

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF  
RURAL ABERDEENSHIRE LEADER  
PROJECT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 26 MAY 2009 AT 10.00 AM  
COMMITTEE ROOM 4, WOODHILL HOUSE**

**Present**

Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Jamie Rankin	Scottish Enterprise
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Service

**Officers in Attendance**

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

**Apologies**

Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

James Knowles welcomed those present.

**2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING**

The minute of the last PAC meeting of 10 March 2009 was approved at the LAG meeting on 27 March 2009 and uploaded on the LEADER website. The draft LAG Minute of 27 March will be considered for approval by the LAG at the meeting on 9 June 2009.

**3. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE**

**3.1 Communication**

- i) Iain Matheson is moving on from LEADER to take up other duties with Rural Communities – Crofting. Ian's successor, Angela Wiseman, will be in charge of the new Community Empowerment Branch of Scottish Government, which includes LEADER and the Scottish National Rural Network. Iain's contribution to the development of LEADER is recognised and a card will be sent on behalf of Rural Aberdeenshire LAG.
- ii) Following letters from Dumfries & Galloway and Aberdeenshire LEADER highlighting concerns over the 25% grant retention until completion of projects, new guidance has been received from Iain Matheson.

Scottish Government 7% advance to LAGs can be used to overcome this problem. LAG and Lead Partner will have discretion to disburse

monies in appropriate situations, depending on need and on a case by case basis. PAC recommended this decision could be made between the Co-ordinator and the LAG Chair.

Applicants will require to sign an agreement and to present bank statements showing defrayed dates relating to payments in grant claims.

This is a very welcome solution. Vicky will present a list of main points for the LAG meeting.

- iii) Maureen Stephen highlighted that community groups may require to have a trading clause in their constitution if the group is operating commercially. It is important that groups check their constitution before signing financial agreements. Maureen will forward a copy of standard wording to be used.

### 3.2 **Scottish National Rural Network**

- i) The SNRN website is now live [www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en](http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en). The Scottish Government is keen to see it well used and is looking for articles. The SNRN newsletters are being distributed by e-mail.
- ii) The SNRN is currently putting together plans for the National Autumn Gathering and is looking for ideas and suggestions. PAC expressed interest in hosting a local event in the North East. Thainstone Exchange was suggested as a possible venue with rural significance. The event would be an opportunity to demonstrate good working partnerships and show how LEADER has worked for successful projects.

### 3.3 **Project Enquiries**

Approximately 20 enquiries have been received for Round 5 with a wide range of possible applications.

### 3.4 **Grant Claim to Scottish Government**

The second grant claim has been submitted to the Scottish Government for the period February/March 2009. The claim relates to admin costs and £29,000 of grant claims. Grants processed to date total circa £83,000.

### 3.5 **LEADER Co-ordinators Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 3 June in Edinburgh. The agenda includes:

- LEADER Team reorganisation
- Payments
- Convergence & SRDP Review
- Scottish National Rural Network
- Levi Seminar Presentation
- Learning Networks Presentation
- European Fisheries Fund Update

### 3.6 **Promotion**

Vicky made presentations on LEADER at the following events:

- LANTRA Rural Women Funding Opportunities Seminar (13/05/09)
- ALOAF meeting (18/05/09)
- Kincardine O'Neil Community Group (20/05/09)

Thanks were passed on to Ewen Cameron for his quote on LEADER in a SNH article in the Holyrood Magazine.

LEADER will again be represented at the Turriff Show on 2nd & 3rd August.

### 3.7 **LAG Meeting – Tuesday, 9 June**

The next LAG meeting will be held at the Salmon Bothy in Portsoy. The new Bothy Manager is now in post. Following the meeting, LAG members will travel to Sandend for a photo shoot and presentation of cheque detailing funds committed in first year's operation of the programme.

PAC ideas for the PR exercise included involving local school pupils, the Portsoy Players or the 'Slipper Skippers', a local youth skipping group.

