# Cronfa Gymunedol y Loteri Genedlaethol / The National Lottery Community Fund

# PWYLLGOR CYMRU / WALES COMMITTEE

12th September 2024

Cardiff

**Agenda**

**In Attendance:**

Simone Lowthe-Thomas Wales Committee Chair

Nicola Russell-Brooks Wales Committee Member

Gwenllian Lansdown Davies Wales Committee Member

Kate Young Wales Committee Member

**Officers**

John Rose The National Lottery Community Fund

Rob Roffe The National Lottery Community Fund

Andrew Owen The National Lottery Community Fund

Ruth Bates The National Lottery Community Fund

**Attendees**

Mark Beynon The Funding Centre

Jo Shepherd The Funding Centre

Jay Calderisi The National Lottery Community Fund (Minutes)

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
	1. Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
	2. Apologies were received from Trystan Pritchard.
2. **Review of minutes from the Wales Committee held on the 10th June 2024 (WBM 24.19)**
	1. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of proceedings.
	2. RR provided a short synopsis of the main points from the consultation exercise indicating that we are awaiting formal policy directions from the Welsh Government.
3. **Matters arising from previous meeting**

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| **Meeting Date** | **Agenda Item** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Due Date** | **Status** | **Comments**  |
| **10.06.24** | **8** | **Take the perspectives of the Committee on addressing need through the Wales Portfolio to the project lead to feed into the project.** | **Rob Roffe** | **12.09.24** | **Complete** |  |
| **10.06.24** | **12** | **Take the perspectives of the Committee on addressing need through the Wales Portfolio to the project lead to feed into the project.** | **K&L Team** |  | **Complete** |  |
| **10.06.24** | **13** | **Invite Dr Lindsay Cordery-Bruce (new Chief Executive of WCVA) as an external speaker before Wales Committee in their next catch up.** | **John Rose** |  | **Incomplete** | **JR will follow up at next catch up.** |

1. **Papers by written procedure**
	1. WBM 24.20 - Sustainable Steps Terms of Reference (TORs) Covering Paper

The TORs were approved.

1. **Declarations of Interest**
	1. Simone Lowthe Thomas declared an interest in the Supporting Great Ideas application from Royal National Institute of Blind People. Whilst it was considered non-disqualifying, SLT agreed to take no part in discussions.
2. **Wales Portfolio Update** **(WBM 24.28)**
	1. Officers provided an update on work over the last 3 months ending 1 September 2024. Highlights included:
		* Overall satisfaction levels in Wales remain above the corporate target of 80%.
		* Officers attended the Third Sector Hub at The National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd in August, which attracted a visit from the new First Minister Eluned Morgan.
		* Post-election congratulatory letters were issued to all MPs with a detailed breakdown of funding within their constituencies.
		* Wales hosted our internal all-staff session ‘Connected’ which invites all colleagues (800 plus) to join us to learn more about our work in Wales.
		* There have been a small number of variation requests from projects in response to civil unrest this quarter.
		* The relaunch of People & Places will take place on 25th September. Applicants will be asked how they are considering the environmental impact of their projects.
		* The Committee strategy days in October will include a session reviewing the Supporting Great Ideas grant programme and the emerging UK evidence and impact strategy.
		* 30th birthday events will be taking place in November.
	2. The Committee commented that it would be interesting to see the trends of application for A4A since the budget was increased to £20k. Officers noted anecdotally that larger charities are now applying for grants as contributions towards core costs and salaries. There will be a UK-wide analysis of this high-level information being undertaken soon.

