

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

**TUESDAY, 25 AUGUST 2009 AT 10.00 AM
COMMITTEE ROOM 4, WOODHILL HOUSE**

Present

Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Tony Miller	Aberdeenshire Community Councils
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

Officers in Attendance

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies

Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Jamie Rankin	Scottish Enterprise
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Service

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

James Knowles welcomed those present.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

- 2.1 The minute of the last PAC meeting of 26 May 2009 was approved at the LAG meeting on 9 June 2009 and uploaded on the LEADER website.

A slight amendment is required to the figures presented in the EFF Update in section 3.1 of the draft minute of the LAG meeting held on 9 June 2009. This was noted and the change will be made in advance of the next LAG meeting. The draft LAG minute will then be considered for approval by the LAG at the meeting on 7 September 2009.

- 2.2 PAC enquired how the provision of a shuttle bus funded by LEADER contributed to the success of the Johnshaven Fish Festival. Vicky reported that in terms of traffic management the shuttle bus was successful. A local bus company provided the vehicle and visitors were appreciative of the service.

3. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

Vicky reported on the following issues which will be covered in the Co-ordinator's Update at the forthcoming LAG meeting:

- 3.1 **Financial Update**
- 3.2 **Scottish Government Claims**
- 3.3 **LAG Annual Report**
- 3.4 **LAG/PAC Procedures**
- 3.5 **SNRN Gathering**
- 3.6 **Project Enquiries**
- 3.7 **Programme Monitoring**
- 3.8 **Website**
- 3.9 **LEADER Publicity and Promotion**
- 3.10 **LAG Members**
- 3.11 **EFF Update**

3.12 **Project 061 - Withdrawn**

Hairst: Halloween in Huntly, a proposal to expand the Halloween in Huntly celebrations was withdrawn after careful consideration by the applicant.

4. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT END YEAR REVIEW

An End Year Review was submitted to the Scottish Government in June. It was reported to the Scottish Government that LEADER is performing well in Aberdeenshire supported by a proactive LAG Partnership. A copy was circulated.

The End Year Review will form the basis of the report to the LAG.

5. PROJECTS 054 TO 065

5.1 **054 – Drumlithie Village Hall Renovations**

The project is to upgrade and improve facilities at the Hall including new kitchen, boiler and heating system, insulation, wiring, flooring, access and redecoration, making the building more energy efficient.

When the local shop closed the Post Office moved to operate one day a week from the Hall, maintaining an essential service for the community. The playgroup runs in the Hall 5 days a week with over 40 children attending.

The Hall is an integral part of the community and proposals have the backing of the local community. The Hall Committee has already secured

all match funding for the project.

The decision to install an electrical combi-boiler rather than a biomass heating system was questioned. Biomass had been considered by the Committee but insufficient storage for biomass product and capacity for maintenance made it impractical.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £27,838 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

5.2 **055 – Crathes Hall Car Park**

This project, to surface the extensive car park and construct lean-to annexes for increased storage, was originally submitted in Round 3. The applicant was asked to re-submit after undertaking further research into community demand for the improved services.

The Committee has undertaken a community survey to identify demand which resulted in a positive response for the proposals.

Access to the Hall is difficult due to the current condition of the car park. With a bus stop just outside the Hall door, the improved parking facility will promote use of public transport.

Aberdeenshire Council T&I department has supported the concept and will consider installing cycle racks. The local bus company is willing to provide a bus timetable display board.

PAC considered that 4 disabled parking spaces would be required for the size of the car park based on a calculation of 1 disabled space for every 20.

PAC suggest that investigation is made into the pros and cons of installing pay and display which could help towards the sustainability of the facility.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £50,770 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ABOVE.

5.3 **056 – Putting the Heart Back into Maud – Final Phase**

The project is to develop the remaining area of the former Mart site into a recreational facility with garden seating, landscaping, play equipment and improved parking.

This is the final phase in a major development of a community complex which includes an NHS Outreach Centre, Buchan Dial a Bus, Bites Training Centre and various other business units for hire.

Maud Village Trust is an enterprising community group and the variety of what is on offer on the site is impressive.

There is a funding shortfall but the group is in contact with SNH. If the project was to include planting of native species of benefit to wildlife then

SNH may be able to make up some of the shortfall.

The proposals will enhance the site and encourage community cohesion by making the complex more user friendly for locals and visitors.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £50,571 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

5.4 **057 – Strichen Community Park Cafe**

Strichen Community Park Company took ownership of the site of a derelict brickworks, subsequently purchasing additional woodland area and developing the site into a Community Park.

There is a strong team of volunteers involved in maintaining the park and the resource is extremely well used by all ages of the community.

The project is to build a café/exhibition space/meeting space on the site of the old Gate Lodge, offering a potential outlet for local craft workers to display and sell their goods.

The business plan includes a 5 year cash flow and figures indicate business viability. An analysis of park users was carried out and results were very much in favour of the proposals.

The issue of displacement was considered. The tearoom will be open daily, serving morning coffees, light lunches and afternoon teas and will be staffed by local volunteers. There will be no evening opening.

