

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

**WEDNESDAY, 6 JUNE 2012 AT 10.00 AM  
PORT ERROLL PUBLIC HALL, CRUDEN BAY**

**Present**

Belinda Miller	LAG Chairperson
Jamie Bell	Scottish Enterprise
Moira Beverley	Aberdeenshire Council – Finance
Gavin Clark	Scottish Natural Heritage
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Economic Development
Keith Newton	Aberdeenshire Council - Community Planning
Scott Petrie	Scottish Land & Estates
Ruth Sim	Aberdeenshire Community Councils
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

**Officers in Attendance**

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Jamie Wilkinson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

**Apologies**

Charlie Adam	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Shona Anderson	Visit Scotland
Caroline Clark	NHS
Ian Cowe	Forestry Commission Scotland
Moira Gordon	SWRI
Jennifer Kinnaird	Scottish Government Rural Payments Inspection Directorate
Bob Leonard	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Learning & Development
Alexander Macleod	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Planning
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Robert Phimister	Member of Scottish Youth Parliament
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Services

**1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

1.1 Belinda Miller welcomed those present to Port Erroll Hall, a LEADER project which has recently completed. Apologies were noted as above.

**2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS**

2.1 Draft minute of the LAG meeting on 20 March 2012 was approved and will be uploaded on the LEADER website.

2.2 Draft minute of the PAC meeting on 29 May 2012 was also approved.

### **3 COMMUNICATION**

- 3.1 A copy of a letter from Alistair Prior, Scottish Government, confirming Aberdeenshire LEADER's additional budget allowance of £678,000 was circulated. Funding is subject to conditions - the budget should be committed by the end of this calendar year and expenditure incurred by 31 March 2014.

LAG welcomed the additional funds and Belinda thanked the LAG staff for their work in providing budget information to Scottish Government.

### **4 CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE**

- 4.1 Belinda will be attending the following meetings on behalf of LEADER:
- LEADER Strategic Board (LSB) meeting, Monday 11 June.
  - Away-Day for LAG Chairs and Lead Partners, Tuesday 12 June, to discuss future funds 2014-2020. Scott Petrie will accompany Belinda.
  - LEADER Monitoring and Evaluation Group led by John Grieve to look at outcomes of the programme, Friday 15 June.
- 4.2 The next Co-ordinators meeting will be held in Edinburgh on Wednesday 13 June. Jamie to attend.
- 4.3 Latest figures issued by Scottish Government show Aberdeenshire LEADER as one of the top performing LAGs in terms of spend, with £2.23 million grant disbursed to projects.

To date, Aberdeenshire LAG has committed over 95% of the budget. Four LAGs have committed between 70 to 90% and eight LAGs less than 70%.

There has been a big improvement in total commitment Scotland-wide in the past six months. Total spend across the board is currently 50% on projects.

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

- 5.1 **Financial Update/Project Update/Scottish Government Claims**  
Current project commitment stands at £3,936,000. The net result of this is a balance of £761,934 which will allow for two further application rounds and a possible mop-up round which would require to take place in early 2013.

Total LEADER grant disbursed to projects is £2.4 million. This equates to 61% of the committed budget.

- 5.2 **Scottish Government Reports and Monitoring**  
April monthly figures will be collated for the LEADER Strategic Board meeting on 11 June 2012.

The Aberdeenshire LEADER End of Year Report 2011 was circulated for information.

Discussion took place on requirements for recording programme outcomes, i.e.

what is monitored and evaluated and how the figures are quantified.

Scottish Government Monitor Visit was undertaken on 18 April 2012. This resulted in 'green light' status for the second year running. SG visited two LEADER Projects, Pitcaple Environmental Project and the Kinmuck Broadband Project.

### 5.3 **Promotion**

Jamie attended the following events:

- SCVO Rural Direct Road Show at Banff Castle on 22 March 2012.
- Deveron Fishing Festival launch at Turriff and the opening of the Fairwather Play Area in Mintlaw on 29 April 2012.
- Marr Community Ward Forum on 23 May 2012.

Three Community Engagement Events for both AEF and LEADER were held at Inverbervie, Port Erroll and Banff in May 2012.

Reid Hutchison is to meet with Jamie, Ann Marie and Vicky to address issues in the Kincardine & Mearns area to help bring forward successful applications.

