

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2023-05-YO29	Wave Adventure
Visit Date	Visited By
31 st July 2023	Victoria Southwell (Zoom)
Overall aim of the funding	
To develop a leadership programme of bike maintenance, mountain bike and other outdoor activity training such as rock climbing and paddle sport for young offenders.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>Wave Adventure (WA) was established in 1999 and became a registered charity in 2013. It is managed by a part time Director and additionally employs two other part time staff, around 7 sessional staff and has 12 active volunteers.</p> <p>The Director is also the founder and works for WA on a part time basis. A part time Administrator and Mental Health Specialist work with him alongside 7 sessional staff and 12 active volunteers. A Board of five Trustees support the Director who include someone with a legal and finance background, a drug and alcohol worker, a sports expert and two people with lived experience of the issues that WA support. There is also a group of 5 Junior Trustees who are under the age of 18 and attend each board meeting and input into decision making. Trustees meet 10 times a year plus an AGM. Several Trustees are also volunteers.</p> <p>WA has a very basic Strategic Plan that covers 2023. It highlights three main objectives which mirror their aims and mission. A five-point plan sits underneath these objectives highlighting how they will be achieved. The Strategic Plan was developed by the Director and shared with Trustees for comment. This would be an area where support from the Spark Programme would be of significant benefit to the organisation.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>At the assessment I met with Graham Wood (Director/Founder) and Tom Miller (Trustee).</p> <p>Graham set up the charity in 1999 when he worked in the youth service and a group of young people who had participated in a local audit identified a canoeing trip as the reward they would like for their contributions. Ongoing activities for the community then followed. His background has always been around education, most latterly in adult education. Five years ago, he took early retirement, and this coincided with the expansion of the range of services being offered and he began to work in a part time paid capacity leading the organisation.</p> <p>Tom works for a drug agency and has been a Trustee since 2018. Prior to this he had been a volunteer with WA for a year. He still volunteers at climbing sessions as an instructor and also at other events. He is also the named Safeguarding Officer for WA.</p>	
Aims and Activities	
Wave Adventure aims to work with disadvantaged children, young people, families, and vulnerable adults and those from communities currently under-represented in participation levels and leadership roles, predominantly in the Bolton and wider Greater Manchester area. WA's main objectives are:	

- To offer the most disadvantaged in under-served communities opportunities to access and care for green spaces and take part in activities which are healthy for the mind & body.
- To enable those experiencing social harm to flourish and to make a positive contribution to their community.
- To work in partnership with relevant organisations with a clear focus on the well-being of a wide range of individuals.

WA currently work with between 1,000 and 1,500 disadvantaged people every year, providing opportunities to take part in regular confidence boosting, healthy activities.

Safeguarding

WA has a Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy that is clear and accessible. This is a small organisation with a number of volunteers and sessional workers who deliver sessions, so it is important that it is well understood and embedded into the work that WA does. The policy is reviewed annually, and Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at Trustee meetings. A Trustee has safeguarding responsibility on the board and is also named in the policy as the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Bolton Council provide Safeguarding training to all staff and volunteers, and this is refreshed every two years. Each activity that is undertaken is risk assessed and any incidents are reviewed by the Director and the Trustee with safeguarding responsibility. Over the past five years there have been between 2-3 safeguarding concerns that have had to be externally escalated and referred on to the MAPPA.

Finances

Independently Examined Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2021 show income of £204,408 against expenditure of £132,198 resulting in a surplus of £72,210. Net assets amount to £135,337 and this is the reserve figure of which £28,947 is unrestricted. WA does not have a formal reserve policy, but their business plan outlines targets and income streams necessary to both grow the organisation and fall back on should funding levels contract. The restricted reserves are primarily made up of fixed assets in the form of equipment.

Budgets and funding predictions for the two-year period of the grant show similar levels of income to previous years. For the current financial year 90% of income has been secured and for the following year just over 50%. Main funding comes from Children in Need, Ministry of Justice, Bolton CVS, and Warburton's Foundation. A five-year grant from National Lottery pays the Director's salary. Some activities generate income for WA and a consultant from the local CVS supports them around sustainability.

Basic but adequate financial systems are in place. Day to day management is undertaken by the part time Administrator who reconciles the bank accounts and produces cash flow projections via Excel spreadsheets. Budget planning is the responsibility of the Director who works with the Treasurer to produce this.

Current Situation and need

Sport is increasingly being shown as an effective way of helping young people to build positive pro-social identities as opposed to anti-social ones. And the work of organisations such as Street Games UK shows that sport-based interventions can help break the cycle of reoffending. This matches the strong belief that WA have that sport can provide the support and mentoring that young offenders need to move down a better path.

