

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

**TUESDAY, 1 JUNE 2010 AT 10.00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM D, WOODHILL HOUSE**

**Present**

Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Sue Clark	Scottish Enterprise
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

**Officers in Attendance**

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

**Apologies**

Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Services

**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

James Knowles welcomed Sue Clark from Scottish Enterprise to the meeting and introductions were made round the table. Apologies were noted as above. Voluntary sector representative, although not present, had forwarded project comments. Chairman agreed to proceed as quorum had been met as per Terms of Reference.

**2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING**

- 2.1 The draft LAG minute of 15 March 2010 was noted and will be considered for approval by the LAG at the meeting on 15 June 2010.

**3. COMMUNICATION: ABERDEENSHIRE & RURAL TAYSIDE LAGs  
LETTER TO LSB CHAIR**

- 3.1 Following the LEADER Co-ordinators meeting with Scottish Government in January 2010, Co-ordinators met in April and agreed to seek clarity regarding outstanding issues regarding programme management and future funding. A letter from Aberdeenshire and Rural Tayside LAGs has been sent to the LEADER Strategic Board Chairman.

Sue Clark, Scottish Enterprise, attends the Rural Community of Practice Group within SE and offered to refer any issues to the group's next meeting on 29 July. VT will liaise with Sue regarding this in early July.

#### **4. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE**

##### **4.1 Financial Update**

Funding summaries were circulated for Round 8. Aberdeenshire LEADER is performing well with excellent leverage through identified match funding. Applicants are working hard to secure funding from other sources.

Following Round 8 approvals, the balance of LEADER funding available for future projects will be circa £500k.

Outstanding Project – Fyvie Traditional Skills Training Centre – feedback awaited on progress with this project.

##### **4.2 Scottish Government Claims**

Six Scottish Government Claims totalling £547k to 31 March 2010 equals 16% of Aberdeenshire LEADER Budget of £3.36m.

##### **4.3 LEADER Strategic Board (LSB)**

Minutes from the LSB meeting on 23 February 2010 had already been circulated.

LSB Chair, Bruce Beveridge proposed a LEADER Conference and Aberdeenshire offered to host the event. The Conference will take place on Friday, 18 June at the Aberdeen Hilton Treetops Hotel. Preparations for the event and the pre-conference dinner on the evening of Thursday, 17 June are well underway.

Bryan McGrath, Scottish Borders LAG, was confirmed as LEADER Representative on the SRDP Monitoring Committee.

##### **4.4 LEADER Promotion in Aberdeenshire**

Vicky was invited to provide an update on Aberdeenshire LEADER at the Kelvin Valley Scottish National Rural Network event at Kilsyth in April.

The LEADER Community Seminar for the Garioch area will be held in Insch on 11 June 2010. Kincardine & Mearns Seminar will be held on 3 September – venue TBC.

The opening ceremony for the work carried out in Aberchirder Square will be held on Sunday, 13 June 2010. James Knowles will attend on behalf of the LAG.

The LEADER stand at Turriff Show on 1&2 August 2010 will be in the new Exhibition Hall.

#### **5. PROJECTS 087 to 095**

##### **5.1 087 – Proposed Extension of Keig Community Hall**

Keig Hall is part of Keig Primary School complex and is widely used by local community groups. Access to the Hall is through the school building which is inconvenient for both parties.

Aberdeenshire Council is undertaking improvements to the school building scheduled in the 2010/11 financial year.

The LEADER proposal is for a series of improvements to the Hall, including new kitchen, construction of a storeroom and a new entrance. Works carried out will mean clear demarcation between the school and the Hall.

A lease has been agreed in principle by the Marr Area Committee and this will be formalised once all funding is identified.

There is wide community support and a strong management team behind the proposals.

Awards for All Lottery Funding has been unsuccessful, giving the group quite a challenge as the project is time bound to align with school capital improvements.

PAC considered it to be practical for work on the school and the Hall to be undertaken at the same time. The Chair proposed that any offer of LEADER grant be increased by £10,000 to cover the shortfall from Awards for All should alternative match funding not be secured within the time period to enable the project to proceed as planned.

