

Alan Williams forwarded a spate of email trails to the LBSA on 16/03/22. These were emails between him and Sport Wales / Coal Field Regeneration Fund in May 2021. Alan has often referred to these discussions and we requested any correspondence he has for some context and clarity, especially surrounding the apparent need for the LBSA to appoint a consultant via Sport Wales Grant aid prior to any application process taking place.

Alan Williams

11 May 2021, 15:13 BST

Good Afternoon

I am the Surveyor to Llangennech Community Council and make initial enquiries regarding the availability of grants for adapting an existing semi-derelict and almost unused Tennis Court into an All Weather Multi Sport –Ball Court for as many sports as possible.

As owners the Council would need to take the lead in all the formalities involved in the submissions and dealing with tendering procedures etc but with the widest involvement of the community, and all Sporting Clubs which are now Associate Members of an umbrella organisation –Llangennech & Bryn Sports Association. (LBSA)

In agreement with the LBSA the Council has already delegated the management of the Football/ Rugby maintenance programme to this organisation and contribute a lump sum to meet these costs.

It is anticipated that the proposed Ball Court would likewise be managed allowing autonomy to the LBSA under a Management Agreement, in return for which any reasonable charges for the use of the Ball Court could be retained and used by this organisation for the on going benefits of Sport in the village.

I am formulating a Report on this matter for the Council and the LBSA and would be pleased to receive your comments regarding the above and whether this type of project is eligible for submission by a Community Council.

Kind Regards

Alan

Alan J Williams

Council Surveyor

Llangennech Community Council

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Ceri Richards (Sport Wales)

11 May 2021, 16:54 BST

Alan

Thanks for the note. At the risk of not focusing on the main bulk of the email, capital projects such as the one proposed can only come from the freeholder or leaseholder.....with any type of local authority, town council or community council being ineligible to apply to the Be Active Wales Fund. We can only accept applications from not-for-profit organisations associated with sport and physical activity.

Ceri

11 May 2021, 19:18, Alan writes:

Thanks Ceri

I thought that was the case. My Council, in principle, would consider granting a 21 year lease to the local Sports Association to achieve the development described in my previous message. In addition, there could be funding to the Association to meet its obligations in respect of its 20% contribution - this will be required.

The Council also has the expertise to freely advise on preparation of Applications, with the information you require including Contract Documents and final Accounts.(All tendering procedures)

The important objective is to achieve the additional facility and it was always likely, in any event, to encourage the Sports Association to enter into a Management Agreement with the Council, as it's probably more capable in that respect.

The only issue that would be of concern to the Council is the matter of Default arising in the future, which could mean the termination of the lease and your position in this regard. The Council is obliged to consider this unlikely scenario.

For my Report to Council I will need some clear replies to the above matters. Needless to say that my Report will be circulated to the Council and the Sports Association at the same time and discussed in an open Meeting.

Regards

Alan

Ceri Richards (Sport Wales)

12 May 2021, 08:03 BST

Alan

To clarify my earlier reply, any grant recipient for such a project would need to be the freeholder or leaseholder on the land in question. However, that is a totally separate issue to whether any award would be made or no in the first instance... let alone discussing any future scenario of a lease being terminated. I appreciate you need to cover all eventualities but as I'm sure you understand, there is no guarantee of funding so there are assumptions at play here.

There are lots of assumptions here, but if an award was made to the Sports Association and the lease was terminated within an agreed period (most likely 21 years), Sport Wales would request a repayment of the grant.

Have you or the group held any discussions with the WRU and FAW? If not, I'd advise this is done sooner rather than later. Chris (WRU) and Kevin (FAW) are copied in.

Hope that helps

Ceri

12 May 2021, 09:26, Alan writes:

Thank you Ceri.

I am preparing a Report for Council, and the Llangennech & Bryn Sports Association (LBSA) and I'm trying to clarify in my mind any opportunities that exist to assist with funding and other basic issues. You have the advantage over me in that you are fully aware of your procedures.

There would be no intention of terminating a 21 year lease and I'm sure the Council would be happy to actually extend the period if required. My question to you relates to something that I hope never happens, that is the cessation of the LBSA beyond the control of the Council. These sort of things can happen overtime and as a public authority there is a need to know what then happens and the procedure that follows. There maybe no funds available to refund the costs from the LBSA in such unfortunate circumstances. Twenty years ago I dealt successfully with Sportalot as it was known then and these issues arose at that time. I can assure you that there are no "assumptions" at play here but merely requests for helpful information and I am a little surprised by this comment. In fact it is making "assumptions" that I am trying to avoid.

I know that there is no guarantee of a grant and whilst it is very kind of you to refer this matter to the WRU and FAW which might be very helpful, my enquiry is directly to you at this stage and I am not asking you to commit to anything, in fact these messages are merely a conversation to help me understand the position you represent.

On a final point I understand that the Applicant for grant must contribute 20% of the cost of the project and that the maximum grant is up to £50000 of the balance.

I presume that any contribution from the Council to the LBSA would only count as “match funding” and not alleviate some of the costs of the contribution.

Finally, no one is under any illusions regarding the outcome of any application but I need reasonable guidance in respect of the above points.

It's a pity that we are not able to informally discuss these matters across the table, but maybe this will arise some time in the future when the Council and the LBSA have had the opportunity of considering my Report.(At the end hopefully of this awful Virus)

Would it be helpful to talk on the telephone?

Regards

Alan

Tel 01554 820481

Ceri Richards (Sport Wales)

12 May 2021, 10:03 BST

Alan

Yes, more than happy to have a conversation (in English neu yn Gymraeg).