### 5.4 **Scottish Government Meetings/Options for LEADER 2014-2020**

Vicky attended the LEADER Working Group meeting on 25 May 2012. This short-life working group has been set up to assess LEADER in the current programme and look at issues/make recommendations for the next programming period 2014-2020.

Scottish Government are consulting informally with all stakeholders. Billy McKenzie is heading up the 2014-2020 Programme Working Group which will report to the SRDP Steering Group.

LAG would welcome a more detailed paper on Future Funds and it was agreed that Alistair Prior and Billy McKenzie be invited to attend a one-off Aberdeenshire LAG meeting purely to discuss future funds.

### 5.5 **Project Underspends and Pipeline Projects**

Newmachar Community Centre - Still awaiting confirming regarding the outcome of match funding for the project. £200,000 of LEADER funding has been committed to the project. A project report has been received and the applicants have submitted the stage 2 application to Sport Scotland. However, this still leaves a funding shortfall. The applicants are in discussion with the Garioch Area Manager and are exploring other options.

LAG would like to give the applicants every opportunity to secure the match funding but it was agreed that a decision will have to be made at the next LAG meeting in September.

It was agreed that Newmachar be discussed further at the August PAC meeting, with recommendation to the LAG in September.

Vicky will write to the project manager to advise.

Daviot Hall – On target to start with the majority of match funding now confirmed. As with Newmachar, the final decision on whether the match funding is complete and the project can proceed will require to be taken.

#### **5.6 Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) Update**

Still awaiting outcome of the first round. As anticipated, CCF Round 1 was heavily oversubscribed. It will be a very competitive process for those projects invited to progress to Round 2.

### **6 REPORT: OPTIONS FOR LEADER 2014-2020**

6.1 This agenda item was discussed under item 5.4 above.

### **7 PROJECT AMENDMENTS**

7.1 Seven project amendments have been approved since the last LAG meeting. A summary spreadsheet was circulated and discussed. LAG noted all amendments made.

### **8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were noted. However, Reid Hutchison, Aberdeenshire Council, did intimate that through his work in Community Economic Development, he was aware of three of the project groups 144, 146 and 147. It was agreed that Reid could participate in discussion on these projects.

### **9 PROJECTS 142 TO 153**

#### **9.1 142 – Sandhaven & Pitullie Community hall Development Phase**

The project follows on from an earlier application supported by the LAG for a feasibility study for the refurbishment and re-development of Sandhaven & Pitullie Hall. This second development phase is required to bring the project forward to the capital phase.

The project will employ a consultant to draw up a business plan, produce and submit plans for full planning permission and make applications to various funders for the capital phase.

There is a distinct lack of facilities in Sandhaven for weddings, functions etc and the proposals are considered to be supported in the community and the surrounding area.

There is a partnership agreement between the applicant, NESPT and the Hall Committee. There is no lack of enthusiasm within the community or the committee, it is just a matter of supporting the group to strengthen to be able to take the project forward.

LAG considered it important that the community is not disadvantaged due to the lack of capacity and suggest that a condition of grant be that the applicant makes contact with Aberdeenshire Council Community Learning & Development (CLD) to provide assistance with community capacity building.

LAG would like to see greater community involvement in the business plan process in terms of the committee or members of the community carrying out further community consultation.

It was considered vital that the community are encouraged to take ownership of the final capital phase of the proposals in order to be able to sustain and manage the completed facility.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £6,075 APPROVED.

### 9.2 **143 – Aboyne Mountain Bike Park**

The project is to create a mountain bike track within Bellwood in Aboyne. The bike park will comprise of areas suitable for beginners, intermediate and advanced riders as well as a jumps area suitable for all users.

There is wide community support from both adults and young people in the area.

All match funding has been confirmed and planning permission has been recently submitted.

The bike park will be accessible by an existing forest track and the proposals will not impede other users of the forest.

LAG considered the proposal to be an excellent community project and felt that the Deeside area is an obvious attraction as a destination for mountain bike tourism. Increased footfall to the area will be of benefit to the hospitality sector. LAG agreed that prominent signage will be essential.

Following queries raised by the PAC, the applicant has confirmed that the design of the track is such that minimum maintenance will be required. Maintenance will be carried out by volunteers and any cost in this respect will be met from local fundraising.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £28,000 APPROVED.

