

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

**TUESDAY, 9 JUNE 2009 AT 10.30 AM
SALMON BOTHY PORTSOY**

Present

Fiona Alderson	Aberdeenshire Council
Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
Caroline Clark	NHS
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
Stewart Johnston	Scottish Executive
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Bob Leonard	Aberdeenshire Council
Ken Massie	Visit Scotland
Tony Miller	Aberdeenshire Community Councils

Officers in Attendance

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies

Eleanor Anderson, Dan Cadle, Liz Gordon, Moira Gordon, Keith Newton, Lorna Paterson, Jamie Rankin, Susan Smith, Maureen Stephen, Andy Willox, Erin Wood

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

James Knowles welcomed those present to the Portsoy Salmon Bothy and introductions were made round the table. Apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 LAG Minute of Friday, 27 March 2009 (Round 3 Applications)

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

2.2 Draft PAC Minute of Tuesday 26 May 2009 (Round 4 Applications)

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

3. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

3.1 LEADER Co-ordinators Meeting, Wednesday 3 June 2009, Edinburgh

i) LEADER Management Team Re-organisation

Iain Matheson moving from LEADER to work with Rural Communities. LEADER now part of Rural Community Empowerment Branch led by Angela Wiseman.

- ii) **Payments**
Iain Matheson update on LEADER spend, which on the whole is on target.
- iii) **SRDP Review**
Peter Cook's report published and Cabinet Secretary statement in Scottish Parliament on 10 June.
- iv) **Article 9**
Advice from Scottish Government that the advance budget held by lead partner may be used to assist applicants where cash flow issues are evident. This was welcomed by LAG. PAC recommended that advances be dealt with on a case by case basis and approval be delegated to the Co-ordinator and the LAG Chair. Signed agreements regarding confirmation of payment must be received from applicants. This procedure was approved by LAG 09 June.

Ewen Cameron indicated that SNH may consider a cash advance to a project receiving SNH match funding where the project is experiencing cash flow difficulties.
- v) **End of Year Review (EYR)**
LAG EYR to be completed for Scottish Government by the end of June.
- vi) **Scottish National Rural Network**
Website is now live. Autumn Gathering to be held in the Perth area on 25 September. Each LAG will be asked to co-ordinate 10 invitations. Regional Co-ordination Service will be investigating venues for local events. Aberdeenshire LAG willing to host.
- vii) **Royal Highland Show**
Rural Communities Empowerment Branch stand at the Royal Highland Show (25-28 June). LEADER will be promoted. LAGs asked to provide raffle prizes.
- viii) **European Network Seminar Presentation**
Vicky gave presentation on the LEADER Seminar in Levi held March 2009.
- ix) **Learning Networks Presentation**
A presentation on Learning Networks by Geraldine McAteer. Networks to provide information to community groups under themes of:
community regeneration and tackling poverty;
mixed and sustainable communities;
town centres and local high streets.
- x) **European Fisheries Fund Update**
Simon Dryden update on EFF Axis 4 funding.
£3m EFF funding will be available for non Highlands & Islands area.

This requires to be matched at 50% with £3m from the public sector. FLAGs, with fishing community representatives, may be formed as an add-on to existing LAGs with relevant coastal areas.

To minimise bureaucracy, an addendum to the LEADER Strategy and Business Plan was suggested.

EFF funding will include larger settlements which are not eligible for LEADER funding, e.g. Fraserburgh and Peterhead.

This is not a significant amount of money but LAG would want to secure their share for the Aberdeenshire coastline.

3.2 Funding Summaries

- i) A slight amendment was made Table 1 to take account of the extra £400 awarded by the PAC to Johnshaven Fish Festival to cover costs of a shuttle bus for the event.
- ii) Table 2 shows the spread of funding.
- iii) Table 3 shows cumulative totals to date. The LEADER percentage on eligible project costs is 33%. Table 3 to be uploaded on the LEADER website demonstrating range of match funding levered in.

3.3 Project Enquiries

A minimum of 20 enquiries have been received to date for Round 5.

3.4 Grant Claim to Scottish Government

The second LAG claim for period 01 Feb 09 to 31 Mar 09 submitted to Scottish Government end April. The claim relates to admin costs and £29,000 of grant claims. Project grants processed to date total £83,000.

