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**Grants Panel Induction Pack**

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1. **Introduction**

Thank you for supporting the work of the Two Ridings Community Foundation (the Foundation) and the local community through membership of an external panel (the Panel).

Local Grants Panels are vital to our work as they help us to fulfil our values of being knowledgeable, collaborative and operating in a manner which is transparent and accountable to the communities we serve.

Your support is enabling us to build stronger communities by ensuring our grant investments are wisely made and guided by local people. Your local knowledge enables us to make better, more informed grants decisions.

The aim of this Grants Panel Induction Pack is to offer guidance and support around the roles and responsibilities of being a Panel member as well as highlighting some of the key principles that the Foundation aims to adhere to in its grant-making.

1. **About Two Ridings Community Foundation**

Two Ridings Community Foundation is a registered charity that works to strengthen communities across North & East Yorkshire by promoting and facilitating local philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. This enables people to invest in their local community in a way which reaches grassroots organisations that really make a difference to the lives of local people and maximises the impact of that investment.

1. **Foundation Grants Strategy & Principles**

Grant-making is a core charitable activity of the Foundation and our principles, policies and protocols aim to ensure that our grant investment:

* is informed by research, information, consultation and due diligence
* prioritises the allocation of resources to achieve clear impacts
* reflects the desire to develop the capacity of local, community-based organisations
* enhances community and voluntary activity and encourages best practice
* is implemented, monitored and evaluated to ensure high-impact and sustainable outcomes, support development and inform future programmes

Adhering to fund holder wishes and requirements are central to the Foundation’s policies and programme design and the grant investment criteria, priorities and decisions are necessarily informed by these. We seek to highlight needs when advising clients and fund holders, bringing to bear our knowledge of the funding and broader societal needs to inform excellent investments where the Foundation has discretionary funds.

1. **Guidance for Panel Members**

The Foundation adheres to a series of principles in its grant making. The following complements this, and should be borne in mind when making decisions as a member of a Grants Panel:

* The Foundation’s professional grants team ensures that all applications which the panel receives are consistent with the clients’ fund criteria and robust in terms of due diligence
* Decisions should be made on merit, based on the case for support made in the application and the assessment report
* Grants cannot be made retrospectively i.e. for project costs already incurred prior to the grant offer
* The panel should resist the temptation to try and share the grants pot around equally rather than fully funding a proposal. Part-funding is acceptable where it is clear that the project can still deliver an acceptable level of impact or where elements of a proposal aren’t fully justified
* In order to ensure that the benefits of the Fund are dispersed fairly and equitably, preference should be given to applicants which have not received support from the Fund previously.
* Where necessary clear conditions can be attached to any grant offer to ensure that the grant meets the aims of the fund or to prevent any potential areas of difficulty

1. **Assessment**

All grant applications are fully assessed either by one of our team of volunteer assessors or by our grants team before being sent out to the Panel for consideration. The following considerations are made at assessment stage

1. **Value for Money**
2. **Evidence of Need**
3. **Case for support**
4. **Management and Governance**
5. **Impact**

Due diligence is carried out on each application. For groups this means checking governing documents, annual accounts and ensuring that the organisation has suitable safeguarding policies where necessary. A reference may also be requested. The Foundation also requires all groups to complete a follow up monitoring report and aims to undertake a follow up visit on a number of funded projects for monitoring and information purposes.

Applications may be rejected prior to Panel for the following reasons:

**Stage 1 - Pre-Panel Rejection Reasons**

* The application didn’t meet the grant criteria/are not eligible
* The application was incomplete
* Supporting documents were not supplied
* Poor performance in the monitoring process for previous grants
* Received after the advertised closing date

The role of the grants panel is to decide which applications to support in order to make recommendations to the Foundation for ratification. These recommendations will be based on the case for support put forward by the applicant alongside the additional comments provided by the Foundation’s project assessor and Grants officer.

Recommendations are then presented to the Foundation’s Grants Committee (acting on behalf of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees) for ratification. All applicants receive notification of the outcome (both those who are successful and those who aren’t). Successful applicants receive their grant award only after signing up to a set of terms and conditions which lists the obligations of the grant recipient and ensures that the grant is spent appropriately. Awarded projects are monitored after six months and grant recipients are required to submit a progress report detailing the impact the grant has made.

1. **Panel decision-making**

We recognise that making grant decisions can be difficult and complex. Managing competing demands for funding to a finite pot of money can present panel members with dilemmas.

Sometimes seemingly good proposals will not get funding due to the competition for resources. In order to differentiate between applications and decide which ones are most deserving of funding, Panel Members will need to take into account a variety of considerations.

Panel Members may find the following questions, or prompts, useful for teasing out the relative strengths and weaknesses of an application and helping you formulate your decisions.