Corporate Communications will advise on Northsound or Moray Firth Radio involvement.

### 3.8 **COAT Project Launches**

- i) Health Walks at Cambus O'May were launched by Councillor Humphrey on 25 May. Unfortunately the LAG was unable to be represented on that date.
- ii) The All-abilities Path at Alastrean Woods, Tarland will be opened by Anne Begg MP on Friday 29 May. Ewen Cameron, SNH will represent the LAG.

## 4. **PROJECTS 043 TO 053**

### 4.1 **043 – Horizons - Stage 2**

The project is to develop and expand the Brighter Horizons youth centre in Low Street, Banff through the purchase of the building which is currently rented and through the employment of additional staff to deliver more activities such as employability skills. Brighter Horizons has been successful in drawing youngsters off the streets and giving them a focus.

The Project Manager and Board are also working to secure a grant from Education, Learning & Leisure. The outcome of ELL application will be known in June.

LEADER is only able to fund a proportion of the cost of purchasing the building resulting in a complicated formula to calculate eligible project costs.

The building is in a reasonable state and the surveyors report and letter

from the bank regarding the mortgage will be required.

Following discussion regarding evidence of joint working, the PAC recommended the project for approval subject to clarification of the Board of Directors.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £66,646 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO CLARIFICATION OF THE ABOVE.

#### 4.2 **044 – Moray Firth Ganseys**

This is a joint project with Highland and Moray LAGs which meets LEADER Action 2 targets.

The project will create employment for a full-time Officer to run the programme over 2 years across the 3 LAG areas. The Officer will promote the history of the gansey and increase awareness of the cultural and fishing heritage of the Moray Firth area.

Booklets and DVDs will be produced and the project has considerable business potential for other craft workers to promote their products.

The project ties in with Homecoming and compliments other harbour restoration projects already approved by LEADER.

Moray and Highland LAGs have approved the project and funding of £50k is confirmed from Heritage Lottery, subject to other funding being in place.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £13,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

#### 4.3 **045 – Deveron District Bio-Security & Fisheries Development Project**

This project is to create a full-time post of Fisheries Development Officer which will be funded over three years. A draft work plan and job description have been provided. The Officer will work with landowners and school groups to increase awareness of conservation.

Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers trust are doing their utmost to improve the quality of rivers and reduce the number of invasive plants and have secured support and permission from landowners to undertake control measures.

There are many riverside walks which cannot currently be utilised due to invasive species, therefore the outcome of this project will be of benefit to many users.

This project involves many different elements. PAC suggested that 6 monthly joint monitoring meetings with SNH, the other main funder, would be essential to manage the project. Approval of the third year of funding will be confirmed following receipt of a mid-term evaluation report.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £52,705 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

4.4 **046 – Dinosaur Extinction**

The project is to purchase six laptop packages which will provide a modern resource to improve educational attainment of both school pupils and the wider community.

The Bracoden Parent Teacher Association are proactive fundraisers. The project will benefit a number of people and will encourage the community to come together, making better use of the Community Facilities at Bracoden School.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £3,137 APPROVED BY PAC.

4.5 **047 – Burns in the Mearns**

The project is to run a 3-day event to promote the work of Robert Burns, Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Joan Eardley. The event is being run as a pilot initiative for Mearns Connections with the intention to hold a yearly event which will focus on different aspects to raise the profile of the area.

Costs have been carefully prepared and the applicants have been successful in obtaining local funding as well as a contribution from the Homecoming Budget.

The project ties in with Homecoming and has potential to increase visitor numbers to the Mearns area. A booklet to promote the area will be produced and the team, who have had considerable success in event organisation in the past, will be heavily involved in marketing the event.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £20,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

4.6 **048 – Environmental Education Project**

The project is to employ an Environmental Education Officer to deliver environmental education and promote conservation to individuals, groups and schools across Aberdeenshire over a 3 year period.