**ACTION JR/AO to provide analysis once completed centrally.**

* 1. Committee members praised the poem of Youth Voice Advisor - Tia - as an authentic, original work that promotes her voice as a young person and reflects on the work of the Fund. The media engagement this quarter has been positive incorporating creative ideas around engaging with MPs and MSs. The Committee congratulated the Comms team on their excellent work.
	2. The Committee reviewed the proposed approach to considering need and congratulated the K&L team on breaking down complex data into a tangible framework. The framework has been adapted to the Welsh context from a model used by Northern Ireland colleagues - a collaboration which reflects the One Fund approach, whilst respecting regional differences and local understanding.
	3. Committee members asked how the Innovation Unit will interact with Wales Committee work. Their nascent work focuses on themes such as AI in grantmaking, and how to connect under-represented communities with the environment using the help of ‘influencers’.
1. **Supporting Great Ideas decisions (WBM 24.26)**
	1. The Committee noted the background information provided relating to the development of the Supporting Great Ideas funding programme.
	2. The Committee APPROVED funding for Royal National Institute of Blind People, noting that it was the first of this scale and may present a useful case study/publicity opportunity.
	3. The Committee considered the ‘Big Bocs Bwyd’ funding request from Bwyd Bob Amser.Officers highlighted that not all feedback had been addressed from earlier submissions and it was noted that a number of similar individual school applications have been received through National Lottery Awards for All. Concerns were raised over the long-term sustainability of the model, although it was noted that it would be beneficial to families during the current time of acute need. Schools were noted to play a pivotal role in communities and that this project could reduce the stigma associated with food insecurity.
	4. The Committee APPROVED funding for Bwyd Bob Amser subject to receiving further clarity on their plan for expanding into north Wales and addressing questions over the provision of culturally appropriate food in diverse settings.
	5. The Committee considered the funding request from Plunkett Foundation. Concerns were raised over what appeared to be insufficient consultation and engagement with other business support providers, which may lead to service duplication.
	6. The Committee DECLINED the application for funding for Plunkett Foundation on this basis.

* 1. The Committee noted the status of potential future Supporting Great Ideas proposals.
1. **Mind our Future the learning so far (WBM 24.22)**
	1. Wales Committee noted and discussed the findings, progress, impact, and key lessons learned to date.
	2. The Committee thanked the Knowledge and Learning team for their comprehensive report. They highlighted how the programme was a good example of how co-production is working in practice with strong engagement of young people. The report also demonstrates how aims and outcomes can evolve to meet service user needs and the importance of flexibility.
	3. The Committee reflected on the preventative nature of some of the activities and questioned whether learning from Mind Our Future could the development of the Children & Young People and Environment programme.
	4. They noted the importance of services to reflect on feedback from service users and the potential for young people losing motivation to engage if their voices are not heard outside of specific projects. The potential for the programme to influence the design of future preventative mental health services was noted with potential links to the work of public health Wales.
2. **Children & the natural environment: funding proposals (WBM 24.23)**
	1. The Wales Committee agreed the revised parameters and priorities for the Fund’s investment in children, families, and the natural environment in Wales
	2. Committee Members highlighted the need to consider families with complex needs when devising programme structure and looking at assisting organisations to tailor their offering. Children with special educational needs are often ineligible for early years provision if their parents are not in employment. In addition, local authorities have varying definitions of the level of 1:1 support provision a child needs. The Fund should ensure these children are not excluded unintentionally.
	3. The proposed length of funding was accepted positively by the Committee since there is a lack of long-term programmes.
	4. The definitions of ‘green spaces’, ‘natural connection’ and ‘outdoors’ were discussed and it was agreed that the wording should be defined so as not to exclude projects within an urban setting, and that it would be premature to narrow the parameters of the programme at this stage.
	5. Committee Members suggested that if the programme is delivered in two stages, with an initial development grant, the remaining budget for phase two should be sufficient to fund all of the projects successful at stage one. This would reduce the risk of applicants building new partnerships which are subsequently unsuccessful, which should build trust and confidence with applicants.
3. **Volunteering in Wales (WBM 24.24)**
	1. The Committee noted the current state of volunteering in Wales and the associated policy landscape presented in this paper and the potential role of The Fund in responding to some of the issues and challenges for volunteering in Wales.
	2. The Committee raised concerns that increasingly volunteers are sometimes considered as a ‘workforce’. This could be particularly challenging where introducing payment to previously voluntary roles and vice versa, which can lead to significant changes in the dynamics of community organisations.
	3. A further challenge is redefining voluntary roles within a modern environment, including online roles, micro-volunteering, etc. Furthermore, organisations requiring onerous application processes can be deterring. The term ‘volunteering’ is often called into question by volunteers themselves, who may not perceive themselves as volunteering, but ‘just helping out’. Officers noted that data from North Wales shows there is a stronger sense of community there and volunteering is not acknowledged as such because it is seen as a social duty. The data should be viewed with this in mind as the numbers of volunteers may be underestimated.
	4. Committee Members expressed an interest in investigating why certain groups are less likely to volunteer (e.g. from deprived communities or with protected characteristics), so that those challenges can be mitigated.
	5. Officers noted the importance of the role of volunteers being celebrated through events such as the WCVA charity awards.