When is best for you, and would you like a phone call or a Teams video call?

Ceri

12 May 2021, 11:18, Alan writes:

Ceri

That is very useful and would think initially a telephone conversation would be sufficient.

I will forward a list of questions to you later to simply structure our conversation and we could arrange a telephone conversation in English when I hear back from you.

I work part- time mainly from home so there is no problem on my availability.

If there is a need for a video call this might become necessary later, particularly if the scheme goes near the Application Stage, in which case the LBSA will be the party most involved.

Alan

Ceri Richards (Sport Wales)

12 May 2021, 11:19 BST

No problem Alan.....

How about tomorrow morning, say 10.30am?

WE ASSUME A CALL TOOK PLACE BETWEEN CERI RICHARDS & ALAN ON 10:30 ON 13/05/2021

16 May 2021, 11:26, Alan writes:

Ceri

First of all many thanks for your comments and advice regarding the above in our telephone conversation last week. Sorry to trouble you so soon.

As I explained, I need to present a Report to Council and LBSA regarding this project too give indications on the "way forward". This will be on the basis of the Council having to meet a very large percentage of "match funding" to the LBSA.

Whilst the maximum grant is £50,000 you mentioned that the process would require the input of Consultancy particularly as the LBSA would be responsible to your Organisation - at distance from the Council - and this is understandable for all parties.

You mentioned that this Consultancy could also be grant-aided and could you give some indication of what this service could cost and would the grant be in addition to your maximum of £50k. In addition, at what rate would the Consultancy grant be paid.

It is presumed that the Consultants would need to Tender the Scheme before the Application could be submitted.

Regards

Alan

On 17th May, Alan contacts Coalfield Regeneration Trust

Sent: 17 May 2021 10:24

To: Wales <Wales@coalfields-regen.org.uk>

Subject: Llangennech Recreation Ground : Conversion of existing unused Tennis Court to an All Weather Ball Court.

Good morning

I was advised this morning that I should contact Mr Ryan Jones regarding the prospect of receiving grant - aid assistance for a proposal as described briefly above. I am already in contact with Wales Sport regarding this proposal. Of course perhaps this message has been mis- directed and some other Officer will reply.

Could you please inform me whether there are any grants available to a local authority for this purpose, and any other advice at this time.

Many Thanks

Alan

On 17 May 2021, at 10:48, Ryan Jones <ryan.jones@coalfields-regen.org.uk> wrote:

Good Morning Alan. Thanks for your interest and enquiry. We've supported a number of community organisations through this exact process over the last few months - many successfully obtaining the funds needed via Sport Wales Be Active fund and our own Coalfields Community Grant. A couple of key points on any application a) evidence of wider (multi-sport) community use and b) visuals 'this is what it looks like now' and 'this is what it could look like' make a big difference.

Unfortunately, Community Councils & Local Authorities are not eligible to receive direct financial support via the Coalfields Community Grant: <https://www.coalfields-regen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Guidance-Notes-DIGITAL-VERSION.pdf>

Can I just double check that your proposal doesn't involve a 'community asset transfer' i.e. long-term lease of the new MUGA / 3G from the L.A. to a local community group of some sort?

Happy to help with a letter of support, as we are fully behind 'better places to play' applications in former mining communities. I know from other examples that this type of application is attractive to local wind farms and also the people's postcode lottery.

Regards

Ryan

17 May 2021, 14:17, Alan writes:

Ryan

Thanks for your reply and note that you do not fund local government.

I am also in communication with Sport Wales and may come back to you in due course.

This scheme is likely to cost in the region of £100,000 inc VAT.

Whilst it's possible for our local Sporting Organisation to consider taking over this project as the Applicant, the contribution from my Council, as "match funding" is going to be very significant.

I know that there is a limit on what you can say about the hypothetical outcome of an application and this applies equally to Sports Wales- I would not expect this information from you.

My underlying concern relates to the likely level of Council funding as "match funding" which might be as high as 80%, depending on levels of any grants and making it a local authority scheme in disguise.

Of course whoever funds this project it is for the community who use it.

Perhaps I am being too pessimistic.

Regards

Alan

On 17 May 2021, at 14:31, Ryan Jones <ryan.jones@coalfields-regen.org.uk> wrote:

Hi Alan, you are on the right path. The other projects we are involved with are circa £75k. A maximum award from Sport Wales being £50k meaning that the 'match' – comes from an array of smaller sources such as (our community grant upto £7k), Millennium Stadium Trust, Church Act, windfarms, local community council and usually some sort of fundraising / crowdfunder (a good way to demonstrate local support).

You are right, sometimes it is about how it is pitched. The community asset transfer (CAT) angle is very closely aligned to the Sport Wales Be Active stream – clubs taking on 'assets' themselves and finding long-term solutions. How that fits with a community council applying directly not sure – explore that conversation with Sport Wales initially.

Happy to help.

Ryan Jones

Game On Wales Development Manager

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

Mobile/Ffon Symudol: 07976 558203

17 May 2021, 15:00, Alan writes:

Ryan

The Recreation Ground has been in the ownership of the Community Council since its first development for this use perhaps eighty years ago or more.

The Council is prepared to give a twenty one year lease to a Local Sports Association which represents all the sport clubs in the village In order to redevelop this unused Tennis Court. A longer lease if required. In addition, a Management Agreement will be necessary for ongoing day to day issues, including at least some basic maintenance works.

It's not a Community Asset Transfer but this arrangement has applied to other "play areas" which has increased the burden on the Council's finances.

Your comments have already been useful to me.

Alan