### 9.3 **144 – Aden’s Growing Places**

The project, which is a follow up to an existing LEADER project approved in 2010 to look at the future development of Aden Country Park, is to employ a project officer for a period of 18 months to engage with the community through a series of events, activities and workshops relating to farming and horticulture. The project officer post is a new post which will be advertised.

The former walled garden will be restored as a community garden/allotment and

the model 1950's farm will be used as a resource for learning about the heritage of farming and horticulture in the area. Part-time farming and gardening mentors will also be employed and volunteers will be involved in maintaining the garden.

The project is dependent on the outcome of the funding application to the Prince's Countryside Fund. Gavin Clark, SNH, agreed to find out more about the funding application to SNH.

PAC questioned the cost and sustainability of the proposals and the applicant came back with a comprehensive response. Costs have been reduced as a result of concerns expressed.

Following discussion, LAG also expressed concerns about how income will be generated to make the garden sustainable and how volunteer capacity can be built up to take the project forward at the end of the 18 month period.

Although broadly supportive of the proposal to create a community garden, after careful consideration the LAG had concerns about the long-term sustainability of the project and agreed to decline the application.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £42,033 DECLINED.

#### 9.4 **145 – Rural Schools & Community Coaching Project**

The project will employ two part-time officers to provide a programme of rugby coaching taster sessions for rural primary and secondary school pupils in Alford, Kemnay and Medrum catchment areas. The tuition will be available over 1 term and it is hoped that that pupils will then be inspired to go on to join the Rugby Club in Inverurie.

The coaching is in addition to statutory PE lessons and there is a letter from Aberdeenshire Council Education, Learning and Leisure confirming that the coaching is extra curricular and not statutory provision.

PAC had raised the question as to why core funders of rugby such as the Scottish Rugby Union had not been approached for funding. However, the applicant has confirmed that the rugby club is already receiving the maximum possible funding from the SRU. The club is currently in discussion with other rugby clubs regarding a funding application to Sport Scotland.

PAC questioned the links of rugby coaching with regard to rural development and LEADER. However, LAG was supportive of the proposals which will help to stimulate an interest in healthy physical activity for young people. The project will also offer youngsters a valuable opportunity to become involved with a club, thereby increasing confidence and ability. LAG also welcomed the possibility of including the less physically able and disabled children in the project.

Potential displacement was also discussed. Through working with football and

cricket clubs in the Inverurie and Westhill areas, the project will be targeting rural schools which don't currently have such a facility on their doorstep.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £11,950 APPROVED.

#### 9.5 **146 – Macduff Pensioners Hall Car Park Improvements**

The project is to construct a new car park area at the Macduff Pensioners Hall which is located on a busy through road. Proposals will make access to the Hall safer for all users, especially the elderly and disabled.

The Hall is a valuable community resource which is well used by a wide variety of local user groups.

The committee is a pro-active group and, through their fundraising efforts, the funding profile is close to being complete.

LAG considered the proposals would further enhance the already well used facilities at the Hall and the work undertaken will significantly improve this vital community hub through improved accessibility.

It was agreed that a condition of the award be that the car park area includes designated cycle parking and accessible disabled parking facilities.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £10,560 APPROVED.

#### 9.6 **147 – The Harvest Folk Festival**

The project is to hold a weekend music festival in late September 2012. A small pilot festival was held last year and was well received. This year's event will be a slightly larger festival showcasing traditional North East music. There will also be clear links to local food production and cookery with the Three Chimneys Restaurant being involved to promote the concept of local produce.

The applicant, Birseland Media, will be working in partnership with the community and the agreement states that any profit from the event will be ring-fenced for future years.

LEADER funding will cover the costs of hiring the marquee, payment of artists, marketing costs and the publication of a DVD which is to be produced by young film makers recording the musicians.

The festival, with the links to local food production, will have the potential to draw large numbers of visitors and locals and LAG considered the event would have a positive economic spin-off for the local area.

LAG discussed the issue of displacement and, if the festival is to become an annual event, it may be possible to change the location in order for other local communities to benefit from the showcase festival.

It was agreed that funding be made available for a one-off event and the applicant must be made aware that there will be no possibility of coming back to LEADER with an application for funding for future events.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £6,105 APPROVED.