1. **Revised Wales Grant budget: 2024/25 and future indicative budgets (WBM 24.21)**
	1. Wales Committee noted the contents of the paper and APPROVED the proposed increase to the 2024/25 programme grant budgets for 2024/2025 for National Lottery Awards for All, People and Places, Supporting Great Ideas and noted the indicative budgets for future years.
2. **Research into Partnership working (WBM 24.25)**

*Mark Beynon and Jo Shepherd joined the meeting*

* 1. The Wales Committee noted the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Funding Centre’s partnership working research.
	2. The guest speakers Mark Beynon and Jo Shepherd from The Funding Centre joined the meeting online to present a summary of the research and discuss the potential role of The Fund in relation to supporting partnership development.
	3. Officers noted the feedback from applicants that the Fund should clearly state the rationale for requiring partnerships, as this would assist organisations in determining the type and structure of partnerships they enter into.
	4. The Committee agreed that when considering the requirement for partnership working, the Fund should consider what training and support could be provided by expert organisations in terms of supporting effective partnership development.
	5. The Committee agreed that report would be useful for other organisations. Officers stated that there is a plan for disseminating the report in the coming months.

*Mark Beynon and Jo Shepherd left the meeting*

1. **Wales Annual Report (For information) (WBM 24.27)**
	1. The Committee noted the report, which covers the first 14 months of the delivery of the Fund’s new strategy, ‘It starts with community’. The paper provided a high-level summary of operating context, grant commitments, engagement, programme development and delivery and outlines the approach to the continued development of the new portfolio.
	2. The Committee asked officers to amend the case studies to ensure they were more representative of the geography of Wales and thanked everyone involved. The report is comprehensive and informative.

**ACTION**: Review case study locations and ensure the geographical spread is proportionate (Ruth Bates)

1. **Forward Work Plan (WBM 24.18)**
	1. The Committee noted and commented on the forward work plan
	2. Suggestions were made as to other future agenda items and discussion topics the Committee would like to see included.
	3. Officers noted the upcoming strategy days in October which would include a review Supporting Great Ideas and the developing UK Evidence and Impact strategy.
2. **Feedback from Corporate Meetings**

15.1 UK Board

* + - The last meeting was in Northern Ireland with excellent community project visits highlighting the unique social and political context of Northern Ireland. The annual accounts were approved, and the governance review concluded. The next Board will be in Newcastle.
		- Audit and Risk Committee met last week and discussed the 3-year internal audit plan. Cyber security was much discussed. The risk strategy was reviewed.
		- Climate Action Fund will meet next week.

15.2 UK Funding Committee

* The UK Funding Committee is due to meet soon. Social infrastructure and supporting third sector organisations are being considered.

15.3 UK Funding Panel

* Nicola Russell-Brooks gave an update on the UK funding panel. They met on Monday and there is no funding coming directly into Wales, although one project is being encouraged to develop the links required to deliver their project in Wales.
1. **AOB**
	1. Kate Young and Trystan Pritchard have had their second term as Wales Committee Members approved by the Welsh Government.
	2. The Chair thanked all present for their attendance.

Close