecting face to face and the need to acknowledge the different factors contributing to poor mental health and differentiate between clinical/medical and social causes.
   5. The Committee discussed the Funds potential role in supporting good mental health and wellbeing. JR reminded Committee of the principle of additionality and that the Fund is better placed to fund non clinical preventative and community interventions. KY highlighted the importance of prevention but also supporting those with ongoing mental health challenges from relapsing into poor mental health and the importance of services which break this cycle.
2. **Building Communities Trust Annual Update**
   1. Chris Johnes CEO of Building Communities Trust (BCT) gave a presentation to complement the annual report providing background to BCT, outlining the priorities and challenges across the programme, focusing on the past 12 months.
   2. CJ spoke in particular about how for many communities they had gone from working amidst one crisis (Covid 19) straight not another (cost of living) and reflected that unlike Covid, agencies were less joined up in relation to cost of living responses.
   3. In addition to reporting on the progress of the 13 Invest Local Communities, CJ outlined BCTs role in influencing Welsh Government Policy, their manifesto for a Community Wealth Fund and proposals for a community anchor investment fund to strengthen anchor organisations based within communities.
   4. Committee thanked CJ for his presentation and reflected that it would be helpful to embed learning from BCT in the Funds future work.
   5. CJ confirmed he would be available should anyone want to contact him directly for a separate meeting to discuss the content of the presentation.
3. **Draft Grant Budget 2023/24**
   1. AO presented draft proposals for the grant budget for 2023/24 and indicative budgets for future years. He highlighted that since writing the paper, the UK Board had agreed to release additional finance that would be factored into the final budget. These would be subject to further discussions with the Finance Team.
   2. Committee noted the need to confirm the exact amount being allocated to the next budget. Whether this allocation will include a further UK amount.
   3. Factor into these plans.
      1. Whether additional budget was required if applicants are allowed 2 A4A grants in a 12-month period.
      2. Review our cost-of-living approach delivered through People and Places programme and look at encouraging longer term approaches in addition to emergency responses. The Committee reflected that it was becoming more difficult to distinguish between Cost-of-Living responses and standard People and Places applications.
      3. Review learning from helping working families and consider how this could inform other responses to the cost of living.
      4. Consider the potential to extend the projects funded under the Helping Working Families programme.

**ACTION:- AO to develop final budget proposals for agreement prior to submission to the UK Board.**

1. **Helping Working Families** 
   1. RR introduced a summary of the findings from the Helping Working Families Programme Review. It drew upon project evaluation reports, extensive interviews with projects and focus group to present a qualitative analysis of programme impact.
   2. Committee thanked the papers authors for a thorough and useful report. Committee noted that much of the learning was relevant to the current cost of living crisis and requested that the team consider how key learning points are disseminated to practitioners, political stakeholders and potentially the Welsh youth parliament.
   3. That also noted that in early 2023, there would be a learning event for grant holders which will be an opportunity to ensure that this report and information reaches the correct audience.
   4. The Committee discussed the potential to extend some of these projects but also expressed some concern that projects demonstrating positive impact were not being funded through mainstream provision where effective.

**Action:- RR/RB consider how the report can be disseminated to practitioners and political stakeholders.**

1. **Forward Work Plan**

The Board are expected to visit Wales in June 2023 and it is likely to take place in Cardiff. WC will be advised of their involvement.

The Chair highlighted that all future Committee meetings (apart from December) should take place face to face.

The Committee noted that there has been an increase in supporting great ideas over the past 12 months, therefore an progress update on some of the existing awards would be helpful at a future meeting.

1. **Feedback from Corporate Meetings**

**UK Board**

* + 1. SLT confirmed that the UK Board has met twice since the last WC meeting. The main focus of these meetings has been the strategy renewal as a result of which a sub committee has been set up. The Board had also received an update of recommendations from the Cultural enquiry and a Board subgroup established to consider looking at staff engagement and culture. Reports of Equity Diversity and Inclusion, and regular updates from the Audit and Risk Committee were also received.

**UKFC**

* + 1. The UK portfolio is currently subject to review. Legacy Programmes have been reviewed considering learning from Commonwealth Games & Jubilee, with a view to planning activities for the Coronation 2023.
    2. The Chair updated on the Peoples Projects. Projects will be subject to public vote in spring 2023. Five projects from Wales have been shortlisted.

1. **Any Other Business**
   * 1. An event to celebrate National Lottery Funding is planned for The Senedd on February 7th, invitations to be sent out the WC members. SLT requested an invitation be sent out to WC members.

**Action: Elizabeth Watson**

13.2 SLT wished everyone Seasons Greetings and closed the meeting.