

Notes on LeithChooses meeting, 2020_08_19

Actions are **yellow-highlighted**

1 Present

Douglas Tharby, Sally Miller, Caroline Lamond, Don Giles, Bruce Ryan

2 Meeting with David Reilly (Scottish Government)

Sally and Don attended this meeting this morning. They noted

- David Reilly (DR) was quick to reply to requests for a meeting.
- DR likes that LeithChooses is mindful of the quality of our PB, but we should keep our momentum. This meeting was to discuss how to do this year's LeithChooses.
- DR stated that North Ayrshire may have used Consul for voting.
 - Action: DR will send us relevant contact details
 - Action: Then LC will ask for experiences/advice.
- But actual use of Consul for LeithChooses still depends on CEC permitting this.
- Concerning Scottish Government (SG) funding for PN:
 - LeithChooses admin costs are £3k to £5k. PB can't be run for free.
 - SG granted £6.5m a few years ago to establish PB. We don't know how much went to CEC.
 - No money has been earmarked for running PB. SG thinks local authorities should fund this.
 - There may be Barnett consequential for PB but these are not guaranteed.
 - Therefore PB in Edinburgh needs funding support from CEC (over and above CEC officials' goodwill and valued contributions of their working time).
 - And hence current SG work is not of direct, immediate benefit to LeithChooses.
 - Angus Hardie on is on the SG's PB working group.
 - LeithChooses believes this money should be in CEC locality managers' budgets.
- Possible options for decision-making systems
 - These include 'participatory grant-making' (PG-M). This is NOT PB.
 - DR would support more deliberation in LeithChooses. In general, deliberation is lacking in Scottish PB. Deliberation can be done online
 - LeithChooses could use multi-year cycles, e.g. year 1 for deliberation, year 2 for voting.
 - This would involve carrying over year 1's funding budget into year 2.
 - Action: Caroline to find whether CEC will allow this

2.1 Discussion

- Sally: If we can't do in-person voting, we must do online [if we are to have voting].
 - So we need to ask CEC to let us use Consul for voting.
 - Action: If CEC does not permit this, LeithChooses will tell DR who will feedback to SG.
 - Possible action - LeithChooses then does PG-M.
- Bruce: concern about **appearance of** conflicts of interest if decision-makers include those applying for funds.
 - For clarity: Bruce has no problem with applicants from previous years (who aren't applying this year) being among decision makers.
 - For clarity: Bruce trusts that majority of pro-social organisations won't **actually** do bad things – it's about appearances.
 - For clarity: Bruce is not against a system where applicants can't vote for themselves.
- Caroline: other localities are considering grants panels, but this might be due to their traditions.

- Caroline: newsflash – this year's £44,000 community grant is now guaranteed.
- Caroline: Consul has been used for deliberation. She has asked twice for CEC's approval of its use for voting

3 Survey

Apologies – Bruce dropped the ball on noting this well

- Don: getting this survey done should be a priority, because it's very unlikely that CEC will permit use of Consul for voting
- All: discussion of which questions to include, and whether to include online voting option.
 - It was suggested that the survey states that LeithChooses cannot use online voting because CEC has not permitted this. This would (1) be transparent; (2) show people that LeithChooses has grappled with this issue.
- Action: SM to circulate an updated version of the survey preamble and questions.

4 Decision-making

This would be after the survey [presumably] gives LeithChooses a mandate to do *something* in 2021.

- All: discussion of how to make decisions, e.g. using Zoom-meetings and Zoom-polling
- All: Discussion of who should be on panel: e.g. 'ordinary' Leithers, local groups, CEC staff, CEC councillors