* Has the applicant provided a good description/evidence of need?
* Is the project duplicating existing work? (This is where local knowledge can be particularly useful)
* How many people are likely to benefit and are the benefits and outcomes clearly illustrated and realistic?
* Is the project well organised with a clear plan for delivery?
* Is the cost breakdown reasonable and clearly explained?
* Does the applicant have the expertise, experience and capability to deliver the project?
* Is there a financial need for support or could this project conceivably be delivered from other resources within the organisation?

The Foundation’s grants team member will make a note of the reason(s) why a grant was not awarded – sometimes this is specific, but more often it is a general reason.

**Stage 2 - Panel Rejection Reasons**

**Grant schemes are often oversubscribed with many more applications than can be funded**

**Reasons why a particular project might be funded over another may include**

1. Good, clear information provided about the project to support the application.
2. The need for the grant was clear or clearly explained by the applicant.
3. The purpose and benefits of the project were clearly stated.
4. It was felt that the applicant has limited reserves and limited opportunity to access other sources of funding or fundraising
5. A clear and realistic breakdown of costs was provided
6. The scale of the project was judged to be manageable for the current management structure and size of the organisation as described in the application.
7. The project has realistic and achievable outcomes
8. An application is inclusive and wide reaching
9. **Panel Terms of Reference – General Overview**

Purpose

The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations on the award of grants to the Foundation’s Board and to help promote the fund in order to maximise the benefit to the community.

Decision-making

The panel will aim to achieve decisions by consensus, however, if this is not possible, a vote will be taken. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair will have the casting vote. The Board of trustees of Two Ridings Community Foundation has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that all income is distributed for charitable purposes in accordance with Charity Commission expectations.

Minutes

The Minutes will be taken by a Foundation staff member and circulated amongst the panel with a record of decisions made following the meeting.

Member responsibilities

All Panel members are responsible for:

1. Reviewing application summaries in advance of the meeting
2. Reviewing any recommendations made by the Foundation’s grants staff
3. Bringing local knowledge and expertise to bear on decision-making (eg. knowledge of the applicant, advice on the funding context, other similar organisations/initiatives operating locally)
4. Declaring an interest at any meeting at which he or she may have an interest in any of the grant applications

Two Ridings Community Foundation responsibilities

The Foundation will be responsible for:

1. The administration of the grants panel
2. Carrying out due diligence and monitoring on all grants made from the Fund
3. Administering and monitoring all applications and awards

**Appendix A**

**Grants Panel Responsibilities**

Panel: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As a member of a Two Ridings Community Foundation Grants Panel, I understand that, although voluntary, this role is accompanied by a number of responsibilities. In joining the Panel, I agree to:

1. Observe strict confidentiality about the applications assessed and the decisions made before and after the Panel meeting has taken place
2. Signpost all third party enquiries to the Foundation
3. Declare any interest that may affect any decision about a grant application at the panel meeting
4. Endeavour to reach an unbiased and fair view on grant applications against the criteria
5. Listen to the views of other panel members and be open-minded when considering ideas and proposals
6. Attempt to reach a consensus on each application and respect the final decision of the Panel
7. Respect the authority of the Chair to direct the meeting, and keep in mind the Agenda and the role of the Panel
8. Bear in mind that the Panel serves the community as a whole (and not a community of interest or geography)
9. Accept that the Panel’s decisions need to be ratified by the Board of the Community Foundation

I confirm that I have read the Two Ridings Community Foundation’s conflict of interest policy and I understand the responsibilities of being a grants panel member. I will endeavour to fulfil these responsibilities. I accept that Two Ridings Community Foundation has the right to terminate this agreement should I be in breach of any of the above undertakings.

**Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*Thank you for volunteering to bring your knowledge and experience to bear on Foundation grant decisions*

**Appendix B**

**Grants Panel Declaration of Interest Form**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| It is recognised that Two Ridings Community Foundation (the Foundation) depends upon volunteers to serve on its Board of Trustees and grants panels. Because of the varied interests and backgrounds of board/panel members who are active in the community in their private and public lives, situations may result that could create, or which might be construed to create, a conflict of interest.  Every member of a Two Ridings Community Foundation Grants Panel should complete the following form to declare any interests they or their direct family have that might impact on the work of the Panel. This would include their employment, any directorships, membership of organisations including voluntary organisations, voluntary commitments including honorary positions and appointments on governing bodies. | | |
|  | | |
| Organisation Name and Address | Nature of the interest(s) | **self (S) or family (F)?** |
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**Grants Panel .............................................................................................................**

**Name…………………………………………………………………………...........…**

**Signed………………………………………………………………………………………**