

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

**MONDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 10.00 AM
COMMITTEE ROOM 4, WOODHILL HOUSE**

Present

Eleanor Anderson	Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships
Moira Beverley	Aberdeenshire Council
Dan Cadle	Forestry Commission Scotland
Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
David Fyffe	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Moira Gordon	SWRI
Gordon Henderson	Aberdeenshire Council
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
Stewart Johnston	Scottish Government Rural Payments Inspection Directorate
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Bob Leonard	Aberdeenshire Council
Ken Massie	Visit Scotland
Tony Miller	Aberdeenshire Community Councils
Keith Newton	Aberdeenshire Council
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Services

Officers in Attendance

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies

Caroline Clark	NHS
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Jamie Rankin	Scottish Enterprise
Susan Smith	Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses
Erin Wood	Aberdeenshire Council

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

James Knowles welcomed new LAG member David Fyffe from SRPBA. In addition, Corporate Services representatives in attendance were Moira Beverley and Gordon Henderson. Introductions were made round the table. Apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

2.1 LAG Meeting of Tuesday 9 June 2009

Approved as an accurate record. Minutes will be uploaded on the LEADER website.

2.2 **Draft PAC Meeting of Tuesday, 25 August 2009**

Approved as an accurate record. PAC minutes will be uploaded on the website once approval letters have been issued to Round 5 applicants.

3. **LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE**

3.1 **Financial Update**

Funding summaries were issued for Round 5. Table 3 detailing range of match funding per application round, with information accurate up to Round 4, has been uploaded on the website. This table shows a very impressive mix of match funders.

3.2 **Scottish Government Claims**

To date, 3 claims have been submitted to the Scottish Government with a drawdown of £163,000. Twenty eight grant claims have been processed to date with £161,000 being disbursed to projects.

3.3 **SNRN National Gathering**

The National Rural Gathering will take place on Friday 25 September at Perth Racecourse. Four representatives from the LAG will attend.

3.4 **SNRN Regional Events**

Regional Gatherings will also be organised across Scotland. SCVO are contracted to deliver the Regional Gatherings. The structure of the event will include project presentations, information sessions and facilitated discussion sessions, with post event analysis.

Thursday, 19 November has been identified as a possible date for Aberdeenshire Regional Event. This will be confirmed once agreed with SCVO.

3.5 **Project Enquiries**

Approximately 15 enquiries have been received to date from potential Round 6 Applicants.

3.6 **Programme Monitoring**

Two projects have now been de-committed. The most recent being Banff Coast in Pictures which was withdrawn due to changes in BCTP priorities.

A decision is still awaited for the Birse Community Assets project due to Big Lottery Growing Community Assets funding being unconfirmed.

A total of 6 projects have been approved in the Huntly area with LEADER funding totalling £265,000.

3.7 **Website**

Recent publicity and promotional events have been uploaded under News and Events.

3.8 LEADER Publicity and Promotion

- i) A LEADER PR event was held at Johnshaven on 3 July 2009 to promote the Johnshaven Fish Festival and the Burns in the Mearns event.
- ii) LEADER was represented at the Turriff Show on 2 & 3 August 2009.
- iii) A Report on LEADER was presented to the Infrastructure Services Committee on 20 August 2009. A LEADER presentation at ISC is scheduled for 8 October 2009.

3.9 LAG Representation

- i) Contact has been made with the Regional Chairman of SAYFC regarding LAG representation. Gender balance and youth representation make a valuable contribution at meetings and at the moment, the LAG does not have a young people's voice.
- ii) SRPBA has confirmed David Fyffe, Acting Chair of North East Region as SRPBA representative on the LAG.
- iii) John Risby, North East Conservator FCS, is moving to Highland and will be replaced by Jim Dewar as Grampian Conservator who starts in September.

3.10 EFF Update

The Scottish Government is in discussion with the Commission to re-design EFF Axis 4 to minimise bureaucracy in relation to the scale of funding available. No decision has yet been taken on allocation of funds. SG would like to issue call to bid before the year-end but this remains uncertain.

4. LAG ANNUAL REPORT

A LEADER End Year Review was submitted to the Scottish Government in June and a report on LEADER was also presented to the Infrastructure Services Committee at the end of August.

Based on the above documents, an annual report to the LAG was compiled and copies of this report were circulated. LAG members will be provided with additional copies for distribution as required.

5. LAG PROCEDURES

LAG Procedures are to be drafted and will include issues such as attendance at meetings, representatives and substitutes, confidentiality, LAG expenses etc.

6. PROJECTS 054 TO 065

5.1 054 – Drumlithie Village Hall Renovations

The project is to bring the Hall up to modern day standards with the installation of a new kitchen, boiler and heating system, insulation, wiring, flooring, access and redecoration.

Following closure of the local shop, the Post Office service was retained

and operates one day a week from the Hall, providing an essential service for the community. The playgroup is held in the Hall 5 days a week.

The Hall is well used by the local community. The Hall Committee has been actively fundraising and has secured all match funding for the project.

Biomass was considered by the Hall Committee but insufficient storage space for feed stock and capacity for maintenance made it impractical.

The project meets key priorities.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £27,838 APPROVED.

5.2 **055 – Crathes Hall Car Park**

This project, to surface and landscape the car park and construct lean-to annexes for increased storage, was originally submitted in Round 3.

