

## BFVH meeting

28 August 2023 / BHA building

### Approved minutes

**Present:** Jackie Watson (Chair – Hutton), Lynda Shepard (Foulden), Margaret Fairgrieve (Gordon), Graham Dolan (Ayton), Beth Landon (Borders Community Action)

**Apologies:** Brian Ulyatt (Ayton) and Brin McAllistair (Reston)

**Purpose of meeting:** to discuss feedback from members on the grant criteria.

#### 1. Feedback on grant criteria

- No guidance is available for applications for a loan and no hall has ever applied for a loan – it was agreed this should be taken off the application form as an option.
- Applicant signing the form should be allowed to be any committee member, not just the secretary – agreed.
- Applications over £1000 currently require an “emergency meeting” to be called (see application form not guidance notes) – it was agreed to amend this to a BFVH general meeting.
- The heading of the grant application form should be in the name of BFVH (remove “and community”) – agreed.
- The contact details need to be updated – agreed to change this to a generic email e.g. [info@borderscommunityaction.org.uk](mailto:info@borderscommunityaction.org.uk) (to avoid further changes if the person providing the secretariat service changes). Consideration is needed on the return address for paper copies.
- A further question was suggested to ask what impact it would have on the running of the hall if the grant was not awarded – agreed.
- A clarification is needed on unrestricted funds as different amounts are stated in application form and guidance for the limit for this for category A applications. A definition of unrestricted funds should be provided in the guidance – agreed.
- An additional question asking for a project description should be added – a word limit of 200 – 300 words was agreed.
- The tables for project costs and any match-funding should be combined and improved – agreed.
- Too much documentation is requested and in practice not all is received – this needs a review. Suggested changes are to ask for 2 quotes *if possible* (an explanation of why only one is available can suffice) and the latest bank statement is sufficient (rather than for latest 3 months) – agreed.
- Category D application upper limit should be increased to £1K and suggestions for use of this funding for encouraging best practice should be made in the guidelines e.g. convertor for the electric generator, hearing loops, broadband – agreed.
- Complaints had been made in the past that the same information is being requested repeatedly, however it was noted that due to changes this might be necessary. Members constitutions should be stored and only asked for again if changes have been made – to be decided.

The above points will be considered when drafting an updated application form and guidance to be adopted by all four federations.

**Action: the draft will be put together by Borders Community Action and amended as required by representatives from each federation before a finalised version is agreed.**

## **2. Procedural improvements to application process:**

- The constitution should be included when sending out completed application forms to BVFH committee members for consideration or this should be checked as part of the secretariat service – to be decided.
- Papers need to be sent to the BVFH committee at least a week before meeting, so a deadline for applications should be set to accommodate this – agreed.
- Calls for applications should direct VHs to the website to download the grant form and guidance to promote use of the site (rather than sending as attachments) – agreed.
- Category A applications (emergency funding) should be assessed between meetings via email – agreed (this has not been happening).

## **3. Additional points of note relating to SBC funding:**

- The new application form and guidance needs to be well promoted.
- The question was raised about what the federations are allowed to use the SBC funds for other than grants, secretariat service and covering the costs of arranging committee meetings. Could social, networking events or training be funded, for example? **Action: Beth to find out and feed back.**
- SBC have requested a plan for the use of unrestricted reserves sitting with federations (each federation can have up to a year's worth of funding allocated as restricted reserves) - ideas from the committee were:
  - Joint website for the 4 federations
  - Split between halls equally – this may not be accepted by SBC
  - Pay for energy assessments / audits – in person visits
  - Raising profile in light of changes – e.g. branding / publicity

## **4. Any other business**

- **Membership fee** – currently there is a £10/year membership fee. Not all 4 federations do the same. A unified approach is needed and clarity on what this income is for.
- **Banking** - Jackie needs access to bank statements. Currently bank statements are paper only and are sent to the Bavs office. Online banking has not been set up due to the difficulty making changes. To be addressed at the next meeting.
- **Files** - Jackie also needs access to BVFH files. Beth is in the process of acquiring these from Sharon and will work out a means for sharing files with Jackie (**action Beth**).
- **Constitution** - need to check whether the constitution is consistent across the 4 federations and to add in clause for online meetings and decisions by email. **Action: Beth to check with other federations and make arrangements for changing constitution at the next general meeting as needed.**
- **Website** – needs updating and it's use promoted. **Action: Graham will get access for Beth.** Graham pays and is reimbursed by Bavs, need to review this. All agreed for this

to changed to be a single Borders wide website if considered the best way forward by the other federations.

- **Minutes of meetings** – these should be circulated to the committee prior to meetings and uploaded to website once approved.
- **Treasurer** – Sharon Fergusons role was both secretary and treasurer. Now the secretariat service has transferred from Bavs to Borders Community Action Sharon can no longer continue in either role, although has agreed to remain as bank signatory until a replacement can be found. Consequently the position of treasurer now needs to be filled. A description of the role is required. **Action: Beth to find this out.**
- **Coronation funding** – Jackie raised the issue that SBC gave money to Community Councils rather than village halls for coronation celebrations, which caused issues in their area as the CC held a single event in Paxton, but nothing in Hutton. **Action: Beth to feed back to SBC community grants team.**
- **Facebook group** - this sits under the Bavs Facebook page, which is no longer appropriate as support for halls is a TSI function. Beth no longer has access to this. It was decided that since this cannot be transferred a message should be posted in it to explain the decision, then this should be shut down. **Action: Beth.**

**Next meeting: Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 10:30am in Hutton Village Hall**