

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

**FRIDAY, 27 MARCH 2009
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, WOODHILL HOUSE**

Present

Eleanor Anderson	Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership Federation
Dan Cadle	Forestry Commission Scotland
Ewen Cameron	Scottish Natural Heritage
Liz Gordon	Aberdeenshire Council
Moira Gordon	Scottish Women's Rural Institute
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
Stewart Johnston	Scottish Executive
James Knowles	Aberdeenshire Council
Calvin Little	NHS
Ken Massie	Visit Scotland
Tony Miller	Aberdeenshire Community Councils
Keith Newton	Aberdeenshire Council
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Erin Wood	Aberdeenshire Council

Officers in Attendance

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies

Martin Brebner, Caroline Clark, Sabine Dey, Jennifer Hall, Morna Harper, Bob Leonard, Jamie Rankin, Susan Smith, Maureen Stephen, Andy Willox

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 James Knowles welcomed those present and apologies were noted as above. Calvin Little, NHS was welcomed to his first meeting and introductions were made round the table.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 LAG Meeting of Tuesday 9 December 2008

The minute was approved as an accurate record and will be uploaded on the LEADER website.

2.2 Draft PAC Meeting of Thursday 12 March 2009

Approved as an accurate record. PAC minutes will be uploaded on the website once approval letters have been issued to applicants.

3. LEADER CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

- 3.1 A copy of the financial spreadsheet was issued, showing a breakdown of funding for Round 3 projects and overall running total of funds allocated

to date.

It was suggested that the funding summaries be uploaded on the LEADER website. After discussion on project confidentiality, it was agreed that a format such as Table 3 cumulative statistics, would be a suitable method of demonstrating the impact and value of match funding in approved projects.

- 3.2 The first LAG claim, relating to LAG administration costs, was submitted to the Scottish Government on 10 March. The claim period covers a thirteen month period from 1 January 2008 to 31 January 2009. The next claim will cover February and March 2009 and claims will be quarterly thereafter. The LEADER office has now started to process project grant claims.

- 3.3 Two successful LEADER Seminars were held in South Aberdeenshire. One in Johnshaven on Wednesday, 25 February and the second in Auchenblae on Friday, 6 March. Both events were well attended.

Presentations were given by representatives from the Scottish Government on SRDP and SCVO on Rural Direct. These were followed by lively project case study presentations.

LAG members felt that the seminars were good publicity and would raise awareness of LEADER.

- 3.4 A copy of the minute from the last LEADER Co-ordinator's meeting held on Wednesday, 4 February in Edinburgh was circulated.

Measure 341, which is funding currently delivered through Rural Priorities for the preparation and development of local strategies, was discussed.

A new Scottish National Rural Network is being established. A website is currently being developed which will include information on LEADER.

- 3.5 Vicky attended a LEADER Seminar in Levi, Finland from 16-20 March. The seminar focused on the potential for trans-national LEADER co-operation.

Events included a contact fair with LAGs around Europe, Seminar discussions on co-operation, workshops and site visits to LEADER funded enterprises.

Good contacts were made and there may be potential to investigate potential for trans-national projects under Axis 2 of the Programme.

Vicky will report back to the Scottish Government.

- 3.6 The submission deadline for Round 4 is 28 April. Approximately 12 draft applications are currently being worked with.

4. COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 Copies of three items of communication were circulated in advance of the meeting.
- 4.2 The 25% retention rate was discussed. This is causing cash flow issues for applicants.
- 4.3 Confirmation that Scottish Enterprise has a budget of £1.5 m for rural investments across Scotland.
- 4.4 Letter from Dumfries & Galloway LAG to Scottish Government on programme management issues.

5. ROUND 3 PROJECT APPLICATIONS 030 TO 042

5.1 030 – Sandend Harbour Revitalisation Project

The Sandhaven Harbour group have taken ownership of the harbour and have undertaken extensive fundraising. The project is to restore and revitalise the small historic harbour to stabilise and protect it.

The project will look towards involving the community in the cultural heritage of the area and will draw in additional tourism.

It was suggested that a possible trans-national project could be to promote small harbours around the North Sea.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £18,000 APPROVED.

5.2 031 – St Ninian's & Forglen Kirk Development Project

The project is a major restoration of the building, retaining its use as a Church whilst offering use of upgraded facilities to a wide range of user groups.

Extensive community consultation has been carried out and there is evidenced demand for use of the refurbished facility.

Turriff has limited meeting facilities available for local groups.

Funding profile for the project has been confirmed.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £50,000 APPROVED.

5.3 032 – The Brander – A Cultural Hub

Deveron Arts currently lease a small office space from Aberdeenshire Council in the Brander Building. The project is to develop the existing office space and to expand another two rooms into a studio and workshop facility for visiting artists.

Scottish Arts Council funding of £20,000 has now been confirmed. Community Asset Fund and Education Learning & Leisure funding have not yet been considered.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £5,000 APPROVED SUBJECT TO ALL OTHER FUNDING BEING CONFIRMED.

5.4 **033 – Cairngorms & Mid-Deeside/Rural Aberdeenshire Communities Path Network Project**

This is a joint project funded by both Cairngorms and Aberdeenshire LEADER programmes.

The project is to upgrade and manage pathways and undertake health walks. The Aberdeenshire element of the project is to create a path link between Tarland and Aboyne and an upgrade to the Fungal path, Forest of Birse.

