**Community Initiatives Committee Meeting**

**16/17 February 2016**

**CRC Offices**

**Present:** David Russell (Chair), Delia Close, Libby Keys, Sheila McClelland, Robin Morton, Kasia Garbal, Donna Blaney

**In Attendance:** Paul Jordan, Jacqueline Irwin, Damien McNally, Michaela Mackin, Charlotte McNaught, Frances Dennison, Ellana Tomasso (minute taker)

1. **Apologies:**

Leon Litvack, Jacqueline Witherow, Noel McKenna and Norman Hamilton.

**2 Declaration of Interests:**

Libby Keys – Rural Community Network  
Robin Morton – Groundwork NI

**3 Minutes from Last Meeting CIC16/12/2015**

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

**4 Matters Arising**

Following the rejection of an incomplete application CRC staff met with North Belfast Interface Network to discuss funding options going forward. Staff will follow-up with the group when the 2016/17 budget has been agreed.

**5 Introduction to Decision Making Session**

**Budget Overview CIC16/02/16/001**

The Committee was advised that there could be potential budget cuts within the 2016/2017 financial year of 5-10%. The total budget available this year was therefore potentially 3 figures – no cuts, 5% cut (-£54,000) and 10% cut (-£134,500). It was acknowledged that the cuts may not be as severe as 10% but there was no confirmed budget available at present.  
The Committee discussed how to allocate funding if cuts were to happen in year.

The Committee identified a number of options

* Decide to fund all groups in the first instance and hope that there are no cuts.
* Fund all groups and if cuts were to occur reduce funding to all groups by the same percentage.
* Set up a reserve list and cuts would be applied only to this list, therefore some groups will get total certainty and others would know they could be subject to cuts from the outset.

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It was agreed that assessments would be made and a reserve list established should it be required.

**Introduction to Mapping and Key Findings of the Review Process CIC 16/02/16/002**

The Evaluation Officer gave an overview of the groups in terms of location, geographic reach and thematic types of work that each group is doing.

It was suggested that groups should be encouraged to work together in certain areas such as Belfast although it was noted that this is already happening.

**CIC 16/02/16/003**

**Running Order Overview**

Staff gave an overview of the running order.   
The Assessment Officer to give an overview of the group and application and a nominated Member will give their assessment of the funding request.   
The Finance Officer will give an overview of the group’s accounts.  
The Evaluation Officer will update the Committee on the reviews of each group with respect to renewal applications.  
Committee will discuss the application and make an initial recommendation.

This was order was agreed by members.

**6 Applications with Decline Recommendations CIC 16/02/16/004**

**The Nerve Centre**Committee noted the application presented a good proposal; however, it was declined on the basis of need as the group presented financial information which evidenced significant unrestricted reserves. It was noted that CRC would continue to support and engage with the group, as there is a strong relationship already through the Decade of Centenaries.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Children’s Enterprise NI**The group applied for a Regional CR Co-ordinator. Committee agreed that the bid did not evidence the need for the post given that other organisations are already offering this type of CR work. It was suggested that local Council funding may be appropriate in places and other costs could be covered by CRC’s CRCD scheme. It was also noted that the group had healthy reserves.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Co Armagh Grand Orange Lodge**Committee recognised that the group are tackling perceptions but that they need to build up a body of community relations work. It was noted that there was limited evidence of relationship building with cross-community organisations. Committee noted that the group was turned down for Core Funding last year and were advised to apply to the CRCD scheme for assistance in building their CR work, but they only submitted an application recently. CRC will reissue the offer to work with the group through the CRCD grant scheme going forward over the coming year.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Suffolk Community Forum**Committee noted the programme is primarily dealing with anti-social behaviour, community safety and environmental issues and is not focused specifically on community relations issues. It was agreed that some of the work could be funded through the CRCD grant scheme. It was agreed to decline the proposal on the basis of the limited CR content of the proposal.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Linen Hall Library**The organisation wishes to promote the NI Political Collection and gather information from the Agreement to the present day. Committee noted there are no plans for facilitative dialogue or community relations engagement on the Collection at present. It was also noted that while this is a very important piece of work it would be more appropriately funded through one of the heritage bodies. The group could apply for CRCD funding if they decided to add a CR dialogue/engagement element. It was agreed that staff should encourage Linen Hall Library to apply next year with emphasis on engaging a CR worker to work alongside the librarian.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Community Restorative Justice Ireland**The group’s application was based on community safety and restorative justice issues and there are no community relations objectives within the strategic plan. It was agreed that the application also did not meet the criteria of the scheme.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Embrace**The group did not meet the criteria of the scheme and did not answer all questions. The application was limited in terms of community relations.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**Rathfern Community Regeneration Group**The application had an emphasis on a shared venue but there was limited evidence of community relations work. The Committee noted the presented work plan was community development focussed at present. The group will be advised to apply to the CRCD scheme for community relations project costs going forward.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**John Hewitt Society**

