

# FiPI Assessment Panel 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 – Parke

## Minutes and Notes

### Attendees

- Russel Ashford (Chair)
- Helen Booker
- Eamon Crowe (via Microsoft teams)
- Martin Perryman
- Daniel Alford
- Will Dracup (Vice-Chair)
- Layland Branfield
- Mark Walker
- Paul Dean (non-voting attendee)

### DNPA attendees

- James Sharpe (via Microsoft teams)
- Sam Taylor
- Hannah Gibbons
- Louise Davis
- Simon Pryor
- Kerry Smith
- David Attwell (via Microsoft teams)

### Apologies:

- Peter Harper
- John Howell

### Welcome Talk and Introduction

Panel lunch and informal chat @ 13:30

Formal start to meeting : 13:45

Introduction to panel meeting given by Chair

Introduction to teams and microphone usage

Approval of Minutes

- Everyone had received copy of minutes prior to meeting
- Minutes of October Meeting approved by panel

## Update on FiPL

- Year 1 funding reprofile request has been confirmed as accepted by Defra:
  - Discussed in October panel meeting
- Year 1 funding reassignment to year 2 approved by Defra
- Year 1 funding now £250,000 approx.
- Year 2 funding now £550,000 approx.

## Discussion on how the panel meetings should run

- First vote to be on FiPL officers' recommendation
- This is approved/declined by the panel
- Approach = Presentation – questions – recommendation – debate – vote

## Declarations of Interests

- Russel Ashford – Deacombe Farm is a neighbour, although they have no dealings with each other (deemed no conflict)
- Helen Brooker – Prison Farm Curlew project has involved RSPB (did not vote)
- Eamon Crowe – Natural England also involved with Curlew project (did not vote)
- Will Dracup – Widecombe (WD is Chair) and Broadaford is Dracup's home farm (left the room for these applications and did not vote)
- Layland Branfield – Prison Farm, Greenwell and Tor Royal, has some dealings with these farms but no direct involvement (deemed no conflict)
- Discussion on when to declare an interest and abstain from voting
  - Panel Members should take a staged approach to involvement where they have an interest. All interests should be declared for the record. A pecuniary interest or close personal relationship requires Panel member takes no part in that stage of the meeting and leaves the meeting, a relationship where some business takes place but the Panel member clearly has nothing to gain from the grant requires the Panel member does not vote but can take part in discussion, if a member knows the applicant but has no dealings with them they should declare the interest but the rest of the Panel can take a view as to whether they should vote.

## Applications Over 5K

### Application: DNP-FPL-184

- Objectives of Project: To support and create a range of habitats.
- Total Grant Requested: £14,531.64
- Weighted Score: n/a
- Vote
  - Recommendation: That the panel defer this application, encouraging the applicant to seek further advice, especially on the nature and measurable value of the habitat as well as cost evidence, before reapplying,

- All votes in favour

### **Application: DNP-FPL-188**

- Objectives of Project: To secure markers of the leat system and enhance public footpath access.
- Total Grant Requested: £16,738
- Weighted Score: n/a
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: That the panel defer this application due to the lack of suitable costings and because the applicant has received a range of expert advice relating to the project but which has not been sufficiently well presented.
  - All votes in favour

### **Application: DNP-FPL-189**

- Objectives of Project: Education, flood control, permissive paths, wildlife, biodiversity and a sustainable business
- Total Grant Requested: £96,811.50
- Weighted Score: n/a
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: That the panel defer this application and encourage the applicant to seek advice and resubmit with clear justification of the benefits of the project, business case and at acceptable intervention rates
  - All votes in favour

### **Application: DNP-FPL-168**

- Objectives of Project: To enable the management of Crows Nest Farm under a high nature, low carbon farming system, enable nature recovery through natural processes, build natural capital, conserve a unique heritage asset and enable the marketing of high value nature and climate friendly farm produce.
- Total Grant Requested: £18,915.44
- Weighted Score: 6.4
- Discussion
  - Presentation by Louise Davis
    - Recommendation to defer large machinery payments
    - Lot of money on machinery
    - Is there a better suited programme?
  - Some aspects of the application are fundable through CS scheme
    - What should and should not be funded has been discussed in other meetings
    - Applicant is in discussion about other funding opportunities for the machinery
    - When applicable, advisors are signposting applicants to better suited schemes for funding

