

Item 15. To discuss the e-mail dated 6 December from Norfolk County Council regarding the Bird Hide and agree on a course of action.

Summary:

This report outlines funding options for Langley with Hardley Parish Council in relation to the potential replacement of the bird hide overlooking Hardley Flood, currently owned by the Parish Council. The opportunity arises through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme administered by the Broads Authority, as communicated by Michael O'Neill, Assistant Project Officer at Norfolk County Council in his e-mail dated 6 December circulated to Parish Councillors on 7 December 2023. Cllr Stuart Adcock is the Parish Council's representative on the Wherryman's Way project group.

Purpose:

To ensure all Councillors are informed about the details and benefits of the project. Discuss whether to proceed with the application and if so nominate a Councillor to lead on the project. It is noted that this has the potential to be a large and complex project taking place over an extended period of time, however the impact of a new bird hide with community workshops is could be considered a worthy investment of this time and commitment.

Background:

The bird hide on the Wherryman's Way, owned and managed by Langley with Hardley Parish Council, is in poor condition and at the end of its life span, according to the assessment conducted by Norfolk County Council. Michael O'Neill, in his correspondence, highlighted the availability of funding through the FiPL scheme for a complete replacement of the bird hide.

Funding Opportunity: Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Scheme:

- **Overview:** The FiPL scheme, administered by the Broads Authority, offers funding for projects on protected landscapes, including those managed by Parish Councils. The specific opportunity discussed involves a replacement for the bird hide, with potential community engagement aspects.
- **Maximum Funding:** The Parish Council has the opportunity to receive 100% funding for a well-designed project, with a maximum value of £75,000.

- **Objectives:** The project aligns with the 'People' objective of the FiPL scheme, promoting more opportunities for people, including diverse audiences, to explore, enjoy, and understand the landscape.
- **Full details of the scheme are available here:** <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects/farming-in-protected-landscapes>

Recommendations:

The Parish Council is presented with the following options:

1. **Apply for FiPL Funding:** Pursue the opportunity presented by Michael O'Neill and apply for funding through the FiPL scheme for the replacement of the bird hide. This could include community engagement activities such as wildlife workshops.
2. **Collaboration with Norfolk County Council:** Engage in discussions with Norfolk County Council to further explore the details of the project, potential community events, and the application process. Seek their support in preparing and submitting the funding application.

Next Steps:

1. Discuss the funding opportunity during the Parish Council meeting to be held on 9 January and gain consensus on proceeding with the bird hide replacement project.
2. Engage with Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority for additional information, guidance, and support in preparing the funding application.
3. Develop a project proposal that aligns with the FiPL scheme objectives, including details on the bird hide replacement and potential community engagement activities.
4. Submit the funding application within the specified timeframe, seeking 100% funding for the project.
5. If funding is successful the next stage would be procurement and build of the new hide.
6. Do nothing.

Conclusion:

The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme presents a valuable opportunity for Langley with Hardley Parish Council to secure funding for the replacement of the bird hide overlooking Hardley Flood. This project not only addresses the need for infrastructure improvement but also aligns with the broader objectives of promoting community engagement and appreciation of the landscape.

The Parish Council is encouraged to discuss and consider the outlined options to make an informed decision regarding this funding opportunity. It is the view of Norfolk County Council that the bird hide cannot remain in place as it is.