Committee recognised the value of the work but agreed that there was not enough of a community relations component to the application to warrant core funding. It was agreed that the work proposal in this application could be funded through CRCD

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**National Museums Northern Ireland**Committee noted that the application was speculative in terms of its stated purpose and the work plan required much more detail. CRC staff will look to work with the organisation to explore opportunities for project support. Committee noted that the group presented significant reserves which could be used for funding the post.

**Decision:** The Committee agreed that the application should be declined.

**7 Renewal Applications CIC16/02/16/005**

**An Gaelaras Ltd**The group are working in Derry/Londonderry and Strabane on Irish Language projects. It was noted that the group are doing some very challenging work and have been assisting other groups in their development work. This group was seen as good value for money and have a good programme of work. Their challenge is to build on their work within the PUL community; CRC will work with the group to develop this further.

**Decision**£27,536 approved for 2 years.

**Ballymoney Community Resource Centre**The group have a broad programme of work and have a significant geographical reach. The group have presented a very strong programme and have an established reputation for being able to deliver on their objectives. It was noted that the group are working well within PUL communities and are working hard to engage with CNR communities also.

**Decision**Agreed £42,851.00 for three years with inflationary increase in salary costs to be held at 1%.

**Belfast Interface Project**The Committee noted that this is a long established project and have made significant moves in working with other initiatives. It was suggested that they need to deliver more of their own projects and share their skills with other groups. Committee noted that there were areas of their work plan which needed more clarity and their extent of their partnerships with other groups.

**Decision**£81,025 for 1 year on condition

**Condition:** Work plan to include evidence of a BIP driven programme of CR delivery with less emphasis on attending meetings and event of other groups.

**Ballynafeigh Community Development Association**Ballynafeigh has been the largest mixed and shared neighbourhood scheme since the 1970’s. They are a well-respected organisation delivering good community relations programmes. They have gone through a significant amount of change in recent years and have lost staff due to funding cuts. However, it was noted that the group need to write up their work and report what they do in a much more structured and specific way. Committee directed staff to assist the group to better articulate the very important work that they are engaged in through the CRCD grant scheme.

**Decision**£41,932 for 1 year.

**Charter NI**Charter NI has a work programme across a range of themes and projects. Committee noted that development work was needed to be done on their public profile, and they needed to start shifting from single-identity work to cross-community work. It was noted that the group are doing a lot of re-imaging work on removing murals.

Committee noted the group’s evaluation report identified a number of concerns, these being;

*“Charter are engaged in work to develop protocols on bonfires issues but have been viewed as providing a less than positive presence in some areas at bonfires.*

*This has been interpreted as the organisation potentially trying to stamp its ownership on bonfire areas. Charter NI will need to discuss this issue with CRC and its own motives for doing this. This may be out of an attempt to deliver a message of oncoming change in how such bonfires are carried out but this issue will need to be resolved during any subsequent periods of funding…..Linked to the issues outlined above, it has been reflected that Charter may need to amend the focus of its work towards more intra-community work in order to address these tensions in PUL areas whilst obviously maintaining its cross community work in East Belfast. This is with the aim of moving communities beyond solely reimaging work and to support them in wider social enterprise initiatives.”*

Committee agreed that the group should be required to do more cross-community with the CNR community, for which they can apply for assistance with this through the CRCD Scheme. They will also be advised to link in with wider CR networks, particularly in its work with PUL communities.

Committee agreed that due to the development and organisational issues it would need to address an award of 1 year would be appropriate with a reduction in their current award.

**Decision**£32,457 for 1 year on condition (see below).

1. **Condition:** Must be able to evidence that it is a credible partner with Short Strand, particularly in responding to issues at the interface and wider cross-community work.
2. **Condition:** The plan of work for 2016 – 17 must show development towards cross community, community relations focussed work.
3. **Condition:** The group must begin to develop networks with other core funded organisations particularly with those that are working within PUL communities on a cross community basis.

**Community Arts Partnership**Committee noted that the group is doing some very good creative arts work however, this does not include sufficiently focused community relations based work. It was noted that the group did not specifically target groups that they were working with but put out an open call. The Committee noted this lack of planned, strategic community relations work, and agreed to decline the group’s application.

