

Minutes

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and
Rural England Prosperity Fund
Board

Friday, 4 August 2023



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee members present

Councillor Philip Knowles (Chairman)
Councillor Lee Steptoe (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Sarah Trotter

Officers

Assistant Director of Finance, Alison Hall-Wright
UKSPF Programme Manager, Hannah Heath
National Management Trainee, Mieke Alcock
Democratic Officer, Lucy Bonshor

Other Members

Councillor Rhea Rayside

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Democratic Officer opened the meeting and as it was the first meeting of the Board following the district elections in May 2023, she asked for nominations for the role of Chairman. Councillor Philip Knowles, who had been the previous Chairman of the Board, was proposed and seconded as Chairman. On being put to the vote this was **AGREED**.

Decision

That Councillor Philip Knowles was elected Chairman of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Board.

With Councillor Knowles in the Chair nominations were requested for the role of Vice-Chairman. Councillor Knowles proposed Councillor Helen Crawford who although was not present, had expressed an interest in continuing the role and this was seconded. A further nomination was proposed for Councillor Lee

Steptoe and this was also seconded. On being put to the vote Councillor Steptoe received the larger number of votes and was therefore appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Decision

That Councillor Lee Steptoe was elected as Vice-Chairman of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Board.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Helen Crawford, Councillor Nikki Manterfield and Councillor Mark Whittington.

3. Declarations of Interests

The Chairman declared an interest in SK2083 – Bourne Wheelers Cycling Club and although it was not a pecuniary interest, the Chairman left the meeting during consideration of the item and took no part in the discussion or voting on the item.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor Ashley Baxter again expressed his concern about the content of the minutes and the financial information which he felt should be included in them.

5. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Concern was expressed by some Members about the press and public being excluded from the meeting. It was felt that as the fund was “public money” then the information should be in the public domain. This point had been raised at previous meetings of the Board and a request was made that the application form should be amended.

Reference was made to the Community Fund which was a similar scheme and the applications for this which were discussed in private.

Further discussion followed about what should or should not be in the public domain and it was confirmed that going forward the amount asked for by applicants would be reflected within the minutes. Currently the applications and the associated information submitted was not to go in the public domain as the applications contained commercially sensitive information regarding third party finances as well as their eligibility and consent had not been received from them to make the information public - full details would be available should an award of funding be made, but not during consideration of applications.

It was also confirmed that a list of agreed applications for the Prosperity Fund was shown on the Council's website together with the amount.

The Chairman indicated that a meeting would be held with the relevant Officers, the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Leader to discuss the issue but at the present time he was not prepared to hold the meeting in public and it was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to exclude the press and public in accordance with Section 100A94) of the Local Government Act 1972 during consideration of the following items of business because of the likelihood that otherwise exempt information, as described in paragraph 3 of the Act would be disclosed to them.

Councillor Baxter asked for his vote against going in to private session be recorded.

6. Applications to the South Kesteven Prosperity Fund

The following applications to the South Kesteven Prosperity Fund were considered:

The Bythams Woodland Trust (BWT) (SK1017)

The application had previously been considered by the Board but had been deferred for further information. The application was in respect of funds for new wooden play structures in the Spinney which was a six acre woodland and green haven, dedicated to the provision of children's play, community recreation and environmental awareness.

Discussion on the funding aspects and who was involved together with the use of artificial grass within the project was discussed following which it was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to approve the application, subject to additional information being provided.

Application funding approved: £60,000.

Great Ponton Parish Council (SK1053)

The application was for the development of an area called Hope Paddock to provide outdoor gym equipment and children's play equipment combined with extra seating facilities, was deferred from the meeting held on 25 April 2023 for a breakdown of costs.

The funding asked for was proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

Application funding approved: £14,000.

(10:55 The Chairman left the meeting before the next application was discussed and took no part in the discussion or the decision)

Vice-Chairman, Councillor Lee Steptoe in the Chair

Bourne Wheelers Cycling Club (SK2083)

The application was for a festival including cycle races, skateboarding and a classic car parade, celebrating the history of Bourne.

Reference was made to the different interventions and also part funding of projects and also that there was some flexibility to move funding between interventions.

The previous Bourne CiCLE Festival was mentioned and how popular it had been and the benefits for the area. The original intention had been to have three events over the years; however, after the first event future events had been cancelled and costs for the original event had spiralled. Any future event needed to have a tight financial control.

