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**COVID-19 WEBINAR SUMMARY**

**20 MAY 2020**

Tim Cutts (Chair) Allen Lane Foundation

Carla Marshall (Co-ordinator) Sir George Martin Trust

**Contributors**

Kate Hainsworth Leeds Community Foundation/Give Bradford

Sam Caldwell South Yorkshire’s Community Foundation

Jan Garrill Two Ridings Community Foundation

Abdou Sidibe National Lottery Community Fund

Kaye Wilson Voluntary Action Leeds & FAWN (Funding Advice Workers Network)

Pat Akerman Voluntary Action Calderdale & FAWN

David Warner The Local Trust & formerly London Funders

Francis Wight School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE)

**Attendees**

There were 53 attendees from a range of local funding and infrastructure support organisations.

**Link to recording of session**

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/4vJnL7faxmRJQ6Oc2FiPfrAPFbW0eaa81iBMq_tfyxl58AK16LrUidAVP9Y68PfX> Password: 9V!X?5K7

**Key points from Community Foundations**

* The crisis has shown the strength of the CF network in the Yorkshire region.
* All three CFs immediately set up an Emergency/Crisis Fund and the NET (National Emergencies Trust) money was distributed by the CFs. These grants have gone to a combination of groups which the CFs had previously supported and new applicants. Leeds and Bradford CF re-purposed their Healthy Holidays Fund to help with the crisis, Two Ridings CF gave out £2K emergency response grants and South Yorkshire have given out £500K of emergency funding.
* Two Ridings and Leeds/Bradford + Wakefield now have Resilience Funding to help support recovery and provide a life-line to groups.
* South Yorkshire CF are working with the University of Sheffield on research about looking to the future and are holding a meeting on the 17th June in Sheffield with the National Lottery Community Fund. If you’re interested in attending email [sam@sycf.org.uk](mailto:sam@sycf.org.uk). The old pit villages are ‘cold spots’ in South Yorkshire and need support, although very few applications are coming in.
* The crisis has made CFs streamline their processes and turn grants around faster. What used to take three months can now take a matter of days. This new way of working is likely to carry on in the future and the aim is to make things easier for groups who are trying to access funding. There is a high trust partnership approach which again should be more prevalent in the long term.
* Grants for running costs and flexible, unrestricted funding is crucial. Funding for the arts, sports and the environment will be more important than ever post-Covid so that funders are ensuring they support thriving communities and it’s not just about survival for the disadvantaged. Carers, mental wellbeing and disabilities are also key – it’s not just about helping the elderly. Digital investment and data are also top priorities.
* Trusts and foundations should not focus all their funding on groups which are in serious financial difficulty as this is a short-sighted view. Funders must not be ‘ambulance chasers’ who try to stop the charity driving of a cliff. This strategy doesn’t work and it’s often too late for the organisation.
* All CFs are working collaboratively with National Lottery Community Fund, other local trusts and foundations, infrastructure support organisations, councils, and the groups themselves to ensure maximum knowledge about their needs. Collaboration is key and it’s crucial to have good relationships with all these parties. The results from regionwide research with charitable groups will be coming out soon.
* CFs are ‘banging their drum’ about the crucial role that voluntary and community groups play in our communities and all funders should try to do the same whenever possible. Need to remind everyone that these charitable organisations are not a replacement for statutory services and they need to be resourced properly.

**Key points from National Lottery Community Fund**

* Initial crisis response work was focused on assessing cash flow as they give out so many multi-year grants. Liquidity is an issue and they re-purposed a lot of funding to help with emergency funding. £1.4m has been distributed across the region over the last couple of months. The team are not accepting new applications for ‘normal’ Reaching Communities and Awards for All projects/programmes but are talking to groups about how they can help. So they may have provided an emergency grant in April/May to a new applicant and will go back to these groups in 3-4 months time to see what support they now need.
* The Yorkshire & Humber team contacted all current grant holders to give them reassurance and let them know there was flexibility around how the Lottery grant was used. Groups were very appreciative of the pro-active outreach and support.
* Like the CFs, the Lottery have changed a lot of the way they work and they now have weekly panels to turn around grants in 10 days instead of six months. Many requests are for digital equipment and lots of groups don’t need much funding. They could ask for up to £100K but some only need £800 for two laptops.
* For the recovery period, funders need to ensure they support leadership across the board so that they can keep up their energy. The grant process and grant making needs to become more intentional and equitable. Mental health and domestic violence are two key issues for the long term.
* Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) is a top priority for the Lottery and the team are conscious that they need to reach out to those groups and communities which can’t/won’t use the website to get in touch. Crucial to support BAME communities and Abdou and his team are looking at ways to encourage these groups to apply and get a conversation going about what they need and how the Lottery can help.
* Collaboration is again key and they have been working closely with all the region’s CFs. Abdou is working with some of the other webinar panelists on creating some new research which is focused on: What does the response need to be to help support the recovery in the ‘new normal’? They will need data from other local funders in order to understand our region’s collective impact so will be working with the YFF and our network to capture the truest picture possible.
* Further government funding will be coming through the National Lottery Community Fund but they are still in negotiation about when and how much funding will be given out. Reliant on Lottery ticket sales and if these go down significantly so will the amount of funding the Lottery can give out to Yorkshire & Humber groups.

