

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF
RURAL ABERDEENSHIRE LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP**

**TUESDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2008
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, WOODHILL HOUSE**

Present

Eleanor Anderson	Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership Federation
Robin Blyth	Aberdeenshire Community Councils
Martin Brebner	Aberdeenshire Council
Dan Cadle	Forestry Commission Scotland
Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
Liz Gordon	Aberdeenshire Council
Moira Gordon	Scottish Women's Rural Institute
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
Stewart Johnston	Scottish Executive
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Ken Massie	Visit Scotland
Tony Miller	Aberdeenshire Community Councils
Erin Wood	Aberdeenshire Council

Officers in Attendance

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies

Caroline Clark, Sabine Dey, Morna Harper, Bob Leonard , Keith Newton, Lorna Paterson, Jamie Rankin, Susan Smith, Maureen Stephen, Andy Willox

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

1.1 James Knowles welcomed those present and apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 LAG Meeting of Tuesday 2 September 2008

Members were updated on two items in the minute:

4.6 – Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER was successful in securing a share of the residue of funding retained for 2nd round LEADER allocations. The final award is £3.36m.

4.7 – LAG Partners Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland, have contributed additional funding towards administration costs for LEADER in the current financial year. Both were thanked for their generous contribution. LEADER is still in communication with NHS regarding a possible contribution.

The minute was approved as an accurate record and will be uploaded on the LEADER website www.aberdeenshireleader.org.

2.2 Draft PAC Meeting of Tuesday, 25 November 2008

Approved as an accurate record. PAC minutes will be uploaded on the website once approval letters have been issued to applicants.

3. COMMUNICATION

- 3.1 A letter has been drafted to Iain Matheson, Scottish Government, confirming that Aberdeenshire PAC considers a grant retention rate of 25% until completion of all project works to be a significant cash flow issue for community groups.
- 3.2 A letter has been drafted to Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary, re-visiting concerns regarding the indicative commitment made by Scottish Enterprise on project spend under Actions 1 & 2. Having been advised that SE no longer holds a discretionary budget at local level, the PAC is seeking assurance that original commitments will be upheld.
- 3.3 Iain Matheson, Scottish Government, has confirmed that the LEADER intervention rate for Action 3 administration costs can be increased to 65%.

He also confirmed that the Rural Aberdeenshire LAG should receive the advance payment of £235,200 this week.

4. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

- 4.1 A progress update was circulated in advance of the meeting along with a note from the LEADER Co-ordinators Meeting held in Inverness on Tuesday, 9 December 2008. Copies of an information sheet on State Aids are available on request.
- 4.2 Funding summary sheets were also circulated in advance of the meeting. LAG members commended the potential of LEADER to lever in support from outside bodies. It was also welcome to see the level of 'own contribution' made by applicants.

5. ROUND 2 PROJECT APPLICATIONS 001 TO 026

Clarification was sought on the completion of the applicant status box on the Project Assessment Reports.

James Knowles confirmed that Vicky would give a brief summary on each project which had been recommended for approval by the PAC. Projects that had been asked to supply additional information would be considered at the end.

5.1 011 – Scolty Trails Enhancement Project (STEP)

The project to improve paths on the local landmark Scolty Hill will be of economic benefit to the area and contribute to community and visitor facilities for recreational access.

The LAG agreed that the paths serve a much wider area, being very popular with people from the city.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £63,000 APPROVED.

5.2 012 – Tullynessle Hall Cultural Arts Development

The hall has been upgraded into a modern rural resource and is considered to be an excellent venue for touring cultural arts companies. LEADER support towards stage lighting and seating will enhance the facility.

The hall is energy efficient and is being used as a 'model' for other village hall renovations.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,000 APPROVED.

5.3 014 – Woodhead & Windyhills Community Woodland Enhancement

The group have a good track record on delivering projects.

A linked application for hedging and fencing has been approved by SRDP under Rural Priorities.

Being a geographically dispersed community, the site provides a local focus and educational resource in a natural environment.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £6,566 APPROVED.

5.4 015 – Rothienorman Bowling & Community Facility

The application comes from a pro-active group. The project is community led with community backing. This community facility will be multi-functional.

Discussion was held as to whether the new community resource might be to the detriment of the existing Villiage Hall.

The LAG felt that with the population of the settlement expanding, having two community buildings would be an advantage. The local Church Hall and the new school are not suitable for general community use.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £112,975 APPROVED.

5.5 016 – Portsoy Salmon Bothy

It is envisaged that the project, creating a new Manager's post for the venue, will be self financing within a 3 year period. Employment creation is one of LEADER's target areas and the LAG felt it was an objective of LEADER to give this type of enterprise an opportunity.

The provision of disabled access to the top floor of the building was raised. This was confirmed.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £28,568 APPROVED.

5.6 018 – The Town is the Venue

The applicant was asked to re-submit in Round 2 with more precise details of aims and costs and more supporting evidence of community backing. Time was well spent on re-focusing the proposal to run a series of cultural arts events with a more robust application being presented.

Community Arts projects in the Huntly area have been very popular in the past.

The organisation has been highly successful in terms of obtaining match funding to enable the structured proposal to proceed.

