

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

**TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 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

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 Services
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

James Knowles welcomed those present. Apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

- 2.1 The minute of the PAC meeting of 25 August 2009 was approved at the LAG meeting on 7 September 2009 and uploaded on the LEADER website.
- 2.2 The draft LAG minute of 7 September 2009 will be considered for approval by the LAG at the meeting on 11 December.

3. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

3.1 Financial Update

Funding summaries were circulated for Round 6.

3.2 Scottish Government Claims

To date, 4 claims have been submitted to the Scottish Government with drawdown of £267k. Fifty one financial grant claims have been processed to date with £301k being disbursed to projects. By December 2010 it is projected that Scottish Government cumulative claims will account for more than 12% of LEADER budget which is ahead of N+2 targets.

3.3 Scottish Government Service Level Agreement Monitor Visit

The Business Support Assurance Team from the Scottish Government visited on 14 October to assess how the LAG meets the conditions of the

Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA sets out the roles of the Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council as lead partner. The SLA will be subject to change.

Awaiting feedback from the Scottish Government following the monitor visit.

3.4 **LAG Annual Confirmation Certificate (ACC) and Annual Report**

Aberdeenshire Council Internal Audit visited and completed the LAG Annual Confirmation Certificate within the short timescale prior to submission to Scottish Government.

Aberdeenshire Council Internal Audit Report requires to be agreed and completed by 4 December.

3.5 **SRDP Rural Priorities and LEADER**

The proposal to transfer Measure 321, Community Services and Facilities, to LEADER has been retracted by the Scottish Government in the interim.

Aberdeenshire is keen to take up the opportunity of an increased budget and LAG Chairs have been invited to attend a meeting to discuss Measure 321 on 8 December.

Other elements which may transfer to LEADER include Measure 341 Local Development Strategy, EFF European Fisheries Fund and Broadband Funding.

3.6 **Issues Outstanding**

- LAG/PAC Terms of Reference are being drafted. Approved Terms of Reference to be forwarded to Scottish Government.
- No response from SAYFC regarding youth representation on the LAG. Community Planning being approached regarding alternative youth representation.
- A quorum requires to be set for PAC meetings – Chair plus possibly 3 members. It is important to establish substitutes. The following was suggested and will be discussed at the LAG meeting.
Community – CVS/Local Rural Partnerships/Community Councils
Business – FSB/SRPBA
Environment – SNH/FCS
Land Based – NFUS (2 reps)
Enterprise – Scottish Enterprise (2 reps).

4. **SCOTTISH NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK (SNRN) REGIONAL GATHERING**

The SNRN Regional Gathering was held on Thursday, 19 November at Lochter Activity Centre. The event was the first of 20 regional events to be organised by SCVO and was well attended by approximately 70 delegates. Around 15 project participants took up the opportunity to host a stall at the event and their displays were very well received by the delegates.

Thanks go to Councillor Peter Argyle who delivered the welcome address

and Ewen Cameron who chaired the event.

An event report, photographs, presentations etc are uploaded on the SNRN website www.ruralgateway.org.uk and also on the LEADER website www.aberdeenshireleader.org.

5. LAG TIMETABLE 2010

The timetable for PAC and LAG dates for 2010 has been finalised, uploaded on the LEADER website and circulated to LAG members.

6. OUTSTANDING PROJECTS (055 AND 059) FROM ROUND 5

6.1 055 Crathes Hall Car Park

The Community Group was invited to provide further information regarding match funding and timescale of the project.

The applicants appreciated the positive response from LAG but considered the task of raising match funding to be too onerous in the current financial climate and have decided to withdraw the application. The group may consider a more modest proposal in the future.

6.2 059 Traditional Skills Training Centre

The applicant supplied additional information as requested by the LAG.

Consultant costs have been stripped from the application and an error in the cost of the hire of premises in the original application has now been corrected. Project Costs have reduced and intervention rate has dropped from 50% to 40%.

Three academic institutions are supportive of the specialist training courses. Outcomes of past training have been analysed and future monitoring will be actioned.

The application is now more robust. The applicant's own contribution has increased as the intervention rate has reduced.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £60,973 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7. PROJECTS 066 to 078

7.1 066 – Pitsligo Castle – Consolidation & Repair of Structure – Phase 1

The project is phase one of a five phase consolidation and repair programme for Pitsligo Castle which is the result of a detailed conservation management plan. The project has the support of Historic Scotland and wide ranging support from the local community and schools.

Phase one is a stand alone project which will stabilise the building.