- Applicant in mid-tier
- Applicant can't get woodland management grant
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: That the Panel approve grant of £2329.11 in support of the business start up with the condition that the applicant provides evidence of all costings (rather than notes) and that the applicant provides a report on the progress of the venture after its first year of operation. That the Panel support the soil, water and compost testing in fipl programme years (not for five years) being £1022.50 on provision of required cost evidence. The remainder of the application should be deferred pending further justification.
  - Votes for: 6
  - Votes Against: 1
  - Votes Abstained: 0

### **Application: DNP-FPL-136**

- Objective of Project: The objective is to produce a wildflower meadow to improve the soil and resilience of the ecosystem health and to enhance biodiversity
- Total Grant Requested: £6,840.50
- Weighted Score: 7.2
- Discussion:
  - Presentation by Kerry Smith
    - Recommendation to use local seed – should drive down price
  - Mention that bracken will come back
  - Difficult to get Hay Meadow status
  - If doesn't work – will applicant have to pay back the money? Meadow restoration – applicant will have method statement to follow and would be expected to carry out funded work with their best efforts. *JS note - FiPL is not a payment by results programme, capital payments are made in arrears and revenue 50% up front, the remainder following review of work.*
  - What are the FiPL guidelines on unsuccessful projects? Meadow restoration can take years and current FiPL programme runs till March 2024.
  - More important to make the best decisions we can prior to grant award rather than asking for money back (last resort)
  - Advise best method to make hay meadow
  - Could this be a learning opportunity?
    - So can help/ tell future applicants what does and doesn't work
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: that the Panel approve funding in principle subject to the applicant sourcing a third cost reference.

- A method statement prepared by a DNPA specialist is followed to ensure the success of the restoration project
- A baseline survey of species present before restoration is carried out, together with a survey after completion in year 3 to confirm that the restoration is on course to succeed.
- The seed purchased must be local in origin and replicate species found specifically in damp Dartmoor meadows.
- Question the need for harrowing and seeding beyond year 1. This should be done once in year 1 and allowed time to see what develops in the following years (Pay for 1 year only).
- Votes for: 6
- Votes Against: 1
- Votes Abstained: 1

### **Application: DNP-FPL-138**

- Objective of Project: At site A the objective is to develop well-structured grasslands and wet flushes improving species diversity, riparian habitats and developing a transition from grassland through graded scrub to the SSSI woodlands. An additional objective is to improve access for the less able. At site B the objective is to restore the traditional stone walls and stone-faced banks and develop species rich meadows. An additional objective is to improve the quality of the water in the Plym through controlling the flow of water.
- Total Grant Requested: £9,369.50
- Total Weighted Score: 8.8
- Discussion:
  - Presentation by Kerry Smith
  - Panel member(s) raised questions over long term viability of fence alongside watercourse.
    - What is the best type of fencing to use in this situation
  - FiPL can only pay on CS rates
  - DNPA Access team will only accept certain contractors to do work on public rights of way
  - National Trust are funding parts of the projects
  - Fencing needs to be able to stand higher water levels during flood/spate
  - Recommendation that the posts need to last
    - Use most durable material
  - In a Normal tenancy tenants are responsible for boundary keeping, discussion over benefits to tenant and whether they would do the work or landowner (NT)
  - Could this work be done through different scheme?
    - Boundary Scheme?
    - Can't be achieved through HLS
  - Work will be done by volunteers
    - Some of the volunteers will be trained
    - Training through Devon Rural Skills Trust

- Recommendation: that the Panel approve this application but note that the applicant \*may have left off one or two of the gates (to replace stiles) so the grant amount may be a little higher, we have queried this and should have an answer by the time of the Panel meeting.
  - applicant is funding these gates themselves, this was confirmed after the recommendation written.
  - Further recommendations
    - Use volunteers
    - Seek grant for the wall if there is one available
    - Fencing to be flood proof (able to resist high water on this site)
  - Votes for: 5
  - Votes Against: 3
  - Votes Abstained: 0