There is a State Aid implication which can be covered under de minimis regulations.

PAC felt the proposals would fit in well with the facilities already on offer and would provide potential for increased visitor numbers to make use of existing shops and businesses in Strichen.

It was highlighted that space between bollards located in some of the pathways in the Park are not wide enough to allow access for wheelchair users.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £121,466 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

5.5 **058 – Acting Up**

The Portsoy Players were established to develop and perform a programme of drama productions and educational workshops in Portsoy and the surrounding area.

Workshops will be held to encourage young people to take part in performances. Professionals will be used to lead the workshops which target skills development and confidence building in participants.

Locals and visitors are encouraged to attend the cultural arts performances.

PAC felt the structured programme, which has a strong emphasis on young people, would offer excellent opportunities for the community and would compliment the Portsoy Boat Festival and the Salmon Bothy.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £9,623 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

5.6 059 – Traditional Building and Landscape Conservation Skills Training

The project is to develop a Centre to provide specialist education and training in traditional building and landscape conservation skills.

The training will be geared towards young people looking to gain experience in traditional skills as well as providing continuing professional training for specialist sectors within the construction industry. Short courses and vocational training will be provided in maintenance and restoration of historic buildings.

The Centre aims to work in collaboration with other education providers.

There is evidence of strong support from the construction industry for this project.

The concept of the project is good, offering some excellent elements, however PAC would like additional information in advance of the LAG meeting on the following:

Justification of marketing/promotion costs.

Evidence of support from SAC, RGU and Banff & Buchan College.

Further information/justification of consultancy fees.

PAC RECOMMENDATION – APPLICANT TO PROVIDE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION FOR THE LAG MEETING.

5.7 060 – Banffshire Coast Tourism Programme

The project is to develop the local tourism partnership using the Destination Management Organisation model and to employ a Project Manager to deliver a 3 year Banffshire Coast Tourism Programme. The programme will offer workshops and seminars to the tourist industry, encouraging tourist businesses in the area to work collaboratively to improve service provision. The Manager will also develop and improve a website, market the area as a tourist destination, produce an events guide and look at possible future development and enhancement of Banff Marina.

Scottish Enterprise and Aberdeenshire Council have committed to the project.

PAC agreed that the project has quantifiable outputs and targets with the

potential to add dimension to the Buchan coast, making it a selling point for the whole area. The North East has one of the most spectacular coastlines in Scotland and this structured/inclusive package will provide the opportunity to contribute to the economic development of the area by encouraging tourism businesses to work together and grow.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £90,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

5.8 062 - Countryside Estate Day for Primary School Pupils 2009 and 2010

The project is to deliver two Countryside Estate Days for over 300 Primary School Pupils, organised by the Royal Northern Countryside Initiative.

RNCI is a well run organisation which works with primary and secondary schools, taking pupils on farm visits to broaden their knowledge of rural issues such as food, conservation and forestry. The programme links to and complements the curriculum.

PAC suggested local and regional press might be interested in publicising the events.

Confirmation will be required that the £500 match from FEI towards the project is separate from other funds that FEI has received through LEADER. Ewen Cameron confirmed that the £500 FEI contribution can be delivered through SNH support.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,528 APPROVED BY PAC.

5.9 063 – Pitsligo Castle Gardens – Archaeological Investigations

The project is to undertake an archaeological survey of Pitsligo Castle Gardens with the aim of conserving and developing the gardens for the future.

The Castle is of great architectural note, and before development of the gardens can commence, an archaeological dig has to be undertaken. Historic Scotland approve of and are contributing to the proposals.

The gardens are a valuable educational and community resource.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £2,850 APPROVED BY PAC.

5.10 064 – Options Appraisal of Back Green, Portsoy

The project is to commission an Options Appraisal Report on a range of options for the future of the B Listed buildings at Back Green Portsoy.

Community consultation will be carried out to gauge local interest and opinion on future uses of the restored buildings. PAC was keen to promote community use of the buildings.

It was suggested that a bat survey of the derelict buildings may be required.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,205 APPROVED BY PAC.

5.11 **065 – Community Radio for the Southern Mearns**

The project is to undertake work on a transmitter mast and radio station to enable local community radio to provide a service in Laurencekirk.

The project has a strong community focus. Technical training in recording and broadcasting community radio will be provided and youngsters will be given training on the social skills required for broadcasting.

A 5 year access and management agreement has been reached with the farmer who owns the land and the mast.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £3,959 APPROVED BY PAC.

6. AOCB

6.1 Ewen Cameron displayed a presentation cheque which SNH has produced for publicity purposes at a cost of £35. LEADER will investigate the possibility of having a similar presentation cheque produced.

6.2 LAG Chairman expressed his appreciation to PAC for their continuing interest and valuable comments.

6.3 PAC expressed their appreciation for the amount of project backup information provided by Vicky and Anne and for the efficient manner in which project paperwork is disbursed by the LEADER team.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

LAG meeting – Monday, 7 September 2009, Committee Room 4, Woodhill House.

PAC meeting – Tuesday, 24 November 2009, Committee Room 4, Woodhill House.