Health Walks initiatives contribute to social integration and the paths will provide a major tourism attraction for the North East of Scotland.

Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust has a proven track record in improving public access in rural areas.

This will be the LAG's first joint application and will contribute to Action 2 targets for the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £47,086 APPROVED (subject to funding being in place).

5.5 **034 – Scottish Sculpture Workshop Building Development**

This is the second submission from Scottish Sculpture Workshop. Applicant was invited to re-submit in Round 3 with further detail on the proposal.

Scottish Arts Council has confirmed £200,000 funding towards project. Increased revenue funding from SAC will enable a marketing manager to be employed. The biomass element has been confirmed by SCHRI. The Education, Learning & Leisure grant committee will make their decision in June.

The application is much clearer and community demand is evidenced.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £135,000 APPROVED SUBJECT TO ALL OTHER FUNDING BEING CONFIRMED.

5.6 **035 – Crathes Hall Car Park**

The project is to surface the car park area, construct lean-to buildings for storage and use the car park as a Park & Ride facility.

The Group are in the process of identifying other funding streams for

match funding.

Discussion took place on how the Park & Ride would impact on other users of the Hall. The car park is large enough to accommodate both Hall and Park & Ride users.

PAC recommended that the applicant be invited to re-submit Round 4 after looking more closely at the potential for Park & Ride facility by identifying the demand for such a service in the mid Deeside area.

PROJECT INVITED TO RE-SUBMIT ROUND 4.

5.7 036 – New Deer on the Up and Up

The proposal is for a further range of improvements to the Hall which is the key focal point of the New Deer Community. These include modernisation of small hall, installation of disabled access toilet and purchase of flexible tiered seating system for an expanding range of theatrical performances.

The New Deer Community Association is a very proactive group that has been successful in attracting visiting theatre companies. Events in the Hall are well attended by the local community.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £10,366 APPROVED.

5.8 037 – St Ternan’s Church Muchalls Enhancement

This is the second submission from St Ternan’s. Applicant was asked to demonstrate community support and demand for the proposed facilities.

The application is more robust with evidence of support from local user groups. Classes for the hard of hearing will be held in the new meeting room. A local reading group is also keen to make use of the proposed new facilities.

St Ternan’s is a pro-active group who investigated the potential for biomass and this is currently being installed.

Discussion took place regarding the impact St Ternan’s would have on other local Halls. PAC considered that St Ternan’s is part of a widely spread rural community and would not adversely affect other facilities. A letter of support had, in fact, been received from the Community Council of Newtonhill.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £42,298 APPROVED

5.9 038 – Glass Hall Window Work

The present condition of the Glass Hall is limiting its use. The Hall is structurally sound but by replacing the existing windows energy efficiency will be improved, making the Hall more clement during winter.

The Hall is a key resource for the small rural community of Glass and there is clear evidence of support. This project will safeguard this valuable community facility.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £6,512 APPROVED.

5.10 **039 – Into The Wild**

Battlehill Woods are owned by Aberdeenshire Council and the project is to research the history of the woods and engage the local community in producing theatrical and film performances. This is a highly innovative cultural arts project which will involve locals in the community aims for the woodland.

Scottish Arts Council funding has been confirmed.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £8,000 APPROVED.

5.11 **040 – Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (North East)**

This is a 3 year phased project to protect and enhance the habitat of the red squirrel species which is now under threat from increasing numbers of grey squirrels. Ewen Cameron from Scottish Natural Heritage reported on the background of the national programme.

A mid-term evaluation report will be required after 18 months. This is a requirement for all phased projects.

One of the key priorities for LEADER is the conservation of the rural environment. The project also meets local community and tourist elements.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £45,545 APPROVED.

5.12 **041 – Turriff Haughs Exhibition Hall and Facilities**

Keith Newton noted an interest.

The project is to construct a new indoor Exhibition Hall plus permanent toilet facilities at the Turriff Haughs show ground. The Exhibition Hall will also be used for storing equipment for the show.

Turriff Show is an iconic event which will be a key component of Homecoming 2009. It was felt that offshoots from this enhanced facility will be of huge community benefit.

Turriff & District Agricultural Association are a forward thinking group and have undertaken a full evaluation of what is required to improve facilities at the Haughs.

PROJECT FUNDING OF £66,000 APPROVED.

5.13 **042 – Defining and Growing Strong Resilient & Supportive Communities**

Project relates to identifying a rural community within the LAG area whereby a researcher is trained and employed to undertake research into what makes a community strong, sustainable and supportive. This follows on from the RESPECT Project.

The applicant had supplied further information regarding the RESPECT Project which had positive outcomes.

Discussion took place on possible over-consultation and overlap with services already being offered by the Community Voluntary Service and Rural Partnerships. The applicant must identify how the project will complement and link to activities currently being undertaken.

The underlying idea of the project is good, however the LAG recommend that the applicant discuss proposals with the Community Planning Executive, demonstrate that there is support from other services and provide clear evidence that the proposal will be a bottom up process.

PROJECT INVITED TO RE-SUBMIT ROUND 4.

6. AOCB

Project details will be uploaded on the LEADER website once approval documents have been issued.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next LAG meeting will be held on Tuesday, 9 June 2009 at a time and place to be confirmed.