**Key points from Funding Advisors**

* Groups need funders to be as flexible as possible with their grants and generally they are being in our region which is good news.
* Big focus on encouraging groups to first speak with funders who have supported them before and build a relationship as they may be more likely to give another grant. Also been providing groups with information on funding available and emergency grants. Been lots of food bank services and group support.
* Groups are struggling with fundraising and this a major issue as they can’t hold any events or bring in funds from their cafés, charity shops, etc.
* Groups are now thinking about the future and many want to apply for funds for autumn activity but as there is so much uncertainty about when they can re-open and start providing their face-to-face services and activities again, they are worried about whether or not they should ask funders for a grant for this work. Please can funders be flexible and consider the group’s predicament.
* The CFs in the region and many councils have been excellent at getting funds out quickly and re-purposing funds where needed.
* Funding advisors at infrastructure support organisations/CVS’s have been holding webinars for groups about funding opportunities, their changing priorities and encouraging groups to support each other.
* Many groups are going to have to completely re-purpose their organisation – what they do and how they do it. They will have to re-do their constitution and in many cases go to the Charity Commission and change their charitable objects, activities and where they operate. This could create a service delay.
* 60% of groups may fold in the next six months, with 25% of them within the next three months. Some groups could go under because their funding applications have been put on hold.

**Key points from David Warner**

* There needs to be a shift of power into communities.
* Funders are not going to be able to fund everyone. Funds available in the medium-long term will be lower and national funders will have less money to invest.
* Many positive things have come out of the crisis and need to be reflected on:
  + Local resilience groups and mutual aid – how do we capture all this work?
  + The re-building of the human connection – funder and grant holder relationships and how we re-imagine these
  + Importance of social infrastructure support organisations/CVS’s and the support they provide to ‘Our Bigger Community’
  + The breaking down and simplifying of processes is accelerating
* Core funding is so vital and we need to focus on what is the landscape going to look like in six months’ time from now? What will be the recover and re-building response?

**Key points from School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE)**

* At the February YFF Roundtable Francis Wight and Sue Osborne fromSSE presented their proposal for an SSE and YFF Funder Plus Initiative for a number of local funders to fund a bespoke Yorkshire SSE training programme for 20 charities and social enterprises (nominated by the funders who participate).
* By mid-March a number of the YFF network had expressed their interest in committing to £50,000 of funding which would have enabled the initiative to go ahead which was a great achievement, but due to Covid-19 this got put on hold while funders and SSE tackled the first phase of the crisis.
* SSE has now adapted all their training programmes to be online and are keen to get a new, tailormade, Yorkshire Resilience & Recovery initiative started, but they need the original, interested funders and any others who want to support local charitable group leaders to steer their organisations through the crisis to commit.
* Given the move to online delivery and associated cost savings, the total cost is £32,000 which equates to £1,600 per place on the programme (please see SSE proposal sent out by Carla with this webinar summary for further details).
* To make sure local leaders get the support and knowledge they need as soon as possible the deadline for expressions of interest is 5June, final sign-off by 30June, participant selection/programme design in July and programme launch in August.
* Email [francis.wight@sse.org.uk](mailto:francis.wight@sse.org.uk) for further information and to register your interest.

**Next steps/future YFF webinars**

* Email Carla any topics or issues that you would like to be covered in a future webinar.
* 17 September is in the diary for the next Roundtable and so there will be an online event then and we will aim for another webinar during the summer.
* An online version of Focus on Funding (funding advisors, groups and funders come together) is likely to run in mid-October, organised by Community First Yorkshire.
* The York venue is booked for the 18th November Autumn Conference and an in-person or online event will take place depending on the social distancing rules.