### **Application: DNP-FPL-152**

- Objective of Project: to support farm to transition to a sustainable and resilient organic farming system (two years prior to certification)
- Total Grant Requested: £25,739
- Weighted Score: 8.4
- Discussion
  - Presentation by James Sharpe
  - Resubmission with clarification over the degree to which the proposal supports FiPL outcomes as well as the associated soil sampling with justification for this. Applicant was invited to resubmit this latter element at meeting last month
  - Layland Branfield left meeting and did not return.
    - Did not agree that application should be resubmitted and presented
  - Supports a number of FiPL outcomes
  - Request for funding based on CS mid-tier organic conversion rate
    - Currently applicant can't access organic conversion through other sources
    - In HLS so can't have organic conversion funds elsewhere
  - Information provided is more detailed than last time submitted
  - No mention of organic conversion as a specific FiPL outcome, therefore the proposal needs to be justified with details of measurable benefit
    - The application does meet FiPL outcomes
    - Defra have confirmed organic conversion is eligible under FiPL
  - Mention that the outcome of the conversion is hypothetical
    - Should FiPL funding hypothetical outcomes?
    - Many future outcomes are based on evidenced assumptions
  - This project is a good opportunity for us to learn
    - Outcomes can be used to understand changes that may become necessary for some under ELM

- Recommendation: that the Panel approve this application with the condition that the applicant works with the FiPL team and any expert help we can access to ensure soil sampling is best value.
  - Other recommendations:
    - That the applicant register with an organic conversion body
  - Votes for: 4
  - Votes Against: 2
  - Votes Abstained: 0

### **Application: DNP-FPL-190**

- Objective of Project: the applicant seeks £18710 funding from FiPL year one, this project delivers across a range of fipl outcomes including priority habitat, traditional built features as well as supporting wetlands and carbon sequestration. The applicant describes several years of successful work already achieved and works with another farmer.
- Total Grant Requested: £18.710
- Weighted Score: 7.2
- Discussion:
  - Presentation by Simon Pryor
  - Flail mower
    - Neighbours pay money to ensure that the item is shared
    - How can we guarantee that machinery and items are shared?
  - Wood pasture
    - Could Moor Trees help here
    - Moor Trees charge daily rate
    - Possibly a joint project
    - Local trees stock would be ideal
  - Applicant currently in HLS agreement
  - CS would be good for applicant
    - Can't get now until 2023
  - Nice project to support
  - Good learning opportunity for FiPL and the panel to share with the wider area
  - Application was also supported by the local commoners
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: that the Panel approve this application, with the conditions that the wildlife survey will be shared with DNPA/DBRC and that officers check all costings prior to grant agreement.
  - Votes For: 6
  - Votes Against: 0
  - Votes Abstained: 1

### **Application: DNP-FPL-117**

- Objective of Project: the project will provide a unique opportunity for communities in the local area to learn new skills and develop confidence and well-being as they experience a working farm
- Total Grant Requested: £21,150
- Weighted Score: 7.2
- Discussion
  - Presentation by James Sharpe
  - Vehicles are not eligible through FiPL
  - Application had not sought advice from FiPL advisor
  - Applicant currently not in a scheme
    - They would benefit from being in one
    - Sounds like applicant needs help and support
    - Would applicant qualify for CS
  - Who is benefiting from the educational visits
    - Is it the same or different groups
  - Do Ofsted have an input into this type of educational programmes and visits?
  - Are we overpopulating the market with educational visits?
    - Is this a response to COVID
    - We need to know who and what visits are occurring
  - People element in FiPL outcomes is least well served outcome across all PL's
  - What year will this take place?
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: that the Panel approve support for the educational visits on condition the applicant provides a realistic plan for delivering these over FiPL years (they will unlikely deliver 25 visits this financial year) and that they match the CS definition claimed against. That the fencing is deferred pending further detailed justification
  - Other recommendations:
    - Applicant has correct insurance
    - Applicant provides information
  - Votes For: 4
  - Votes Against: 3
    - These members support the applicant just wished to defer and find out more information
  - Votes Abstained: 0

### **Application: DNP-FPL-112**

- Objective of Project: This application will enable Commoners to carry out practical work on the Common with a shared vision.
- Total Granted Requested: £28,207
- Weighted Score: 7.6
- Discussion:
  - Will Dracup left due to declared interest
    - Re-joined after vote



