

Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Voluntary Sector Planning Meeting

9 June 2020, 10am-12pm

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

- Kevin Rahman Daultry, Size of Wales
- Sarah Germain, Fare Share Cymru
- Gary Mitchell, Social Farms and Garden
- Rachel Sharp, Wildlife Trusts Wales
- Rebecca Brough, Ramblers Cymru
- Karen Balmer, Groundwork North Wales
- Katy Stevenson, Groundwork Wales
- Julia Korn, Pont Cymru
- Gethin Rhys, Interfaith Council for Wales
- Claire Lawson, Animal Welfare Network for Wales
- Angela Charlton, Ramblers Cymru

Apologies

- Nicola Perkins, Social Farms and Gardens

Minutes of previous meeting

Actions:

- *Amend Karen's organization from Groundwork Wales to Groundwork North Wales.*

Green recovery and support for the sector post Covid-19

Wales Environment Link sent a letter to the Minister about lack of risk sharing and not effectively working to the Five Ways of Working. Rachel said the response to this was misleading.

Covid has reduced environmental organisations' capacity to access funds. They have had little assistance from Welsh Government. Many feel there is a presumption they will survive. Gary said his group had found small pots of money for community food, but hard to find long-term funding.

Rachel said the sector needs Welsh Government to be able to make onward commitments. It needs secure budgets to unfurlough staff. Group noted that codesign and coinvolvement

of decisions gives more effective results. Need to make point that local groups driven by communities should be able to set agenda – that then allows for understanding of health inequalities and divisive issues.

Julia commented that North Wales groups feel they lack a voice. Would like this resolved if meetings resume in Cardiff post-crisis.

Actions:

- *Ben to pass on concerns to Matt Brown at WCVA re criteria for third sector resilience fund.*
- *Rachel to share WEL letter to Minister and prepare short briefing paper for group ahead of October Ministerial Meeting.*

Funding into the environmental sector – ENRaW, SMS and Natural Resources Wales

Gary noted slow turnaround of ENRaW and SMS applications. We need to challenge some processes. The head of department at Welsh Government left, but there was no communication. Julia gave example of Pont's SMS application, which has had to be cancelled due to not receiving first payment. Rachel noted that the capital money for the National Forest is still intact despite crisis, and that it should be done through a more streamlined SMS. This is due to be approved in August and released in September, but the group wants this in writing.

Group frustrated that NRW has moved to three to five year funding processes, but Welsh Government can't/won't do that. Little consultation on work on local places for nature also a frustration. Group noted that we mustn't lose sight of sector need for core funding.

Actions

- *Julia to send her experiences with SMS to Rachel.*
- *Group members to send any comments on individual funding streams for Dave to draft a paper ahead of Ministerial Meeting.*
- *Rachel to draft paper on current funding issues, referring back to last Ministerial Meeting.*
- *Rachel to sent round details of new Welsh Government contacts.*

Legislation on environmental governance

On a replacement for courts of justice – Welsh Government had a task and finish group which was very productive. It produced a report, which hasn't been published, which said to set up a commission, but need legislative time to do this. But there seems to be a political block – it costs money and had pushback from opposition parties about proliferation of commissions. But without legislative time, there is a gap. Yet even interim arrangements need legislative time. If not tabled by October, it will not get thru unless done by emergency procedure. Gary noted need for realism – it's not likely to happen by October.

Rachel said we need to see where the interim body is by October, ask how long it will last and when legislation will be brought in.

Preparation for the Ministerial Meeting of 7 October 2020

Proposed agenda

The Green Recovery – need short briefing on this.

Discussion on grant administration

A question on governance.

Actions:

Claire to provide a question on sentience. UK Government proposals have changed, leaving no protection for commitment on protection on animals across legislation. This will go to officials before the meeting.

Rachel to draft a question on EU legislative frameworks and share WEL's collective outcome on task and finish group. Karen to share material from Stop Climate Chaos and Interclimate Network. Karen to draw this material into a briefing for the Minister by early September.

AOB

Rachel suggested a piece about health and wellbeing and sectoral contribution to the pandemic recovery to allow the Minister to challenge us back.