**PROJECT FUNDING OF £55,556 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC WITH POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL £10,000**

## **5.2 088 – Udney Community Wind Turbine Purchase**

LEADER originally funded a feasibility study in November 2008 for a community owned 800kw wind turbine.

The study was completed successfully and the project has managed to secure Lottery and CAREs funding towards the community turbine, the overall cost of which is £1.4 million. The LEADER application relates to 10% of the cost of the turbine and the balance of funds are being sought through bank overdraft facilities.

After bank loan interest is paid, 100% of the net revenue will be disbursed by the Community Trust for the benefit of the community.

The applicant is in the process of finalising the lease and access rights to the field where the turbine will be situated. Full planning permission has been obtained and the applicant has paid for grid access. The Feed-in-Tariff is a set rate for 20 years.

The issue of State Aid is being clarified by Aberdeenshire Council's European Team who are in discussion with the Scottish Government. It is hoped that this issue can be covered under the General Block Exemption Regulation.

PAC agreed this was a ground breaking project for LEADER as it will be the first 100% community owned wind turbine in Aberdeenshire. The project

has potential to demonstrate what can be achieved to other community groups.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £95,040 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

**5.3 089 – Meldrum Hall – Access for All**

Meldrum Town Hall owned by Aberdeenshire Council is situated in the centre of Oldmeldrum. A lease to transfer the building to Making Meldrum Better Community Interest Company (MMB CIC) being prepared but the Council will retain responsibility for structural maintenance.

The project is to improve the facility with proposed improvement works to include the creation of a small meeting room and toilet facilities upstairs, the installation of a lift between floors, new kitchen and refurbishment to the existing Hall and existing downstairs meeting room.

Planning for Real consultation was carried out and there is strong community support for the project with evidence of demand from user groups who are interested in making use of the upgraded facility. Oldmeldrum town centre is currently undergoing regeneration as part of the Town Centre Regeneration Fund.

Income generated from the Community Café which currently runs from the Hall is disbursed to the community.

Oldmeldrum has almost doubled in size and £61,000 has been secured from Planning Gain.

The Hall is a listed building. Building Warrant and Listed Building Consent will be required. Work will go out to tender to local contractors once all funding is confirmed.

PAC support the project in the expanding community but request further information regarding the Oldmeldrum Legion Hall is available at the LAG meeting.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £61,468 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ABOVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

**5.4 090 – The Bothie, Kintore**

The project is to construct and refurbish an Eco-Youth Centre which will provide valuable youth facilities which are currently lacking in the rapidly expanding community of Kintore.

Planning for the innovative straw build has been approved. Action Kintore is actively fundraising and there is wide community support for the project.

Members of the Youth Forum and parents are working in tandem with the Community Learning Development Team. Examples of best practice of other youth centres are being researched by the group.

PAC agreed the project was highly innovative but, as the facility will be situated in a residential area, confirmation of opening hours was sought as was additional information about the Management Committee.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £47,400 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ABOVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

**5.5 091 – Boddam Community Park Project**

The project is to provide much needed community recreational facilities in Boddam. Work will include the installation of a range of play equipment and landscaping which will provide a safe play/recreational area for the increasing numbers of new families moving into the area.

The applicant is working closely with Buchan Development Partnership and with Aberdeenshire Council's Landscape Services.

SNH will make contact regarding the possibility of financial assistance towards wildlife friendly landscaping.

PAC supportive of proposals and suggested the applicant investigates the possibility of installation of some adult outdoor gym equipment.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £25,925 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

**5.6 092 – The Enchanted Castle**

LEADER provided funding towards community activities in Aboyne associated with the successful Enchanted Glen event in Glen Tanar in 2008.

GM Events and the Deeside Destination Management Organisation have formed a partnership to deliver a 3-evening event at Crathes Castle in the run-up to Christmas. The event will be a light and sound display with the castle and its surroundings as the backdrop. A range of local food and drink will be showcased at the event.

National Trust for Scotland is supportive of the event and Aberdeenshire Council's Economic Development Department is contributing. Private sponsorship is still to be confirmed. G M Events will cover the event costs which will be met by income from ticket sales.