- Presentation by Louise Davis
- Previously application was approved in part, pending further detail and quotes
- Applicants will need to go to Natural England to get management plan agreed
- Will need to have SSSI Consent
- Applicant should carry out CS application
  - May not be successful
  - But will be good for once FiPL has ended
  - If can agree on FiPL application, should agree on CS application
- Would Common need majority decision vote for an application and grazing schedule?
  - Panel worried that progress could be halted by 1 or 2 commoners
- Vote
  - Recommendation: that the panel note the additional details and confirm their support for this project
  - Votes For: 6
  - Votes Against: 0
  - Votes Abstained: 0

### **Application: DNP-FPL-186**

- Objective of Project: We are looking to improve infrastructure at the Farm to enable better management, control and storage of wool through the summer and autumn months. Wool has been under used and undervalued for years. Greenwell has been used as a collection, sorting and packing centre for Brannach Olann and Twool for the past 4 years. This grant will enable that opportunity to grow this strand of our business benefitting farmers across Dartmoor and the south west of Devon. It will also enable the growth of Dartmoor Branded wool and give us the opportunity to add value to wool and educate local people about wool.
- Total Granted Requested: £8,666.68
- Weighted Score: 7.2
- Discussion
  - Presentation by David Attwell
  - Adding value to wool
    - Very specific to the Dartmoor area
  - Positive story with this application
- Vote:
  - Recommendation: That the Panel approve this application on condition that the applicant sources two more cost references for the bespoke item.
  - Votes For: 7
  - Votes Against: 0
  - Votes Abstained: 0

### **Application: DNP-FPL-185**

- Objective of Project: To improve an area of an upland farm landscape to improve habitats and land management to assist the declining populations of iconic Dartmoor species such as Curlews and Lapwings. In particular, the project aims to reverse the decline, boost the population with the rearing and release of young Curlews, which hopefully will return and recolonise previously used breeding areas on Dartmoor. The project will demonstrate good land management practices to benefit biodiversity and landscape.
- Total Granted Requested: £33,999
- Weighted Score: 7.6
- Discussion
  - Presentation by David Attwell
  - What is the best method of rush management?
  - Applicant possibly sharing weed wipers
    - Very expensive piece of equipment
    - Equipment may become obsolete after a few years of management?
  - Intervention rate on the weed wiper
    - Higher than other machinery voted on
    - Available in other schemes at 50%
  - How likely is the machinery to be used and shared?
    - Similar discussion on other applications with applicant stating will share equipment
    - How do we manage and ensure sharing takes place?
  - Vote:
    - Recommendation: That the Panel approve this application on condition the applicant provides confirmation that specialists involved in the Curlew project support the work (letter of support) and the panel take a view on intervention rate for the weed wiper and that applicant make a firm commitment for this item to be used elsewhere and costings are supported by three quotes. There should be some record of the changes to habitat before/after to assess the success of this approach.
    - Other recommendations:
      - Machinery is funded at 50%, unless applicant can demonstrate a higher % demand
    - Votes For: 5
    - Votes Against: 0
    - Votes Abstained: 1

### **Application: DNP-FPL-191**

- Objective of Project: To develop an interactive and fun educational resource focusing on bees and their importance to the environment of Dartmoor. The focus will be local school groups, of both primary and secondary age
- Total Granted Requested: £13,142.20
- Weighted Score: 7.2
- Discussion
  - Presentation By David Attwell

- Applicant willing to contribute to monitoring outcome and performance
  - Mistake on the application form as hasn't been ticked
- Time of the visits
  - This needs to be clearer
  - Day light hours
- Vote
  - Recommendation: The Panel approve funding for this project
  - Votes For: 6
  - Votes Against: 1
  - Votes Abstained: 0

## **Other Business**

VAT recovery for non VAT registered applications

- Recoverable VAT as a claimed cost
- Is this an expense to the fund
- Concerns about FiPL fundings having to carry VAT
- If can't claim VAT, comes from FiPL
- Need to explore option of claiming back VAT
- This will protect FiPL funds

When will Panel gets payment

- On a yearly basis
- End of financial year (March)