

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

**TUESDAY, 24 AUGUST 2010 AT 10.00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM D, WOODHILL HOUSE**

**Present**

Sue Clark	Scottish Enterprise
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Scott Petrie	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Services
Paul Timms	Scottish Natural Heritage
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

**Officers in Attendance**

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

**Apologies**

Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
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**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

James Knowles welcomed Scott Petrie from SRPBA to the meeting and introductions were made round the table. Apologies were noted as above.

**2. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING**

- 2.1 The draft LAG minute of 15 June 2010 was noted and will be considered for approval by the LAG at the meeting on 7 September 2010.
- 2.2 Vicky confirmed that Argyll LAG has stepped down from the North of Scotland Rural Touring Fund joint project. Western Isles LAG has now been approached to join Aberdeenshire, Highland, Cairngorms and Moray as funders of the project. An initial start-up meeting was held with some of the funding partners but Vicky was unable to attend.

**3. COMMUNICATION**

**3.1 Bruce Beveridge, LSB Chair**

Letter from Bruce Beveridge regarding the next LSB meeting scheduled for 10 September 2010 was circulated. This was accompanied by a spreadsheet showing LAG monthly reporting figures.

Aberdeenshire LEADER is in the upper range in terms of both commitment and spend.

**3.2 Angela Wiseman, Rural Community Empowerment Team**

Letter from Angela Wiseman confirming the transfer of Rural Priorities money to LEADER was circulated. A table showing the pro-rata distribution

of funds was attached. Aberdeenshire LAG's indicative allocation for new measures is £1.16 million, taking the total indicative allocation to £4.52 million.

#### **4. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

- 4.1 Scottish Government notes from the LEADER Conference had been circulated. Pre-conference dinner and Aberdeenshire project presentations were well received.
- 4.2 Chairman is to meet with Bruce Beveridge to discuss LEADER post 2013 on 30 August 2010. No agenda for the meeting as yet.
- 4.3 James Knowles announced his retirement from Aberdeenshire Council. He is currently working notice. Important decisions regarding position as PAC and LAG Chairman will be discussed at the LAG meeting on 7 September.

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

##### **5.1 Financial Update**

Round 8 financial summary sheet was circulated.

##### **5.2 Scottish Government Claims**

Seven Scottish Government Claims submitted totalling £797k to 30 June 2010.

##### **5.3 LEADER Conference**

LEADER conference was held on 18 June with pre-conference dinner held on evening of 17 June.

##### **5.4 Rural Broadband Challenge Fund (RBCF)**

RBCF launched by Scottish Government in July. IT Consultant Jim McCurrach has been appointed to work with applicants. Lengthy discussion took place. PAC expressed concerns about the likelihood of the scheme being heavily oversubscribed.

Closing date for applications has been extended to 8 October. Jim McCurrach will do a technical appraisal of applications in advance of the LAG Broadband meeting on 19 October. Bid will be forwarded to Scottish Government by the end of that week - one week in advance of the deadline.

##### **5.5 Transfer of Rural Priorities Money to LEADER**

See item 3.2 above. Rural Direct Service will be working with LEADER regarding any RP projects outstanding from the last approval round.

##### **5.6 Scottish Government Service Level Agreement Monitor Visit**

SLA monitor visit is scheduled for Wednesday, 1 September 2010. Aberdeenshire Council Finance and Internal Audit will attend the meeting. A monitor pro-forma will be completed in advance of the meeting.

The Service Level Agreement is currently being re-drafted by Scottish

Government.

## 5.7 LEADER Promotion in Aberdeenshire

LEADER was represented at the Turriff Show on 1&2 August 2010. Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary and Paul Gray, Director General visited the LEADER stand which was situated in the new Exhibition Hall.

Vicky attended the Aboyne Twinning Ceremony on Thursday, 5 August.

The next LEADER Community Seminar is to be held in Drumlithie Village Hall on Friday, 3 September.

Scottish Government and European Network for Rural Development EU Co-operation Fair takes place in Edinburgh on 23 & 24 September 2010. Two LAG reps have already registered but further spaces are still available.

## 6. PROJECTS 096 to 105

### 6.1 096 – Sandhaven Harbour Middle Jetty Repair

The application relates to phase 1 of a project to undertake improvement works to the middle jetty of Sandhaven Harbour.

Work to restore the middle jetty wall and reconstruct the point of the jetty wall which has deteriorated over the years will be carried out. This will increase the number of berths available for mooring pleasure craft and larger working vessels. Restoration of the point will also create a base where the landing derrick could be relocated in the future to allow fishing boats to land their catch. The middle jetty also protects other parts of the harbour from the elements.

The Sandhaven and Pitullie Harbour Trust runs the harbour for the benefit of the community and will be contributing 7% towards the project. £2,000 has also been raised through community fundraising. The Trust wish to maintain the harbour as a key focal point.

PAC felt that Sandhaven is an interesting part of the North East coastline and if the middle jetty issues are not addressed, it may lead to future problems. The application is for slightly over 50% but PAC considered this to be acceptable for a project of this size. Paul Timms indicated that the harbour is outwith SSSI but provided a contact name at SNH for confirmation.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £13,750 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

### 6.2 097 – The Revitalisation & Enhancement of Oldmeldrum Pleasure Park

Phase 1 of the project is to expand and improve the play equipment for under 12s at the Oldmeldrum Pleasure Park. Phase 2 is to provide dedicated green space for other park users ensuring that the park is fully utilised and becomes a valuable community asset. The aim is to develop a

community engagement group to take ownership of the green space and organise activities to bring the community together.

There has been a significant increase in the number of new houses in Oldmeldrum and the applicants have secured funding from Planning Gain.

The group will be working in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council who will install the equipment, ensuring it is purchased at best value and is up to health and safety regulations. The inclusion of adult outdoor gym equipment is a possibility for the future.

