

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

**MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2010 AT 10.30 AM
ROTHIENORMAN BOWLING CLUB**

Present

Eleanor Anderson	Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships
Sue Clark	Scottish Enterprise
David Fyffe	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Moira Gordon	SWRI
Gordon Henderson	Aberdeenshire Council
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Bob Leonard	Aberdeenshire Council
Alexander Macleod	Aberdeenshire Council
Keith Newton	Aberdeenshire Council
Paul Timms	Scottish Natural Heritage
Matt Young	Forestry Commission Scotland

Officers in Attendance

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies

Dan Cadle	Forestry Commission Scotland
Caroline Clark	NHS
Jennifer Kinnaird	Scottish Government Rural Payments Inspection Directorate
Ken Massie	Visit Scotland
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Scott Petrie	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Services
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

LAG members were welcomed to the recently completed Rothienorman Bowling Club. James Knowles thanked members of the Bowling Club Committee and in particular, Ian Lonsdale, for providing an interesting presentation on the progress of the project from start to completion. LAG members were impressed with the quality of the excellent facility.

Apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

2.1 Draft LAG Minutes of Monday, 15 March 2010

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

- 2.2 **Draft PAC Minutes of Tuesday, 1 June 2010**
Approved as an accurate record. Minutes will be uploaded on the LEADER website.

3. COMMUNICATION

- 3.1 A copy of a letter to LEADER Strategic Board Chairman, Bruce Beveridge was circulated. A letter had been drafted on behalf of all LAGs, however, Aberdeenshire and Rural Tayside LAGs chose to send their own, slightly amended version. Awaiting response.
- 3.2 Letter of resignation from Tony Miller, Community Council Rep on the LAG. Tony offered to remain as disability adviser to the LAG. LAG happy for Tony to continue provided links with Access Forums are retained.
- 3.3 Rural Aberdeenshire LAG is one of five across Scotland chosen to be part of the Scottish Government's mid-term evaluation process of SRDP and LEADER.

4. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

4.1 Financial Update

Round 8 funding summary tables were circulated. Balance of LEADER funds available subject to Round 8 approvals is circa £500,000. It is hoped that additional funds will be transferred to LEADER in the near future.

LAG members asked for clarification about Planning Gain Fund as a source of match funding. Planning Gain is a fund which comes to the Council from developers. It is a contribution to infrastructure as a consequence of new developments. Two out of eight applications this round have applied for Planning Gain.

Scottish Traditional Skills Training Centre project – letter has been sent to the applicant requesting an update. Awaiting feedback.

4.2 Scottish Government Claims

The next claim to Scottish Government will be more than £200,000.

To date, 27% of total grant commitment has been paid out to projects.

4.3 LEADER Strategic Board (LSB)

A meeting note from the LSB meeting held on 23 February had been circulated earlier.

Aberdeenshire LAG offered to host the proposed LEADER Conference.

Bryan McGrath, Scottish Borders LAG, is confirmed as LEADER representative on the SRDP Programme Monitoring Committee.

4.4 **LEADER Conference**

The LSB Conference is to be held at the Hilton Aberdeen Treetops Hotel on Friday, 18 June and it is expected that approximately 100 delegates will attend.

4.5 **LEADER Promotion in Aberdeenshire**

Vicky provided an update on LEADER in Aberdeenshire at the Kelvin Valley Scottish National Rural Network event.

Garioch LEADER Seminar was held at Carriages Hotel in Inch on Friday, 11 June 2010. The event was well attended by approximately 35 delegates. Four presentations from projects participating in the programme were very well received.

A similar event will be held in the Kincardine & Mearns area on Friday, 3 September – venue TBC.

LAG Chairman attended the Aberchirder Town Centre Opening Ceremony on Sunday, 13 June.

LEADER will be represented at the Turriff Show on Sunday 1 and Monday 2 August. The LEADER stand will be situated in the new Exhibition Hall.

5. **PROJECTS 087 TO 095**

5.1 **087 – Keig Community Hall Users' Group**

Keig Hall is part of Keig school building. Access for hall users is through the school building. Current facilities in the hall are poor. Aberdeenshire Council is proposing to undertake extensive refurbishment of the school building before the end of this financial year. (Note: later confirmed as 2011/12 year).

The project will carry out a series of improvements to the hall, including new kitchen, construction of a storeroom and a new entrance. It is practical to upgrade the hall at the same time as the school refurbishment and in order to achieve this, the project will be managed by the Council.

There is wide community support for the project. Keig is an expanding community with 11 new houses currently being built. There is an immediate need for enhanced community facilities.

Application to Awards for All was unsuccessful.

LAG would encourage the applicant to look at Planning Gain and Marr Area Partnership as possible funders to make up the shortfall. It was felt that it would be prudent for all works to be carried out at the same time and LAG agreed to approve £55,556 with the possibility of an additional £10,000 if other external funding is unsuccessful within the timescale.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £55,556 APPROVED.

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

This project will be the first 100% community owned wind turbine in Aberdeenshire. LEADER funded the feasibility study for the community owned 800kw wind turbine in November 2008.