The project is closely linked with SNH and Ewen Cameron reported on the background of the SNH application. Outcome should be known within the next 3-4 weeks.

As with any 3-year project, a mid-term evaluation and quarterly reporting will be a requirement. It was suggested that 6 monthly meetings be held between LEADER, SNH and the applicant. Approval of the third year of funding will be confirmed following receipt of a mid-term evaluation report.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £34,766 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

#### 4.7 **049 – Sustaining Huntly**

The Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership (ATP) programme made significant inroads into revitalising and refocusing Huntly. Following community consultation, Huntly Development Trust (HDT) was formed as the successor to ATP. HDT is a focused group who will continue to deliver and bring forward improvements to Huntly and the surrounding district.

The project is to undertake feasibility studies and implement projects in and around Huntly over a two year structured programme with the creation of two new full-time and one part-time post. The ineligible part of the LEADER application is for the purchase of a building to become the Huntly Hub.

The PAC agreed that with six target themes, the applicant must be realistic as to what can be delivered in the timescale. It will be necessary to obtain formal 15-20 year agreements with landowners in relation to public access and proposed pathwork.

It will be desirable to have co-ordinated reporting procedures to share expertise between partners.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £153,386 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION OF OTHER FUNDING.

#### 4.8 **050 – Johnshaven Fish Festival**

The application is for a contribution towards the running costs of the annual Johnshaven Fish Festival to be held on 8 August 2009. This is a family fun day which attracts large numbers of locals and visitors.

Income generated from the event is disbursed to local charities.

Due to difficulties with parking for the high numbers of visitors at the event, PAC agreed an additional contribution of up to £400 for the applicants to provide a shuttle bus to transport attendees to Johnshaven Harbour.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £1,200 APPROVED BY PAC WITH ADDITIONAL AWARD OF £400 TOWARDS TRANSPORT COSTS.

#### 4.9 **051 – Huntly Hairst Food Festival**

Huntly Farmers & Producers Market Association will run a two-day Food Festival to promote food and crafts produced in and around Huntly. Similar festivals have been run annually around Halloween but in this Homecoming year the event has been extended and brought forward to September to coincide with the busier visitor season. The programme will include a range of fun events for all the family.

LEADER funding will go towards marketing costs for this innovative festival. It is envisaged the event will be more sustainable being brought forward in the calendar year with any profit re-invested the following year.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £2,500 APPROVED BY PAC.

- 4.10 **052 – Replacement of Hatton Public Hall Windows and External Doors**  
The project to replace the windows and external doors is part of an ongoing improvement programme which includes a recently installed energy efficient gas boiler.

The Committee is a pro-active group who has the support of the community.

Hatton is an expanding community and the Hall and associated All-Weather Pitch are used on a daily basis, both daytime and evenings. The improvements will make this valuable community facility more comfortable and useable.

Costs are based on QS estimates. Other funders are still to confirm.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £9,285 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

- 4.11 **053 – Feasibility Study for Mountain Bike Trail Centre – Part 1**  
This is a joint project with Tayside LAG to commission a feasibility study for the construction of a Mountain Bike Trail Centre. The Angus Mountain Bike Trails Association (AMBTA) has, through its research, identified a lack of bike trails on FCS land in Glen Isla in Angus and Drumtochty Glen in Aberdeenshire.

The group has consent from FCS to use these sites for the study.

A consultant will consider the merits of the two sites and make recommendation on one site chosen to have the Mountain Bike Centre.

It is a sensible approach to undertake a feasibility study and PAC agreed that, even if the project does not go ahead in Aberdeenshire, a feasibility study is worthwhile for a project like this.

A copy of the final report must be provided to the LAG.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £3,000 APPROVED BY PAC.

## 5. **AOCB**

There was no other business.

## 6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

LAG meeting – Tuesday, 9 June 2009, Salmon Bothy, Portsoy.

PAC meeting – Tuesday, 18 August, Committee Room 4, Woodhill House.