The project meets LEADER priorities, in particular conservation of rural

environment. There is potential for economic benefit for the community from increased tourism.

PAC supports the project which will help to bring a valuable part of Scotland's history to life.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £47,205 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.2 **067 – Turriff Haughs Facilities – Economic Appraisal**

The project relates to a feasibility study for a new build community facility at the Haughs, Turriff. The study will look at economic aspects and viability of the proposal and will include a full appraisal of water management and drainage at the proposed site.

A previous Yellow Book Study identified the Haughs area as a major asset for Turriff and a good site for a much needed community facility.

PAC agreed that a feasibility approach for such a project is worthwhile. It may be of benefit for the study to include appraisal of alternative site if the preferred site is deemed unsuitable due to risk of flooding. A location map of the site will be provided for the LAG meeting.

Outcome of Community Asset Fund application should be known by mid December.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £9,475 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.3 **068 – Aberchirder Square Environmental Improvements**

The project is to regenerate and enhance the Square in Aberchirder.

The applicants have been working closely with Transportation & Infrastructure Landscape Services Department and detailed plans and drawings show the installation of a new bus shelter, benches, lamp posts and the planting of trees all centred round the recently restored Victorian fountain.

All match funding has now been confirmed.

Enhancing the Square will encourage economic activity in the area and lead to increased community pride.

PAC suggested that local residents get involved in as much of the work as possible to encourage community ownership. Proposals for a community opening ceremony are being researched.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £29,295 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.4 **069 – Glamourhaugh Allotments Creation**

The project is to create an allotment site for the benefit of the Huntly community. A total of sixteen plots will be created with some set aside for use by schools and community groups. A community footpath with seating areas will surround the allotment area and a summerhouse, storage shed and composting toilet will also be installed.

The Rotary Club of Huntly will oversee the project for the first 18 months. A small charge for allotments will go towards ongoing maintenance and long-term sustainability.

The allotments will be an area where people can meet and spend time together, bringing an additional social aspect to the community.

The applicant has made extensive efforts to obtain quotes locally.

PAC noted match funding requires confirmation. PAC suggested approaching Huntly Supermarkets for contribution and also that the community could be involved in some of the site preparation work including hedge planting.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £25,690 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.5 **070 – Rothienorman Bowling & Community Facility – Phase 2 Equipping New Building**

The project will furnish the new Bowling Club facility with tables, chairs, industrial standard kitchen equipment and an IT/audio/visual system.

Phase 2 is a natural succession to the build and the provision of these items will be essential to ensure the facility can be used by a wide range of community groups, ensuring long-term viability.

The initial build has been a big challenge for the group.

PAC were impressed by the self-build approach of the group which promotes a sense of community ownership.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £11,881 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.6 **071 – Laurencekirk Memorial Park Project – Phase 2**

The project is Phase 2 of a programme to install modern, innovative play equipment in the community park in Laurencekirk.

The applicants are a pro-active group who have been very successful in fundraising for both phases of the project. The group is working closely with Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services department to identify and install appropriate equipment for all ages and abilities.

Laurencekirk is an expanding settlement and the play park will be an asset to the local community and visitors alike.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £24,135 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.7 072 – Transition & Parental/Carer Engagement Development Programme and Extension of Existing Service Delivery

Aberdeenshire Life Education Centre (ALEC) works with local schools and communities to provide Healthy Life Choice Education to nursery and primary children throughout Aberdeenshire.

The project is to expand the delivery of health and wellbeing programmes to schools not yet targeted and to include S1/S2 pupils and parents. The proposal will provide an additional mobile classroom and additional member of staff to deliver the programme to an increased target audience.

The eligible costs of the project relate to activity undertaken in the Rural Aberdeenshire LAG area. The ineligible costs relate to work in larger settlements.

There is evidence of support from schools and staff who welcome the service which is benefiting pupils.

PAC supported the proposal subject to the following additional information being provided for the LAG meeting:

- Evidence of the structured programme of work carried out in schools.
- Endorsement from schools that the programme is effective.
- Background information on match funder Aberdeenshire Local Tobacco Alliance (ALTA)

PROJECT FUNDING OF £33,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ABOVE.

7.8 073 – Young People’s Employability Project

The project relates to the provision of employment opportunities for disadvantaged young people across Aberdeenshire. Youth unemployment is high in rural Aberdeenshire and the project aims to offer 30 young people the opportunity to gain employment through apprenticeships and new skills training. Participants in the programme will attend an initial 2 week introductory assessment period allowing them to be matched to suitable employment opportunities.