9.7 **148 – The Bothie Youth & Volunteer Co-ordinator**

This project is a follow-on from an earlier project approved by the LAG in June 2010 to build an eco youth centre in Kintore. The original application is now back on track following delays caused initially by difficulties with match funding and latterly by a decline in volunteer interest and difficulties with obtaining building expertise for the straw bale construction.

Building warrant is now in final stages of approval following changes to revert to conventional build.

This project relates to the long-term sustainability of the facility and will employ a youth worker over an 18 month period to co-ordinate activities at the Bothie and recruit and train adult volunteers to form a management committee.

LAG considered proposals to be of benefit for the young people in a rapidly expanding settlement such as Kintore which is currently lacking in youth facilities. It was acknowledged that it would be sensible for the co-ordinator to be in post before the completion of the build in order to commence work on encouraging volunteers in advance of the facility being open for business.

It was agreed that a provisional approval be issued with formal approval document to follow once the applicant has confirmed in writing that the construction of the Kintore Bothie will proceed.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT OF FUNDING OF £13,320 PROVISIONALLY APPROVED  
DEPENDANT ON THE BUILD PROJECT PROCEEDING.

9.8 **150 – “Children’s Community Voice” – Community Engagement & Delivery**

The project will employ an officer on a part-time basis over an 18 month period to deliver a series of events to Primary 4-7 pupils in rural schools in the Garioch area. The aim of the project is to hold community consultation events where the pupils as reporters, put forward questions about issues that affect their lives within their



communities to local decision makers such as Councillors, Police, Firemen, Community Workers etc.

A DVD will also be produced to enable the concept to be showcased to other organisations and thus help to make the project sustainable.

The proposal, which links with Curriculum for Excellence, encourages learning about society, government and the community for real and will help make children feel valued by building self confidence and giving them a sense of community ownership.

PAC were supportive of the unique proposals but recommended that the applicant seek confirmation from Education Learning & Leisure Head of Service that what is being proposed is not a statutory requirement.

As a pilot project has already been carried out in the area, LAG recommended a condition of grant be that assurances are given by the applicant that activities will take place in a new geographical area where this service has not been provided in the past.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £7,222 APPROVED.

**9.9 151 – Tullynessle Hall Exterior Improvements**

This small project application was approved by the PAC at their meeting on 29 May 2012. The project relates to the upgrading and enhancement of the exterior areas around the hall including resurfacing of the car park, improvements to the area at the main door and the neatening of landscaped areas and boundary edges.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £3,075 APPROVED BY PAC.

**9.10 152 – Aberdeen Angus 212 Ruby Anniversary Tour**

Decision on this small project application was deferred by the PAC pending further information from the applicant.

The project is for the production and publication of a high quality hard-backed book as part of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society. A 5-day tour of Aberdeen Angus herds in North East Scotland will take place in October 2012 for 250 delegates.

The book will promote the Aberdeen Angus breed and its heritage as well as the cultural history of the North East.

Of the 500 copies, 250 will be given away to the delegates. Others will be distributed to various stakeholders, members of the society, sponsors and industry specific parties. The high quality publication will be a timeless book to be treasured.

LAG considered the publication to be a good marketing opportunity for the area and although the book will focus on the breed it will also showcase the quality of the Aberdeenshire area in particular and will have the potential to promote local food.

LAG suggested that the publication be produced in digital format with large print compatibility and also be made available as an online resource. This would allow the publication to be distributed to the tourism sector, hotel industry, DMO's and others in the food and drink sector. It was agreed that this be a condition of grant offer.

<b>Summary of Responses</b>	<b>In favour</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Not in favour</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>DOI</b>	<b>0</b>

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,925 APPROVED.

**9.11 153 – Kinmuck Community Broadband Extension Project**

This small project application was approved by the PAC at their meeting on 29 May 2012. The project relates to the expansion of the innovative Kinmuck Broadband Project which was approved by the LAG in January 2011 and aims to provide a more efficient bandwidth and service to a much wider range of users.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £4,750 APPROVED BY PAC.

**10 AOCB**

10.1 There was no other business.

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

11.1 LAG meeting - Tuesday, 18 September 2012 at 10.30 am at Banff Castle.

11.2 PAC meeting – Tuesday, 20 November 2012 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 4, Woodhill House.