PAC proposed that in the event of specific other funding being unsuccessful, the shortfall could be covered by LEADER. Responsibility for this would be delegated to LAG Chair and LEADER Co-ordinator.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £21,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC WITH POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING.

### 6.3 **098 – AFCMA Marketing & Development Programme**

The project is to create a new part-time post of Marketing Manager to carry out a two year pilot project to look at supporting the co-ordinated promotion, awareness raising and uplifting of local farmers markets. The Marketing Manager will also create a website to ensure that promotion reaches a wider audience.

Scottish Agricultural Organisations Society and Scottish Agricultural Colleges are providing promotional support to the project.

PAC considered that farmers markets can lift and enhance town centres through increased footfall to local shops. The marketeers are encouraging rural Aberdeenshire to come into towns and cities. Discussion took place about the possibility of marketing to city businesses to see if more can be done to get produce into supermarkets and local retail outlets.

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

### 6.4 **099 – Pitcaple Environmental Project Ltd**

The project is to build a log cabin Interpretation Centre which will showcase best practice in renewable energy technology.

The centre has been successful in providing training and employment opportunities in woodwork, construction and gardening for people with learning disabilities and special needs. The new facility will increase the number of trainees and volunteers going through the centre and will ultimately help trainees who are willing and able to progress to paid employment.

The new centre will help sustain PEPs financial viability in the future.

Planning permission is pending and the lease agreement is still to be finalised with the Council.

PAC will require a letter of comfort from the Council regarding the lease.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £20,800 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

6.5 **100 – Resurfacing Multi-Purpose Sports Area**

The project is to replace the existing tennis court surface with an appropriate surface for multi-sports use and the installation of floodlights to ensure extended use of the facility.

The James Tennant Playing Field was bequeathed to the community and is an impressive resource which includes football pitch, pavilion, bowling green & tennis courts.

The new facility will be suitable for all ages, abilities and sports group and the project has wide community support.

Applicants have undertaken significant fundraising to upgrade the facilities. Local wind farms are interested in supporting the project but will only commit once other funding is in place. Local schools and community groups support the project.

PAC liked the concept of the proposals although concerns were expressed about funding profile being largely unconfirmed. Details of Sports Facilities Fund to be checked in advance of LAG meeting. PAC proposed that in the event of specific other funding being unsuccessful, the shortfall could be covered by LEADER. Responsibility for this would be delegated to LAG Chair and LEADER Co-ordinator.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £36,285 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

6.6 **101 – Banff Castle West Pavilion Development**

The project is to develop the West Pavilion buildings of Banff Castle, creating a folklore centre and café. A centre Manager post will be created and the postholder will create a programme of events and oversee activities within the centre and the café. Additional visitor parking will also be provided. Income from the café will be recycled into maintaining the building.

Banff Castle is a beautiful Grade A Adams building which previously secured Heritage Lottery funding to make the main building wind and watertight. Listed building consent has been approved for the proposed work on the West Pavilion.

The proposals will enable the facility to be used for cultural events, exhibitions and workshops, leading to increased visitor numbers to the area.

The café will be subject to state aid. Forecasted cafe profit figures were discussed and considered to be optimistic. The Association is not VAT registered.

PAC request clarification on VAT situation, profit figures and information on displacement issue with another café which has just started up on the Banff Castle site.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £94,790 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

**6.7 102 – Edzell Woods Excess Water Study**

The project is to contract a hydrologist to undertake and produce a feasibility study on site to identify the source of fresh water which has been entering the sewage system and causing flooding. Possible solutions will be identified.

The project site was previously a military base and is now in private ownership. Edzell Woods Owners Group have responsibility for water and sweage services. Only some residents pay a service charge of £25 per month towards these costs and this causes tension between residents.

Maintenance costs incurred by existing properties have been excessive and a solution will help to reduce costs to residents. In the future, new housing is planned for the locality which will strengthen the community.

There is strong support for the proposals from local residents, Councillors and MPs.

Lengthy discussion took place regarding responsibility of residents. It was suggested that the group contact the Community Housing Association for further advice.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £7,206 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

**6.8 103 – MacRobert Hall Development Project**

The project is to upgrade and modernise the McRobert Hall which is an important community resource in Tarland. The renovations will include energy efficiency improvements, measures to increase the potential uses of the hall and improvements to the aesthetic appearance of the hall to attract more users.

The applicant has carried out community consultation and energy audit and the programme of works proposed will be carried out by a contractor appointed through competitive tender.

PAC discussed the possibility of the applicant becoming VAT registered.

PAC considered the Hall to be a vital resource in Tarland. Upgrading of the resource will lead to increased use which in turn will lead to the continuing sustainability of the facility.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £100,000 RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY PAC.

6.9 **104 – Linking with Finland**

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.

The application is for funding towards a Learning Journey in September 2010 for representatives from a number of Huntly groups to travel to Juankoski in Finland to investigate the potential for collaboration.

An intervention rate of 75% is available for transnational projects.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,950 APPROVED BY PAC BY WRITTEN PROCEDURES.

6.10 **105 – Explore for a Day – Aberdeen & Grampian**

Paul Timms, SNH, declared an interest in this application.

The project is to design, print and distribute 20,000 promotional leaflets to provide visitors to Aberdeenshire and the North East with information about natural and cultural heritage attractions on a daily itinerary basis.

It is hoped the leaflet will encourage visitors to prolong their stay in the area, thereby leading to additional spend locally.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £2,488 APPROVED BY PAC

7. **AOCB**

There was no other business.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

LAG Broadband meeting – Tuesday, 19 October 2010, Committee Room 4, Woodhill House

PAC meeting – Tuesday, 11 November 2010, Conference Room D, Woodhill House