**Decision**Declined

**Community Dialogue**Committee noted the group is very good at networking and developing their work over a range of sectors. They are carrying out some very good work engaging hard to reach communities in difficult conversations. However, it was noted that the group need to focus on outcomes as well as outputs. CRC will assist the group in doing this going forward.

**Decision**£48,799 for 2 years with conditions

**North West Playhouse Resource Centre**Committee noted they are very specific about the community relations work they are doing which is of a very high standard. The group uses various theatre techniques to engage young people and adults around CR issues. Committee agreed that the group had presented a strong programme of work.

**Decision**£29,144 for 2 years.

**TWN**Committee noted this group has been funded for a number of years and are building networks and connections in the women’s sector. However, it was noted that it is not clear how CRC Core Funding is specifically connected to their work plan. Committee agreed that the group appear to be working with the same women’s groups from last year and have not evidenced engagement with new groups to any great extent. Committee noted from the groups evaluation that some review questions have not been answered along with information relating to some of their work. Committee noted that the women’s sector was an important constituency. Following discussion it was agreed that the work is also being done by other groups who are engaging with new networks. Committee felt that some of the proposed work may be better suited to the CRCD scheme. Committee agreed that there was not enough evidence of how CRC Core Funding was directly enabling focused CR work to warrant continued support.

**Decision**Declined.

**Churches Work Alliance**The work that LINC are doing is very good and has a lot of potential. It was suggested that the group needs to coordinate their work better and take a more joined up approach. However, there are some issues that CRC will need to address with the group prior to funding. CRC will engage with the group’s Board to discuss governance issues and a more substantial work plan for 1 of the posts applied for. CRC will fund the post of Programme Director for 1 year and the 2nd post of CR Co-ordinator for 6 months with a view to reviewing the work of the 2nd post in September’16. The group also have a deficit so this is subject to independent verification of accounts.

**Decision**Conditional offer of £90,620 for 1 year subject to specific financial condition (see below) and a review of the 2nd post after 6 months.  
  
**Condition:** Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

**Community Relations in Schools (CRIS)**Committee noted the group have a huge throughput of work and are engaging with a cross-community parents group in Antrim, Randalstown and Cookstown. The group are also developing new aspects of their work and have been very honest about any difficulties that they have faced in specific areas. They have produced reports and information when asked which is of a very high quality. Committee agreed that the group are very good value for money in terms of the work that they are delivering.

**Decision**£72,119.54 for 3 years.

**Groundwork NI**Committee noted the following points. This is a not-for-profit regeneration organisation, and has a good track record with regards to its work. They are working on shared space projects on contested spaces and are developing collaborative projects. They have been able to successfully work on interfaces in Belfast and are also doing some very good work in Fermanagh with the Bands Forum and PUL community. Committee agreed that the organisation needs to improve its community relations focus in Belfast.

**Decision**£28,674 with review of CR work and subject to conditions:

**Condition:** Work plan for the Good Relations post must be significantly enhanced to demonstrate value for money.

**Harmony Community Trust**Committee noted the following. The group is based outside Strangford and have a good track record in doing community relations work. They have had two different CR workers within the last funding period which has proven difficult but they now have a good work plan in place. They are working with the District Council going forward and are planning to develop this relationship further. They are currently running a deficit so funding will be conditional on them proving they are a going concern.

**Decision**£31,076 for 1 year subject to financial conditions (see below).

**Condition:** Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

**Institute for Conflict Research**Committee noted the following points. This group have a sound track record in the public and voluntary sector. ICR was funded in the last core funding round in part to develop strategic links and relationships with the new Councils. It was acknowledged that this would have been more difficult because of Council mergers, however, this was the agreement for funding from last year and it appears not to have been delivered. Their proposed programme of work contained in the application is for this year is different from the previous funding year. They also have had a deficit for 2014 and 2015 and no reserves policy. Committee agreed based on the evidence provided that the organisation at present does not appear to be financially viable.

**Decision**Declined

**The Junction/Holywell Trust**Committee noted the following points. This is a strong organisation with a very good track record in community relations work. They have been proactive in building relationships across the North-West and have been instrumental in introducing other groups to CR work and enabling them to run their own projects with help from the CRCD scheme. They are currently working on a Troubles Museum creating a collection of artefacts that will be held in the Centre. The review of this group is very positive and they are successfully delivering on their work plans.

**Decision**£99,249 for 2 years.

**Partisan Productions**Committee noted that this project has been funded for the last number of years engaging communities in discussions about culture and identity through theatre. They are able to facilitate difficult conversations within communities and are producing good quality work. It was felt they could upscale their CR work and CRC will assist them in doing this.

