

The Grants Committee

18 September 2024

Present: Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall (Chair)
Councillor S Hancock MBE, Dr M Havard, Dr R Plummer and
Councillor M James.

Also in attendance: Arwel Evans (Farming Conservation Officer), Clare Flynn (Conservation Officer), Georgia Jones (Democratic Services Officer), Caroline Llewellyn (Democratic Services Manager) and Jessica Morgan (Head of Decarbonisation).

(Virtual Meeting: 10:00am – 11:26am)

1. Election of Chair

The Democratic Services Manager opened the meeting and reported that only one nomination had been received for the office of Chair: Councillor M James.

On the proposal of Dr M Havard, seconded by Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall, it was **resolved** that Councillor M James be elected Chair for the ensuing year.

2. Election of Deputy Chair

The Chair reported that only one nomination had been received for the office of Deputy Chair: Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall.

On the proposal of Councillor M James, seconded by Dr R Plummer, it was **resolved** that Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall be elected Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

Due to technical difficulties experienced by Councillor M James, S Skyrme-Blackhall chaired the remainder of the meeting.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Tinley.

4. Disclosures of Interest

Dr R Plummer made a general declaration as a Board Member of Natural Resources Wales, Chair of its Protected Areas Committee, and Director of Plantlife Biodiversity Enhancements Ltd.



5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 08 May 2024 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

On the proposal of Dr R Plummer, seconded by Dr M Havard, it was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 08 May 2024 be confirmed and authenticated.

6. Action Log

Members noted the action log.

Noted.

7. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Report

The Chair welcomed the Head of Decarbonisation who presented an update on the SDF. The report outlined background information, the current financial commitments of the scheme, a map of approved projects, details of projects completed since the last meeting and the scheme's financial position for 2024/25.

With regards to the table that detailed the current financial commitments of the fund, a Member stated that the term 'progressing' did not provide sufficient reassurance and this was noted by the Officer who agreed to provide more detail in future.

Noted.

8. Connecting the Coast Project Update

The Chair welcomed the Conservation Officer, who presented a report that updated Members on the delivery and progress of Connecting the Coast grants in excess of £20,000, as approved by the Committee in January 2024. The report provided background information, key highlights, statistics, proposal summaries and updates.

A discussion ensued regarding the importance of the project in engaging with the agricultural community within Pembrokeshire. Members agreed that monitoring would be essential and would support future funding bids. The Officer agreed with Members' comments and added that further work was required to communicate the impact of the scheme to the wider public.

In response to a Member's query, the Officer confirmed that agreements with landowners were for a 5-year period. It was explained that the impact of the scheme would be seen in this time and Officers aimed to capture



case studies both during and after the 5-year period to illustrate the impact and potential change in outlook of participants.

Noted.

9. Greening Agriculture Project Update

The Chair welcomed the Farming Conservation Officer who presented a Greening Agriculture project update. The report outlined background information, a breakdown of the funding allocated to the scheme and details of the status of each project.

A discussion ensued regarding the future of the scheme and Members highlighted the need to record the impact of each project, including case studies of elements such as positive participant perception as this would support future funding bids. In addition, it was suggested that an interactive map including statistics be featured on the Authority website to reach the wider public.

Noted.

10. Exclusion of the public

It was noted that in discussing the applications, information might be shared which was personal or commercially sensitive, and it was therefore requested that the public be excluded from the meeting.

On the proposal of Councillor M James, seconded by Dr S Hancock, it was **resolved** that the public be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, would be disclosed.

11. Greening Agriculture Applications for consideration

The Farming Conservation Officer presented an application for consideration under the Greening Agriculture scheme and Members approval was sought for this funding. It was reported that the same application had previously been presented to Members however due to planning permission implications, the decision was made to defer the consideration of the application until the planning matter was resolved. The Officer highlighted amendments that had been made to the application since it was last considered by Members.

On the proposal of Dr M Havard, seconded by Councillor M James, it was **resolved** that funding be awarded to the following application, subject to the usual conditions of the grant:



Ref	Proposal	Funding Awarded
GA23/PEA	Solar system (53kw) -with 33.kwh Battery Storage	£21,000
Total		£21,000

It was noted that £20,000 remained in the Greening Agriculture fund and the Officer confirmed that these funds had been earmarked for a smaller, grassroots project which would further inform the team's decisions regarding the best approach for the Greening Agriculture fund in future. Members requested further details of this project at the next meeting, and this was noted by the Officer.

12. Any other business

Members noted that the deadline for the Authority's Traditional Boundaries Scheme was fast approaching, and they requested an update of the scheme. The Officer provided an update, including the number of applications received, the number of eligible applications, details of the scoring system, and the funding allocated to the scheme.

The Officer explained that as Traditional Boundaries applications did not exceed the threshold of £10,000, decisions were delegated to Officers, rather than being taken by the Committee. As a result of Members' interest in the scheme, the Officer agreed to provide a report on the Traditional Boundaries Scheme in Spring of 2025.

