

FiPL Assessment Panel 19th January - Virtual

Minutes and Notes

Attendees

- Dan Alford
- Paul Dean (non-voting member)
- Helen Booker
- Layland Branfield
- Mark Walker
- Peter Harper
- Eamon Crowe
- John Howell
- Russel Ashford
- Will Dracup

DNPA Attendees

- Samuel Taylor
- James Sharpe
- David Attwell
- Kerry Smith
- Simon Pryor
- Hannah Gibbons

Welcome Talk and Introduction

Minutes of last minutes

- Correct spelling of Helen Booker
- Natural England also abstained from Prison farm vote

Update of Management of programme

- 30k left from year 1 (21/22) – we expect to go over this with the amount of under 5k applications which have come through this year
- Defra have been in touch to ask if we will spend all out year 1 budget
 - We said yes we will and that we could also spend more than this
- Update on FiPL coms
 - Presenting the best applications
 - Set up face to face meetings to help farmers

Applications over 5k

Application: DNP-FPL106

- Objectives of Project: To create an enlarged area of wildlife rich habitat by removal of Himalayan balsam, mixed, native tree planting on the more marginal areas of the site whilst improving other areas to support low impact, sustainable, organic, conservation cattle grazing.
- Total Grant Request: £12,150
- Weighted Score: 8
- Declarations of interest: none
- Discussion
 - Presentation by Kerry
 - Do we commit to the whole project spread over multiple years or do we fund the single year
 - Himalayan balsam is difficult to work with
 - Applicant is working with advisors so project should work
 - Once the scrub is removed – what is the plan
 - Once scrub has been removed, grazing management will return
 - Will the balsam be chemically removed
 - Suggestion that we approve all three years – this means money won't go to waste by only half doing the project and giving up
 - Application not clear towards nature
 - Will they clear all the scrub
 - Is June / July the right time to do this – bird nesting season
 - Advisory condition that the right timing is chosen
 - Not all the scrub will be cleared
 - Not a naturally wet sight
 - Water comes in from the road due to a blocked drain somewhere else
 - Cattle will have to be kept out from tree planting otherwise the trees will be stripped
 - A fence needs to be put in to corner off the area
- Vote
 - **Recommendation:** Breaking down costs of bracken and bramble vs balsam. Overall costings need to be confirmed as they don't match up (word and excel document). An application for a permissive path would be welcomed (discussed on site with Kerry Smith) in the future if feasible, not under consideration for this application.
 - Approve in principle (years 2 and year 3) – set aside the money but subjected to site visits from FiPL team.
 - Need to control the scrub around the newly planted trees
 - Votes For 6
 - Votes Against: 3
 - Votes Abstained: 0

Application: DNP-FPL-101

- Objectives of project: This project will support habitat enhancement for wildlife across a nature focused upland field, via establishment of a conservation grazing system and improved habitat management. We also plan to use this land to demonstrate the value of these moorland edge fields as interest increases in the value of these areas for nature, carbon and water storage and how best to manage them.
- Total Grant Requested: £11,178
- Weighted Score: n/a
- Declaration of interest – applicant is colleague of Helen
 - On the record but confirmed by panel for Helen to vote
- Discussion:
 - Presentation by Kerry
 - Some / most of year 1 activities will now not be included
 - Where will these people park?
 - Hopefully park in a field or park somewhere else and walk to site
 - How sustainable are the wooden dams
 - Stone dams (very few) – expensive to bring in the stone
 - Wooden dams – very durable (untreated oak) will last longer than 10 years
 - The dams becoming living structures
 - Scrub control vs grazing
 - Bring scrub back into management and then using grazing to maintain this level
 - Winter and autumn grazing will not be appropriate on the site – is this true
 - Bird boxes may not be appropriate for the birds (will tit) – check guidance on this
 - Shared tools is a lot for a few days / weeks a year
 - Is there a way to hire / borrow these
 - IS the moth trap calculation correct
 - Have they tried CSS for this land
 - CSS are still accepting applications – but will this be successful
- Vote
 - Recommendation: To approve this grant subject to one recommendation and one condition/change: Recommendation - Slim down the events: 1 or 2 farmer events per year (rather than 4). 1 x bioblitz per year (as described in application), 1 or 2 community events per year (rather than 4 per year). As the vegetation is likely to change it would be good to include some vegetation monitoring though significant changes are unlikely to occur during the life of FiPL. Change - The GS6 payment rate can only run for two years rather than three (as stated in application) which brings the payment for project 10 down from £2730 to £1820. April 2022-March 2024.
 - Votes For: 4
 - Votes Against: 5
 - Votes Abstained: 0
 - Value for money

- Unproven case for the re-wetting
- Feasibility of the project – potential impact on the community (lack of parking)
- Recommendation to apply to stewardship
- Aspects can't get through Stewardship – can re-apply?

Application: DNP-FPL-197

- Objectives of project: To create and improve suitable feeding and breeding habitat primarily for Curlews but also other moorland bird species.
- Total Grant Requested: £6,300
- Weighted Score: 8
- Declarations of interest: Helen and Layland (Curlew Project connection)
- Discussion:
 - Presentation by David
 - Discussion on food of curlews in the area
 - Soil invertebrates
 - No issue of food for the curlews
 - Curlews are very important to the area
 - Stocking
 - Can't turn the tap on and off from stocking
 - Rotational management needs to change
 - Take a lot of stocking
 - Stocking policy changed recently
- Vote
 - Recommendation: to approve this project
 - Votes For: 6
 - Votes Against: 0
 - Votes Abstained: 3

Application: DNP-FPL-177

- Objectives of project: Further develop habitat enhancement works for nature through corridor creation and recreating historic landscape features. Improve the management of farmland and woodlands through the establishment of a permanent conservation grazing traditional cattle herd. Supporting future engagement opportunities for others in the farming and local community as a demonstration site for a wide range of existing and planned projects which integrate both farming and habitat management/creation for wildlife.
- Total Grant Requested: £21,361
- Weighted Score: n/a
- Declaration of interest: Russ, Helen
 - approved that Russ can still vote
 - Applicant is chairman of RSPB – approved Helen can vote

- Discussion
 - Presentation by Hannah
 - Declaration of interest: Russ, Helen
 - Two other schemes funding activities of the project
 - Need to see an overall management plan
 - Why doesn't stewardship cover more of this
 - Applicant applied to stewardship 2 years ago – but in a very different situation with Grazing – want to have their own animals all year round
 - Applicant wants to fence now – wasn't this case 2 years ago when applied to stewardship
 - Should replacing fencing be something they apply for
 - It's apart of farming to replace farming
 - Prefer to see other projects than to fund a fencing
 - Fencing is to preserve aspects not to replace fencing
 - If fencing has been publicly funded, FiPL cannot fund to replace fence
 - Tower is a concern
 - There are a lot of buildings on the site that are suitable
 - NFM has funded work at the site
 - Funded re-wetting of a meadow with dams
 - Not easy to add the stewardship once in an agreement
 - Brook (applicant location) is a good example to Dartmoor.
 - People should try be like this
 - Applicants are very good
 - Introducing animals to increase profit
- Vote
 - Recommendation: That the Panel approve the year one elements of the application as they strongly support a range of FiPL outcomes, asking the applicant to resubmit year two with more specific justification, especially relating to value for money for the fencing and wildlife tower.
 - Votes For: 7
 - Votes Against: 0
 - Votes Abstained: 0