**Decision**£28,937 for 2 years.

**Derry/Londonderry YMCA**Committee noted the organisation is building on their funding from last year and are rolling out a CR programme with adults. The supported worker is continuing to deliver good relations training with other YMCA’s. They have good contacts in other areas, and are hoping to build on their work engaging dissidents groups in CR conversations. It was felt that the work is not without risk; however, it was felt that the worker in place will be able to deliver on this. **Decision**£26,424 for 2 years.

**Prime Cut Productions**Committee noted the organisation have successfully delivered on their work plan to date. The work plan going forward is very ambitious and creative although not without challenges in terms of being able achieve all of it. Committee agreed that the group will be encouraged to progress their work around Lough Neagh and continue to develop their good relations work.

**Decision**£26,250 for 2 years.

**Rural Community Network**Committee note that this is an excellent group doing very substantive community relations work in rural areas. They have a wide range of access to rural groups and are well linked to other Core Funded organisations. However, they have a financial deficit which will need to be dealt with going forward.

**Decision**£44,658 for 2 years with condition

**Conditions:** Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

**REACT**Committee noted the following points. This is a long-standing group doing very good work. The group provide meeting spaces within their offices to enable people to engage in difficult conversations. They are doing a lot of work with Rural Community Network and the Armagh Bands Forum. The group are developing their work outside Armagh and have a very positive review and work plan going forward.

**Decision**  
£40,094 for 2 years

**St Columbs Park House**This group have a good community relations programme in place and their reviews are very positive. Committee noted that the group have a deficit and will therefore need to prove that they are a going concern before funding will be released.

**Decision**£35,695 for 3 years subject to conditions (see below).

**Condition:** Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

**Suffolk/Lenadoon Interface Group (SLIG)**Committee noted that the group have been doing joint interface work for a number of years. However, it was felt that while the work is very valuable a number of issues were raised during their review that needed further clarification before funding could be released. CRC will work with the board to clarify these issues going forward.

**Decision**  
£29,647 for 1 year subject to clarification from board and financial verification (see below)

**Conditions**

Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

Staff to engage with the Board of SLIG about the role of Copius Consultants in delivery of core funded work. Focus must be shifted to work and role of Intercultural Awareness Project Workers.

**8 New Applications**

**174 Trust**Group met with CRC staff after they were turned down for core funding last year. Group was advised to apply for work of Deputy Director post however this was not taken on-board. They have produced an extensive proposal in terms of CR output; however, the full work-plan for 2016 – 2017 is not available at present. The Centre has a long history of CR work and is seen as a shared space. The Committee agreed to fund 2 posts at a reduced level, 25% each, as long as the group produces a clear work plan and there is evidence of CR work being done by both posts.

**Decision**£31,580 for 1 year with conditions:

**Conditions**

174 Trust produces a detailed work plan of community relations work, the specific role of the Director needs to be enhanced.

Group to be informed that any further applications to this Programme will be declined if a clear programme of work is not produced as part of its application.

**Forthspring**Committee noted that the group is based at a peace-line and have 16 years’ experience working in this sector. They are involved in a number of community relations initiatives and there is a lot of evidence of very good work being done. This project involves community relations work with parents of children from two primary schools from across the interface which is involved in the Shared Education Programme. Committee agreed to support the proposal.

**Decision**£39,088 for 1 year

**PeacePlayers**Committee noted the following. This organisation uses basketball as a vehicle for developing CR work. They also run the Belfast Interface Games. The work that they are engaged in is distinctive and very high quality. They are able to bridge the gap of dealing with sport and CR work very well. The funding is for training for practitioners and coaches.

**Decision**£23,666.37 for 1 year.

**Corrymeela**Committee noted the following points. This organisation was turned down for core funding last year and CRC staff met with them to explain this decision and give them direction which they have taken on board. They have restructured their Articles of Association and employed a new CR programme team. Their work plan is still being developed but so far is creative and innovative and they are collaborating on various CR projects with others. Their financial status is unclear and the group appear to have a substantial deficit and with their reserves are tied up in buildings. The Committee felt that the programme was excellent but there was concern expressed about their financial sustainability going forward.

**Decision**£75,115 for 1 year.

**Condition**: Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

**East Belfast Mission**Committee noted the following. This group initiated an Irish Language group called Turas, which runs 9 weekly courses for people from both sides of the interface with 150 learners. The group has an excellent reputation and are currently doing outreach work in depoliticising the Irish language. The group have a deficit and concern was raised over their viability as a going concern. It was also advised that the group also explore other funding streams particularly from DCAL.

£29,972 was the recommended grant award which includes salary contribution of 90%. Committee considered awarding the salary at 80% to reflect the 80/20 balance of work between adults and children. Following further consideration it was agreed to fund at the recommended amount however officers were directed meet with the group to develop their work plan further subsequent to audit questions being addressed.