Access to the Hall is difficult due to the current condition of the car park. The group has been in negotiation with Aberdeenshire Council Transportation & Infrastructure Service regarding additional equipment including bike rack, notice boards and access to bus stops.

A community survey was undertaken and the community is 100% behind the proposals to improve and market the Hall.

The Deeside way passes close to the Hall and the facility will provide useful parking for walkers.

A sufficient number of disabled spaces will be provided.

The LAG is supportive of the concept to develop the car park and additional facilities at Crathes Hall. Prior to reaching a final decision on the application, the LAG seeks further clarification on how the match funding towards the project will be provided.

The LAG recommends approval of the LEADER application subject to confirmation of other funding.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £50,770 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL SUBJECT TO ABOVE INFORMATION BEING PROVIDED.

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

The project relates to developing the final stage of a community facility on the former Mart site in the centre of Maud into a recreational facility.

The community complex includes an NHS Outreach Centre with impressive gym facilities, Buchan Dial a Bus, Bites Training Centre and other business units and office space.

Some match funding has already been confirmed and the group are in

contact with SNH and Buchan Countryside Group to meet the funding shortfall.

Maud Village Trust is an enterprising community group who have undertaken extensive community consultation.

LAG supports the project which will complete the final part of this significant community achievement.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £50,571 APPROVED.

5.4 **057 – Strichen Community Park Cafe**

Strichen Community Park Company, formed in 1994, took ownership of the site of a derelict brickworks, subsequently purchasing additional woodland area and developing the site into a Community Park. Planning permission has been confirmed to rebuild and restore the old Gate Lodge into a café/exhibition space/meeting space. Big Lottery, Growing Community Assets match funding under consideration.

The area is visually attractive and volunteers work hard to maintain the park as a popular venue for locals and visitors.

The issue of displacement was discussed but it was considered that there would be potential for local businesses to benefit from the increased foot-fall.

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

A high level of community consultation was carried out by the group and results were very much in favour of the proposals. The group has a proven track record of delivery. A detailed business plan demonstrates viability.

LAG felt this was a much needed facility in the community with the potential for employment creation.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £121,466 APPROVED.

5.5 **058 – Acting Up**

The Portsoy Players amateur dramatic group develop and perform a programme of drama productions and educational workshops in Portsoy and the surrounding area.

This innovative project will contribute to community cohesion, will provide entertainment to locals and visitors and will improve integration for newcomers to the area.

The group have a structured plan showing what they aim to deliver over the two year programme. A broad spectrum of people are involved in helping behind the scenes.

The project will target young people, helping with skills development and confidence building. The youth element is important and is a key target area for LEADER.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £9,623 APPROVED.

5.6 **059 – Traditional Building and Landscape Conservation Skills Training**

The project is to establish a Centre to provide training for young people and professionals in the construction industry in traditional building skills for the conservation of historic buildings.

PAC requested additional information in advance of the LAG meeting. Letters of support from Robert Gordon University, Banff & Buchan College and Scottish Agricultural College were received. These establishments will work in collaboration with the centre and do not envisage any duplication or overlap in training provided.

The LAG considered the proposal to provide specialist skills training in the construction sector as positive, in terms of skills development, increasing employment opportunity and conservation of the built heritage.

LAG requests further information on level of grant requested, marketing and promotion costs and outcomes of past training activities prior to final decision.

PROJECT DEFERRED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

5.7 **060 – Banffshire Coast Tourism Programme**

The project will employ a Project Manager to deliver a 3 year programme in the Banff Coast area, encouraging tourist businesses in the area to work collaboratively to improve service provision.

With its unspoilt beauty and fascinating built heritage, the North East coastline is designated as an area of international importance, offering opportunities for storm watching, whale watching, bird watching and coastal marine cruising.

Visit Scotland supports and promotes quality driven projects such as this. SNH is willing to participate in the promotion of the project.

Scottish Enterprise will oversee delivery of the project and both SE and Aberdeenshire Council have already committed to the funding profile.

LAG recommends that the selection and appointment of the Project Manager is made by BCTP.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £90,000 APPROVED.

- 5.8 **062 - Countryside Estate Day for Primary School Pupils 2009 and 2010**
£4,528 approved by PAC to deliver two Countryside Estate Days for Primary School Pupils.
- 5.9 **063 – Pitsligo Castle Gardens – Archaeological Investigations**
£2,850 approved by PAC to undertake an archaeological survey of Pitsligo Castle Gardens.
- 5.10 **064 – Options Appraisal of Back Green, Portsoy**
£4,205 approved by PAC to commission an Options Appraisal Report on B Listed buildings at Back Green Portsoy.
- 5.11 **065 – Community Radio for the Southern Mearns**
£3,959 approved by PAC for work on a transmitter mast and radio station for Mearns Community Radio in Laurencekirk.

6. AOCB

- 6.1 The Scottish Government has announced an increase in grant rate from 50% to 90% for community projects applying for Rural Priorities Funding.

Enquiries made to LEADER for capital build projects could now be directed to RDC.

Details can be found on the Scottish Government and Scottish National Rural Network websites.

- 6.2 Concern was expressed at the low number of applications coming forward to LEADER from the Garioch area. It was suggested that the next round of LEADER promotion might take place in Garioch.
- 6.3 Eleanor Anderson will display a selection of LEADER promotional materials at the forthcoming Glens of Foudland Wind Farm Open Afternoon to be held on Saturday, 19 September 2009.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

LAG meeting – Tuesday, 8 December 2009, Committee Room 2, Woodhill House.