The application was approved in principle but more detail was requested in respect of the breakdown of costs for the £8,000 in match funding.

Application funding approved in principle more detail requested in respect of the £8,000 match funding: £35,000 approved in principle.

(11:09 the Chairman returned to the meeting)

Councillor Philip Knowles in the Chair

Lawrance Park Recreation Ground and Community Association (SK2100)

The application was for building improvements including the removal of the Community Hall showers and refurbishment of toilet facilities, installation of new sinks, refurbished flooring and decoration throughout.

It was stated that three quotes would be required to ensure Value for Money.

Concern was expressed that no match funding had been given, although it was acknowledged that this was not a legal requisite of accessing the funding and discussion followed on other funding streams with examples given of other areas where they had accessed funding from other bodies. Councillor Sarah Trotter offered to assist the applicant.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **REFER** the application back to the applicant and sign post the organisation to other funding streams.

REFER application back and signpost to other available funding streams.

The following two applications were discussed together.

Caythorpe and Frieston Parish Council (SK2085)

An application for the improvements to heating, hot water and power installation using renewable energy (solar and battery storage) at the Pavilion.

Caythorpe and Frieston Parish Council (SK2084)

An application for Solar panels and battery storage for the Village Hall.

Discussion on both funding applications followed and it was noted that not all parties had been consulted. It was confirmed that the Parish had already received funding for £13,000 in respect of the automation of the winding-up of the church clock. Further discussion followed on the usage of both the pavilion and village hall and it was proposed, seconded and agreed to **REFER** the application back for more information in respect of anticipated energy consumption and usage of facilities.

REFER application back for more information in respect of anticipated energy consumption and usage of facilities.

Caythorpe and Frieston Parish Council (SK2082)

This application concerned the renewal of flat roof coverings to the Village Hall to replace existing leaking roofs, including improved insulation, new roof covering and associated works.

Discussion on the application followed and it was noted that consultation had been carried out and also match funding was in place. It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to approve the funding requested.

Application funding approved: £13,000.

Castle Bytham Village Hall (SK2091)

The application was for the replacement of doors in the Village Hall. Discussion on the application followed and it was noted that this was Phase 2 of a four part project. It was agreed to **REFER** the application back for further clarity in respect of the funding that was being requested.

REFER application back for further clarity in respect of the funding being requested.

Little Bytham Village Hall (SK2097)

The application was for insulation of the roof space, installation of LED lighting and improved electrical heaters. Then to look to have a solar arrangement with battery storage.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to approve the funding.

Application funding approved: £20,000.

Dysart Park Action Group (SK2102)

The application was for a jazz festival in Dysart Park, including musicians, food stalls and local stall holders.

The application was discussed and concern expressed about the costs and tight timescale. It was stated that the funding guidelines required three quotes and that the cheapest was used. Further discussion followed and it was proposed and seconded to refuse the application for funding on the basis that it did not represent Value for Money.

Funding application REFUSED.

Stubton Village Hall (SK2093)

An application for the replacement of five windows and three doors. Members discussed the application but felt that further information was required and it was agreed to **REFER** the application back to seek clarity and comparability in respect of the quotes submitted.

REFER application back to seek clarity and comparability in respect of the quotes submitted.

PCC St Georges Church Stamford (SK2099)

An application for works to make the chancel watertight. It was stated that more research was needed to see if the application could be considered under the guidelines of the fund as religious activities could not be funded.

To DEFER the application until further enquiries were made as to its eligibility for the fund.

Jubilee Church (ACM) (SK2070)

An application for a weekly Saturday Café for one year, providing a hub to support Ukrainian refugees. Funding to cover some cost of the Café.

The application was discussed but it was felt that further clarity in respect of costs was required and it was proposed and seconded to **REFER** the application back for clarity in respect of the costs.

REFER application back for clarity in respect of costs.

7. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances decides is urgent

The following issues were raised.

- The Board to be circulated with a list of all applications which Officers had agreed under the £5,000 threshold 24 hours before they were published on the website.

➤ Action – Democratic Officer to circulate ODD list before publication.

- That a meeting be arranged with the Chairman, the Deputy Leader and the Monitoring Officer to consider the Terms of Reference of the Board particularly in respect of substitutes.
- That consideration be given to applicants who wished to present their applications.
- That meetings of the Board were to take place every two months – the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for Monday 16 October at 2pm.

8. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 12:24pm.