LEADER funding has a pivotal role in the project, extending the length of the provision from 6 to 12 months.

The eligible costs of the project relate to activity undertaken in the Rural Aberdeenshire LAG area. The ineligible costs relate to work in larger settlements.

PAC considered the concept of targeting youngsters who have difficulty in securing or keeping a job to be very worthwhile. Employers will, at the end of the period, potentially have a stable new employee.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £70,050 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.9 **074 – Port Erroll Public Hall Improvement Programme**

Following a structural survey of the Port Erroll Hall and undertaking Planning for Real, the project is to upgrade the Hall and make it more energy efficient by installing an efficient heating system, rewiring, replacing flooring and joists, improving the roof, including insulation, and installing solar panels for hot water supply.

The Management Committee has undertaken extensive community consultation and has worked closely with local architects.

The proposal will improve and provide a valuable, lasting facility for the community which will encourage increased use by a wide range of groups.

PAC highlighted the importance all-ability access to the facility.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £36,161 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.10 **075 – Developing Opportunities Through Sport (Rugby)**

Moray Media Promotions Group Ltd (MMPG) will support and train a Rugby Development Officer appointed to establish a schools Rugby League and to deliver a programme over the 1st year. The initiative will then transfer to the Neil Gibson Rattray Foundation.

Skills development training will be provided for pupils as well as opportunities to develop IT, language and communication skills through match and league reporting on the website. Parents will also be involved through coaching or as match officials. Mintlaw and Laurencekirk secondary schools have been identified as areas in Aberdeenshire where rugby is less evident than football.

PAC supported the proposal subject to the following additional information being provided for the LAG meeting:

- Evidence of demand from identified schools.
- Clarification that schools are aware of on-costs such as transport and purchase of additional equipment.

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

7.11 **076 – Food Access Rural Environment (FARE)**

Mearns Area Partnership has carried out research into the decline of rural services due to the closure of local shops. The project, based on a social enterprise model, will set up a rural delivery service supplying fresh produce throughout the rural community. Project costs will cover vehicle and driver costs. The service will provide a door to door delivery service or delivery to local shops or community facilities.

The project has a significant level of support from community groups and local Councillors. Outcome of application to Awards for All is awaited.

The applicants have identified a range of wholesalers but most are unable to provide the service required. Preferred option is the social enterprise model. The service provided will not affect existing businesses and products will be sourced locally where possible.

PAC considered the project to be an interesting concept to provide a valuable rural service and address the real issue of accessing fresh produce in rural areas.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £9,452 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

7.12 **077 – Echt Showground & Community Access Improvement**

The project is to improve accessibility to the Echt showground by upgrading the road surfaces, paths and carrying out drainage work.

Echt show is held on land owned by Dunecht Estates and rented to Dunecht Home Farm. Echt show takes place early in the season, is highly popular and draws visitors from a big catchment area.

The new surfaces will reinforce and improve access to the facilities and the improved drainage will prevent flooding of the show site.

PAC highlighted the importance of the paths being accessible for all and suggested contacting the Local Deeside Access Panel for further advice on wheelchair access.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,984 APPROVED BY PAC.

7.13 **078 – Strachan Village Hall Kitchen Enhancement**

The project is to improve and modernise kitchen facilities at Strachan Hall which will improve the marketability of the Hall.

Strachan is a rapidly expanding community and the proposals have gained community support.

The Committee has already undertaken heating and window upgrades and a modern kitchen facility would increase use of the Hall through an increased range of user groups, private hires and community events.

PAC highlighted the importance of all-ability accessibility and the possibility of the community getting involved in the work to encourage community ownership.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £5,000 APPROVED BY PAC.

8. AOCB

- 8.1 Project 043 Horizons – Stage 2 is to be de-committed due to issues with securing match funding. The Brighter Horizons Board has withdrawn their interest in purchasing the building.
- 8.2 An enquiry was received regarding a training sponsorship project. It was considered that this interesting idea may not meet LEADER criteria. James Knowles will investigate further avenues for sponsorship.
- 8.3 Anna Murray from Scottish Government LEADER Team visited following the Regional Gathering. Vicky and Anna made site visits to St Ninian's and Forglan Church in Turriff and then on to the community facility being constructed by Rothienorman Bowling Club. Anna was very pleased to see the two successful community led projects.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

PAC meeting – Tuesday, 2 March 2010, Conference Room D, Woodhill House.

LAG meeting – Tuesday, 16 March 2010, Committee Room 1, Woodhill House.