The applicants will report regularly on the events programme.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £72,586 APPROVED.

5.7 020 – The Enchanted Glen

This novel winter forest event has potential to have positive impact on the local economy in terms of increased visitor numbers over the weekend.

Ticket sales to date have been promising, attaining target numbers.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £5,000 APPROVED.

5.8 Application 021

The PAC recommended the applicant be invited to re-submit application in Round 3.

5.9 022 – Portrait of Our Time

This is an attractive cultural heritage project to create a photographic record of residents which will be of great interest to the local community.

It is a small application with strong community support and fundraising is on-going.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £5,000 APPROVED.

5.10 024 – Old Deer Children’s Play Area Improvement Project

Community led project to improve the children’s play area and create landscaped seating areas for all ages and abilities.

Project considered to be of benefit to the expanding local community.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £10,677 APPROVED.

5.11 **025 – The Local Hub – Kintore Phase 1**

The project will benefit groups and individuals in the rapidly expanding community of Kintore, providing an opportunity for increased community integration through the new community venue.

The project has potential to create 4 FTE jobs with monies generated from the business being recycled back into the community.

The issue of evening opening was discussed. It was agreed that this may happen through time, assuming community backing and necessary consents are obtained.

State Aid has been considered for this project although approval can be given under de-minimis funding

PROJECT FUNDING OF £10,000 APPROVED.

5.12 **013 – Turra Coo Sculpture Project**

A paper was circulated detailing the breakdown of education costs for the community arts project that will focus on the history of the Turra Coo. The LAG approved an increase in LEADER funding of £400.

The project has strong tourism, cultural and heritage links and will help to put Turriff on the map in terms of visitor interest.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £37,769 APPROVED.

5.13 **017 Aberdeenshire Conservation Recycle Store (ACReS)**

In response to the request for further information on potential displacement with other businesses, the applicant indicated that ACReS is a social enterprise that will be sourcing and recycling specific items of architectural heritage.

ACReS will be a small scale operation with limited throughput. A significant cost will be depreciation of equipment.

The project has the potential to create new employment in the rural area and will provide opportunities for volunteers who will work on cataloguing items for sale.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £11,388 APPROVED

5.14 **019 – St Ternan’s Church Enhancement**

The PAC recommended the applicant be invited to re-submit application in Round 3.

5.15 **023 – Planning Proposal – Udney Community Wind Turbine**

Updated information was supplied by the applicant following consideration of tenders. The group wish to accept the lowest priced tender and therefore are able to reduce total project costs from £39,500 to £31,750 – a reduction of £7,750.

The group has confirmed grid access for the wind turbine.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £15,562 APPROVED.

5.16 **026 – Tarland Community Path Network**

Robin Blyth declared an interest in this project and left the room.

In response to the request for further information, the applicant produced a detailed breakdown of management costs.

Following the PAC meeting, Ewen Cameron had investigated commercial rates for project management fees for path works. The rates detailed in the application were considered acceptable.

The need for the provision of seating at regular intervals on the paths was highlighted. This is an essential requirement for all-abilities paths, as will be the case in the project's all abilities path.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £19,000 APPROVED.

5.17 **Round 2A Projects**

These had been circulated to PAC members for comment in advance of the meeting.

5.18 **027 – Fyvie Homecoming Festival**

A large amount of background work has been undertaken to develop this three day festival at Fyvie.

There is a strong level of community support for this project which will link to Homecoming 2009. The project will target visitors to Fyvie and has potential to increase awareness of the area.

The LEADER funding will contribute to delivering events, marketing and web-development. Consents and Liability Insurance are already in place.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,800 APPROVED.

5.19 **028 – Carbon Footprint (Part 1)**

The Rannes Hall was gifted to the community by Leith Hall Estate and will celebrate its centenary in 2009.

The committee is a member of the Aberdeenshire Halls Group which is researching energy efficiency and renewable energy heating potential.

The hall is a much used community focus in a scattered rural area. The building is structurally sound and work to upgrade the car park has just been completed.

In order to improve energy efficiency, the project will replace existing doors to include fire escapes and disabled access.

It was suggested that the hall committee contact the Deeside Access Panel for further advice and guidance on disabled access.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,480 APPROVED.

5.20 **029 – Contours**

This small grant application will contribute to a series of visual arts workshops to explore community relationships and perception of the sea and seashore.

The project will employ a professional artist to run workshops. There will be specific workshops for women and young people and outcomes from these workshops will be on display at the COAST festival 2009.

The post will go out to tender and emphasis will be placed on an Artist with an affinity with the local area.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £5,000 APPROVED.

6. **AOCB**

The importance of press coverage and promotion was re-visited.

A press release will be prepared for publication following issue of approval documents. It was suggested that it would be useful to include comments from successful applicants on what it means to their organisation to have secured LEADER funding. This will help to raise awareness in other communities of what LEADER can do to stimulate rural communities and economic activity.

The press release will be also issued to LAG members for inclusion in their respective organisation's Newsletter.

Project details will be uploaded on the LEADER website once approval documents have been issued.

7. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next LAG meeting will be held on Tuesday, 24 March 2009 at a time and place to be confirmed.