3.5 Promotion

Thanks to Ewen Cameron for quoting LEADER in an article in the Holyrood Magazine.

Vicky has given presentations on LEADER at the following events:

- i) LANTRA Rural Women Funding Opportunities Seminar (13/05/09).
- ii) ALOAF Meeting (18/05/09).
- iii) Kincardine O'Neil Community Group (20/05/09).

LEADER will be represented at the Turriff Show, Sunday 2 and Monday 3 August 2009.

Press Release about today's promotional event at Sandend will be circulated to the LAG.

3.6 Project Launches

- i) Health Walks at Cambus O'May were launched by Councillor Humphrey on 25 May.
- ii) The All-abilities Path at Alastrean Woods, Tarland was opened by Anne Begg MP on Friday 29 May. Thanks to Ewen Cameron, SNH, for representing the LAG.
- iii) Grand opening of the Local Hub, Kintore on Saturday 13 June.

4. PROJECTS 043 TO 053

4.1 043 – Horizons - Stage 2

The project is to employ new staff, purchase the current premises and expand existing activities to include 3 new groups.

Brighter Horizons provides a useful service for young people and is strongly supported by Aberdeenshire Council Community Learning, NHS, Community Safety, Fire & Resuce and Grampian Police. Grampian Police gave positive comments about work being done to give focus to challenging youths.

The Business Plan shows projected financial sustainability and there will be an opportunity to let out rooms in the building to other users.

Caroline Clark, NHS, commented on examples of the valuable work done with young people which includes bereavement group, drink awareness, supporting Global Rock, Friday night drop in open till 11pm, various outdoor activities in summer holidays, sexual health work, open 1 evening during the week for shy youngsters.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £66,646 APPROVED.

4.2 044 – Moray Firth Ganseys

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

Moray Firth Partnership undertook a major survey to look at the cultural heritage of the area. The project will employ a full-time Officer to promote the history of the gansey and increase awareness of the cultural and fishing heritage of the Moray Firth area. A booklet and DVD will be produced.

Gansey knitting demonstrations will be held at the Portsoy Boat Festival.

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

The project will play an important part in keeping the fishing heritage alive and will also help to encourage the selling of local crafts to visitors.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £13,000 APPROVED.

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

The project will employ a full-time Fisheries Development Officer over three years with SNH as other main funder. The Officer will cover a range of activities including, promoting the area as a visitor attraction, increasing awareness of conservation in schools and eradicating invasive, non-native plant species.

The project has potential to enhance the habitat and to promote the river

Deveron as a high quality fishing river to the wider tourism sector, thereby helping tourism businesses in the area.

Over 20 letters of support have been received from local landowners.

Accessibility to river banks will be improved and will benefit the whole community.

It was considered important to have quarterly reports and regular meetings between major funders to check that the project is being effectively delivered. The applicant will be required to undertake a mid-term evaluation before the LAG commits to the 3rd year of the project.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £52,705 APPROVED, SUBJECT TO OTHER FUNDING CONFIRMATION.

4.4 **046 – Dinosaur Extinction**

The small project to purchase six laptop packages was approved by the PAC.

Bracoden Parent Council have already raised the match funding required and the order will be placed shortly.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £3,137 APPROVED BY PAC (26/05/09).

4.5 **047 – Burns in the Mearns**

The project is to hold a 3-day event to promote the work of Robert Burns, Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Joan Eardley. The applicant undertook Planning for Real exercises to highlight the Burns connection for the Mearns area. The event will be a pilot for Mearns Connections.

It was recommended the initiative should work in partnership with the Father of the Bard project.

The project has the potential to stimulate economic activity in the Mearns area and be of significant benefit to local tourism service providers.

LAG considered the application to be a worthwhile project which could lead to future initiatives.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £20,000 APPROVED.

4.6 **048 – Environmental Education Project**

The project is to employ an Environmental Education Officer over a 3 year period with SNH as other main funder. The Officer will deliver environmental education and promote conservation to schools and community groups. Work will be undertaken with 15,000 pupils across Aberdeenshire. A new website will be established as an online resource.

The applicants will be encouraged to give thought to long-term financing

and to focus on looking to the community for the potential to generate income for future sustainability. Community involvement with the environment is an important issue with the Scottish Government.