As part of a Ministry of Justice pilot, WA worked with eight young offenders to help them develop positive interests and make positive contributions to their community. This involved learning new skills alongside receiving mentoring support from trusted coaches and other experts. This pilot created a big demand for WA's services, and they now have a waiting list of young offenders, with a number of key organisations such as Youth Justice and social services keen to refer.

The local Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support Team have commissioned WA on a small scale to continue elements of this project by offering bike maintenance sessions for young offenders. But this does not come close to meeting the demand for the service from young people.

In response to this WA plans to develop a Leadership Programme for young offenders that will involve working with a team of trusted adults on activities such as accredited bike maintenance sessions, Mountain Bike Leader qualifications, indoor climbing awards and Outdoor First Aid. The programme will be individualised so that young people can progress at their own pace, developing confidence, self-esteem, skills acquisition and progressing to mentoring, volunteering and leadership qualifications. Sessions will be provided at WA's bike hub and through the use of other indoor and outdoor off-site locations. They will run four sessions per week, plus additional days for specific training/qualifications, and will work with up to 16 young people each year.

WA will use non-traditional sports such as rock climbing, kayaking and mountain biking to attract young people who would otherwise not engage in activities and community programmes. A part time Project Manager will be employed to lead the project with support from the Director and volunteers.

Expected changes in Year 1

Social Impact Area 1

Individual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-efficacy • Improved motivation • Improved team work
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Social Impact Area 2

Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental wellbeing • Positive health behaviour • Increased physical activity
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Social Impact Area 3

Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced employability skills • Young people gain work experience • Increased aspirations and career goals
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Request and Budget

WA is requesting **£63,400** over 2 years for the salary costs of a part time Project Manager and project costs.

£33,200 in year 1 - £14,400 (salary), £7,100 (equipment), £4,290 (accreditation and training), £4,000 (venues), £1,600 (transport), £1,200 (insurance) and £610 (refreshments and small items).

£30,200 in year 2 - £14,400 (salary), £4,100 (equipment), £4,290 (accreditation and training), £4,000 (venues), £1,600 (transport), £1,200 (insurance) and £610 (refreshments and small items).

Conclusion

Wave Adventure is a small but effective charity that provides an important offer to a wide range of local community members. It is genuinely reflective of the communities

it serves and the life experiences of those who live there. It is an empowering and supportive organisation that takes care not to over extend its reach nor to drift too far from the original ethos it was founded on.

Graham, the founder, and Director is committed and passionate and WA is clearly his life work. At the heart of the project lies a strong ethos towards development and progression for everyone who takes part and some of the groups who have successfully engaged with activities – such as young Muslim women and those with mental ill health – demonstrate this well. The work that they do is accessible, relevant, and rooted in people thriving through activities and new opportunities.

The proposed project is based on a short Ministry of Justice funded pilot that worked with 18 young people referred by the local Youth Justice Service. Out of these 8 were young men with criminal convictions and the pilot demonstrated over a short period of time that Wave Adventure could offer an effective and interesting intervention for these young people. The pilot was too short to really be able to ascertain if there was a long-term benefit from the project with regards to impacting offending behaviour, but the MoJ report did highlight that the pilot had shown many positive outcomes linked to achievement and personal development. This proposal seeks to build on this and provide a longer-term option for the young people to enable them to build stronger links with WA and gain skills and qualifications that will enable them to move away from their previous offending behaviour.

The activities that WA offer clearly provide a hook to young people and the ability to develop skills in areas such as bike maintenance and achieve qualifications in climbing and other water-based sports enables a route towards viable and genuine employment opportunities to potentially be achieved. However, a lot of what WA appears to want to do is about providing young offenders with the opportunity to participate in activities that they wouldn't ordinarily have had a chance to do. And whilst it can be argued that this participation will develop skills and link to personal development that might impact offending behaviour, this outcome doesn't feel like the driving force behind the project. The 'taking part' feels like the key factor and this was evident in the proposed project feeling slightly unstructured and participation being left up to the young person to define. There did not seem to be a formal curriculum that was applied to the sporting activities to develop the skills that were discussed and even though staff were described as being trauma informed and compassion focused I was left a little confused about what support would actually be available. With this group of young people likely to be complicated and challenging there was little mention of other issues that might need to be supported such as housing, addiction, family breakdowns and past trauma.

This project unfortunately does not seem to do enough in a formal way to be considered using a sport for development approach and when compared to other applicants there were some clear gaps in both expertise and focus. It is without a doubt a worthwhile organisation doing some great work, but I struggle to see how they will be able to show that they have impacted the offending behaviour of participants. They have good links with a range of relevant agencies, but it felt like the project was a nice thing for the young people being referred to do rather than this being a key part of their rehabilitation. With this in mind it is recommended that a grant not be awarded.

Recommended Priority Rating		
Risk = Medium	Difference to organisation = High	Priority = Low