**Decision** £29,972 for 1 year with financial conditions.

**Condition:** Grant aid subject to independent assessment of accounts to verify that the deficit will not increase within this financial year, and that the organisation has a plan in place to reduce their deficit. They are also required to prove that they are a going concern.

**Irish Council of Churches**Committee noted that this is a group partially funded by the four main churches. The beneficiaries of this project are extensive and it was felt that partially funding this group to encourage CR work across the churches sector would be a good use of funding. The Committee would require a clear and deliverable CR work plan to be produced before funding would be released. The Committee agreed that the funding offer is also conditional on the churches putting in 50% match funding, therefore CRC will fund at a lesser amount than requested.  
  
**Decision**£22,279 for 2 years with a review after 1 year, this would not be a renewal application.

**Conditions:**

Subject to a review after 1 year for Committee consideration.

50% Match funding coming from the churches.

More detailed CR plan to be presented.

**Falls Community Council**Committee noted that the group have an extensive network across Belfast and have a good track record in dealing with interface tensions. They are currently working on an Anti-Sectarianism Toolkit and are seeking OCN accreditation for this. The Committee felt that the group needs to take a more partnership approach and encourage other funders to buy into the work. It will also be a condition that the group attend meetings of the Interface Community Partners. Support to be offered at 50% for BCRC Project Manager and BCRC Policy & Admin Officer posts and some running costs.

**Decision**£33,935 for 1 year over two posts Project Manager and Policy Officer.

**Condition:**

Group to actively participate in ICP.

**Mediation NI**Committee noted the following. The group are working on civic dialogue projects with statutory agencies and doing alternative dispute resolution. They now wish to do more CR work although this is still in its infancy; the project itself has merit given the constituencies in which the group is working. It was agreed that support from the statutory agencies would need to be verified as a condition of grant aid.

**Decision**£19,201.80 for 1 year

**Condition**

Verification of added value from NIHE, Parades Commission and PSNI and evidence that consultation with these agencies has been on-going in the design of the programme.

**Women’s Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)**Committee noted that this group has developed links with Women’s Information NI (WINI), and are doing some collaborative work. They are engaging women from both communities on issues such as the flags protests and parades. Committee agreed that there was collaborative advantage to be gained through this work that could increase the level of CR activities within the women’s sector. It was agreed that initial support for one year would be awarded.

**Decision**£28,780 for 1 year with condition.

**Youthlink**Committee noted that the group have a good track record in community relations work. Their application is focused on CRED which the Department has moved away from. However, there is value in encouraging the group to work within the United Youth Programme and Summer Camps. The Committee decided that CRC should have a connection with the group and encourage them to move into new programmes. This is on condition that they send in a new work plan that reflects this and is deliverable.

**Decision**£24,175.17 for 1 year with condition.

**Condition:** Group submit a new work plan

**International School of Peace Studies**Committee noted that this project is based in Derry/Londonderry using the Messines Experience to bring people from all communities together, emphasising the shared history of World War I. The Committee felt that this project was very valuable but that it could be funded through CRCD to assist them in being more proactive in getting a cross-community balance.

**Decision**Decline

**Beyond Skin**Committee noted that the project did have some clear CR content however there was a significant portion of the group’s bid which included work that falls outside of the Core Scheme remit i.e. work with MEDF communities and work with school children.

The officers recommendation noted that the group’s bid had around 25% content that was relevant to the Core Programme.

Committee recognised the value of the work, however, they believed that the proposal did not has sufficient CR content to warrant Core Funding and directed staff to discuss with the group the possibility of support from the CR/CD Scheme.

**Decision** Decline

**Conclusion**Committee noted that the number of eligible projects exceeded the existing budget and that any recommendations could only be in-principle and subject to funding being available. Reference was made to the committee’s earlier discussion which considered having a reserve list. In the absence of a definitive scoring matrix it was agreed not to pursue this but to wait until the final budget had been confirmed. The Chair suggested that once the final budget was confirmed that committee may wish to top-slice all awards in order to stay within budget limits. It was agreed that CRC would write to OFMDFM to see if further funds can be made available and/or more clarification around the possibility of cuts.

Given the uncertainty regarding the 2016/17 budgetat the moment the Committee will reconvene on the 11th March when it is hoped that more information will be available.

Staff will follow-up on the queries raised and have responses ready for the 11th March meeting.

The Chair thanked the committee and staff for their hard work in what had been a massive task in preparing and assessing all of the applications.

It was agreed that a condition of all awards would be Core Funded groups are required to run an event during CRCA week 16/17.