The importance of quarterly reports and regular meetings between the Officer and major funders was highlighted. The applicant will be required to do a mid-term evaluation before the LAG commits to the 3rd year of the project.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £34,766 APPROVED.

4.7 **049 – Sustaining Huntly**

As a result of the 2005-2008 exit strategy for the Aberdeenshire Town Partnership (ATP) programme, Huntly Development Trust (HDT) was formed. HDT aims to deliver improvements to the community of Huntly and the surrounding district. HDT is currently applying for charitable status.

The project will undertake feasibility studies and implement an ambitious programme of events over 2 years and will create 2 full-time and 1 part-time post.

There are 6 target themes to the project, including:

The Huntly Hub which will be used as a meeting place and will house the George MacDonald heritage centre. The purchase of the building for the Hub is ineligible for LEADER funding;

Feasibility of business units;

Social support needs;

Opportunities for reducing environmental impact;

Possible micro-hydro scheme;

Environmental issues which include the joining of local footpaths in Huntly providing the potential for an extensive walking network.

Co-ordinated reporting procedures between partners was considered essential.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £153,386 APPROVED, SUBJECT TO OTHER FUNDING CONFIRMATION.

4.8 **050 – Johnshaven Fish Festival**

The small application for a contribution towards the running costs of the annual Johnshaven Fish Festival to be held on 8 August 2009 was approved by the PAC.

Income generated from the event is disbursed to local charities.

Due to difficulties with parking for the high numbers of visitors to 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 (26/05/09).

4.9 **051 – Huntly Hairst Food Festival**

The small project to run a two-day Food Festival to promote food and crafts produced in and around Huntly was approved by the PAC.

It is envisaged the event will be more sustainable being extended and brought forward to September to coincide with the busier visitor season. Any profit will be re-invested in next year's event.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £2,500 APPROVED BY PAC (26/05/09).

4.10 **052 – Replacement of Hatton Public Hall Windows and External Doors**

The project to replace the windows and external doors is part of a well thought through, ongoing development programme for the Hall which was undertaken following a Planning for Real Exercise.

The expanding community of Hatton is fully supportive of the project and the improvements will make this valuable, already well used community facility more energy efficient and useable.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £9,285 APPROVED.

4.11 **053 – Feasibility Study for Mountain Bike Trail Centre – Part 1**

The small project to commission a feasibility study for the construction of a Mountain Bike Trail Centre was approved by the PAC.

This is a joint project with Tayside LAG. Two FCS sites, one in Glen Isla in Angus and the other in Drumtochty Glen in Aberdeenshire have been selected for the feasibility study.

The merits of the two sites will be considered and one site will then be chosen as development site for proposed Mountain Bike Centre.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £3,000 APPROVED BY PAC (26/05/09),
SUBJECT TO OTHER FUNDING CONFIRMATION.

5. AOCB

5.1 James Knowles thanked LAG members for their continuing support.

5.2 Leanne Wilson, Manager of the Portsoy Salmon Bothy was welcomed to the meeting to give LAG members an insight into her new post and her vision for the Bothy.

The Bothy is a valuable community facility with huge potential to offer something to the local community of Portsoy and the surrounding area.

Various groups from amateur dramatics and knitting to boat building and music workshops are making use of the upstairs room at the Bothy.

The Manager's role is multi-faceted.

The museum is staffed by a willing, supportive and welcoming group of volunteers and Leanne is enthused by the community support. The Salmon Bothy houses salmon fishing artefacts and exhibits the local history of Portsoy and the surrounding area. One of the volunteers can advise on how to use software to research family history. Some old cine film of the Bothy in its working day has been donated and it is hoped that this, along with various photographs, can be projected in the Bothy.

The Bothy will host various Homecoming events over the Portsoy Boat Festival.

Leanne will be involved in developing the website. Newsletters will be posted out to a mailing list and all events will be well publicised.

James Knowles thanked Leanne and wished her well for the future.

- 5.3 Following lunch, LAG members travelled to Sandend Harbour for a publicity event to celebrate the first anniversary of the LEADER Programme.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

PAC Meeting – AMENDED DATE Tuesday, 25 August, Committee Room 4, Woodhill House.

LAG Meeting – AMENDED DATE Monday, 7 September, venue to be confirmed.