The Community Group have been working for over 4 years on the proposals and have the backing of the community.

Full planning permission has been obtained and grid access has been paid. The Community Trust will disburse the net revenue from the turbine for the benefit of the community.

The project did not meet the criteria for SRDP funding. Lottery and CAREs funding have been secured. LEADER funding relates to 10% of the costs of the turbine. The balance will be secured through bank loan.

LAG praised the capabilities and courage of the group. This is an exemplar community project and it was suggested that the applicant consider an Evergreen Fund to follow on from the 20 year lifespan of the project.

State Aid Guidance from Scottish Government provided.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £95,040 APPROVED.

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

The proposal is to upgrade Meldrum Hall including creation of small meeting room and toilet facilities upstairs, installation of a lift, new kitchen and refurbishment of the existing hall and meeting room downstairs.

The hall is owned by Aberdeenshire Council but a draft lease to transfer the building to Making Meldrum Better Community Interest Company (MMB CIC) has been prepared. MMB CIC will be responsible for internal maintenance but Aberdeenshire Council will retain responsibility for structural maintenance. Listed building consent is required.

The Community Café which operates from the hall is the heart of the community and income generated from the café is disbursed to the community. Oldmeldrum is a growing community and there is evidence of community support. Planning Gain funding has been secured.

PAC raised the question about competition with Oldmeldrum Legion Hall. Applicant subsequently confirmed that the Legion Hall supports the proposals. The proposed upgrade will complement local businesses, including the Legion. There is wide community support for the project.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £61,468 APPROVED.

5.4 **090 – The Bothie, Kintore**

The project is to build an eco-friendly youth centre in the rapidly expanding community of Kintore. The proposal is for an innovative straw building to be constructed and planning permission has already been approved.

Planning Gain funding of £10,000 has been confirmed.

There is strong community support for the project as there is a severe lack of facilities for young people in Kintore. Local Councillors and Grampian Police also support the proposals.

The project is managed by a member of Action Kintore and the applicant confirmed that opening hours will be until between 9 pm and 10 pm.

LAG considered this to be an exciting project with an innovative use of building materials. The youth forum will be working alongside Community Learning & Development and it was felt that the project could showcase youth engagement.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £46,400 APPROVED.

5.5 **091 – Boddam Community Park Project**

The proposal is to install a range of play equipment and landscaping to create much needed community recreational facilities in Boddam. Boddam Development Trust has taken on board advice from SNH to consider a wildlife garden to make the landscaping more aesthetically and environmentally pleasing.

With increasing numbers of new families in the area there is wide community support to upgrade the existing tired facilities. The applicant will be working in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council.

The suggestion about Adult outdoor gym equipment and discussion with SNH regarding landscaping will be made in the approval document.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £25,925 APPROVED.

5.6 **092 – The Enchanted Castle**

The proposal is to deliver a 3-evening light and sound event at Crathes Castle in the run-up to Christmas. GM Events and the Deeside Destination Management Organisation have created a partnership agreement to deliver the event. The DMO role will be to promote local produce at the event.

Analysis from the Enchanted Glen event held in Glen Tanar in 2008 confirms the value added element for the local community.

Scottish Enterprise and Aberdeenshire Council funding and commercial sponsorship have been confirmed.

LAG considered the proposal to be an innovative visual display in an atmospheric setting which will stimulate local businesses at a quiet time of year. The event meets strategic objectives and fits in with the winter festival programme which has been largely city based up till now.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £7,500 APPROVED.

5.7 093 – Food Tourism Project and The Deeside Sessions

The proposal is a pilot to deliver six food/walking/folk music related projects in the Deeside area from July 2010 to March 2011. Events will raise the profile of tourist opportunities in the area.

Projects will promote local produce and will encourage local establishments to offer local food on their menus.

The success of each pilot project will be assessed on completion and feedback will be provided from each event. The Deeside Destination Management Organisation has underwritten industry contributions.

LAG felt the proposals have the potential to support local producers and to stimulate local businesses through increased footfall at the various events.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £26,000 APPROVED.

5.8 094 – North of Scotland Rural Touring Fund

The proposal is to deliver a series of cultural, theatrical events to rural areas across the North of Scotland over a 2 year period. The project is an Action 2 joint proposal with Highland, Cairngorms, Moray and Argyll LAGs. Highland and Cairngorms LEADER have already approved the project. The cost will be pro-rata across the LAG areas.

It will be essential to hold a start-up meeting with all stakeholders to identify how the project will work. Project management is key to success.

LAG considered the project to be beneficial as there are currently limited opportunities for local theatre to be seen in local communities. LAG was keen to ensure that the 3 year project leaves behind a legacy in each area and also expressed an interest in whether any outdoor venues are being considered for performances.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £33,600 APPROVED.

5.9 095 – Castle Fraser Steam & Vintage Fair 40th Anniversary

£4,944 approved by PAC for a two-day Steam and Vintage Fair at Castle Fraser on 19/20 June 2010 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Bon Accord Steam Engine Club.

6. AOCB

There was no other business.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

LAG meeting – Tuesday, 7 September 2010, Committee Room 1, Woodhill House.