PAC agreed project is innovative in its approach and has clear economic benefits for the area with local businesses benefiting greatly from the increased footfall at the event. It was suggested that applicants may wish to consider the idea of selling corporate hospitality at the event. PAC would also welcome feedback from the Enchanted Glen event.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £7,500 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

### 5.7 **093 – Food Tourism Project and The Deeside Sessions**

The project is to deliver six pilot projects in the Deeside area from July 2010 to March 2011. The events may lead to a possible joint project next year with Cairngorms LEADER and the Cairngorms National Park.

The projects are:

- On-line food and drink magazine;
- Local Producers Marquee at Aboyne Highland Games (this is time bound);
- Food and Walking Event during the Active Aboyne Outdoor Activities Festival in September;
- Venison Festival, encouraging local hotels and restaurants to feature local venison on the menu;
- Dining on Deeside fortnight to promote local hotels, cafes and local produce;
- The Deeside Sessions, local folk music at venues throughout Deeside.

Each of the above projects has its own budget costs.

PAC considered a pilot to be worthwhile and felt the project had potential to stimulate local businesses. Greater accuracy on figures for targets and outcomes would be appreciated. It was agreed that a specific condition of any offer of funding would be that the applicant promotes local producers. Feedback from each event would be welcomed.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £26,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

### 5.8 **094 – North of Scotland Rural Touring Fund**

This is an Action 2 Joint Application with Highland, Cairngorms, Moray and Argyll LAGs to deliver a series of cultural, theatrical events to rural areas across the North of Scotland over a 2 year period. Performances would deliver new, modern enlightening theatre to the doorstep of rural communities.

The Aberdeenshire element is costed pro-rata on the likely number of performances to be held in Aberdeenshire. PAC suggested a minimum of 15 venues should be identified for performances in Aberdeenshire.

PAC considered the project to be of great benefit for rural communities and would like to see local theatre groups being used for performances. Further information on marketing the events would be welcomed. Once a funding package is confirmed, an initial start-up meeting with all stakeholders will be essential followed by regular reporting on progress of the initiative.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £33,600 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

5.9 **095 – Castle Fraser Steam & Vintage Fair 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The proposal is to hold a two-day Steam and Vintage Fair at Castle Fraser on 19/20 June 2010. Similar events have been held on an annual basis but 2010 is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bon Accord Steam Engine Club and the group has put forward a much expanded proposal for the popular event.

There will be a large number of exhibits and a unique 1880's carnival ride and restored 1920's rides will also be on show.

PAC agreed that this would be a one-off special event which could not be funded in perpetuity. The opportunity to showcase local produce was highlighted and the applicant will be asked to contact Aberdeenshire Council's Rural Development Officer regarding local food promotion.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,944 APPROVED BY PAC

**6. TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT ENQUIRY – FINLAND/HUNTLY**

- 6.1 Following the visit of a party delegates from Finland in January 2010 to view Aberdeenshire LEADER projects, links were created with Huntly Development Trust and the Linden Centre. An invitation has been made by the Finns for a party from Aberdeenshire to travel to Juankoski in Finland to investigate the potential for collaboration. HDT will prepare a small grant application for funding towards a Learning Journey in September 2010 for representatives from a number of Huntly groups. Given the tight timescale the Chair confirmed that this small grant application can be dealt with by the PAC by written procedure. An intervention rate of 75% is available for transnational projects.

**7. AOCB**

- 7.1 In February 2010 Birse Community Trust withdrew their application for LEADER funding due to their bid for funding from the Big Lottery being unsuccessful. The Trust has now secured funding from a private sponsor and SNH has offered to make up the outstanding balance to allow the Trust to proceed with the purchase of Balfour Wood.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

LAG meeting – Tuesday, 15 June 2010, Rothienorman Bowling Club. PAC suggested that LAG may wish to consider funding a plaque for the Bowling Club to celebrate the completion of this major community project.

PAC meeting – Tuesday, 24 August 2010, Conference Room D, Woodhill House.