

**FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING**

**22 MARCH 2016**

**GARTMORE HOUSE, GARTMORE**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

<i>Peter Sunderland</i>	<i>Business and Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Douglas Johnston</i>	<i>Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Lynn Hamilton</i>	<i>VisitScotland</i>
<i>Janet Beveridge</i>	<i>Land Management, West Dunbartonshire</i>
<i>Mike Ewart</i>	<i>Land Management, Central Scotland Green Network Trust</i>
<i>John Armstrong</i>	<i>Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Celia Burn</i>	<i>Community, West Dunbartonshire</i>
<i>Isla Campbell</i>	<i>Scottish Natural Heritage</i>
<i>Bridget Clark</i>	<i>Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Carolyn McGill</i>	<i>Clackmannanshire Council</i>
<i>Jo Wright</i>	<i>Loch Lomond &amp; the Trossachs National Park Authority</i>
<i>Mike Strachan</i>	<i>Forestry Commission Scotland</i>
<i>Janice Kennedy</i>	<i>Scottish Enterprise</i>
<i>Brian McColgan</i>	<i>West Dunbartonshire Council</i>
<i>Tony Teasdale</i>	<i>Community, Rural Stirling Housing Association</i>
<i>Ian Mathieson</i>	<i>Community, Clackmannanshire</i>

**Apologies:**

<i>Jason Clark</i>	<i>Business, Stirling Enterprise Park</i>
<i>Gillian Ferguson</i>	<i>Historic Scotland</i>
<i>Stuart Oliver</i>	<i>Stirling Council</i>

**In Attendance:**

<i>Anne-Michelle Ketteridge</i>	<i>Programme Manager</i>
<i>Neil Ramsay</i>	<i>Development Officer</i>
<i>Irene Watterson</i>	<i>Claims Officer and Minute Taker</i>

ITEM		ACTIONS
1	<p><b><u>Welcome, Sederunt and Minutes of Last Meeting</u></b></p> <p><i>PS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from JC, GF and SO.</i></p> <p><i>The accuracy of the last Minute was reviewed by Members for accuracy. It was Proposed my MS and seconded my IC.</i></p> <p><i>PS took the meeting through the action points of the Minute.</i></p> <p><i>In Item 4 (Page 4) - AMK advised that EOIs would be addressed later in the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>NR confirmed that 100 LEADER Projects Publication is now on the FVL website.</i></p> <p><i>Item 5 (Page 4) - AMK advised that the Launch would be addressed later in the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Page 7 Farm Diversification and Rural Enterprise - AMK advised that some issues had been raised regarding State Aid and confirmed that 70% intervention can only be approved if it's offered under de minimis.</i></p> <p><i>Item 8 (page 8) - AMK advised that Strategic Asset Mapping would be addressed later in the meeting.</i></p> <p><b>LH arrived at the meeting</b></p>	
2	<p><b><u>Project Scoring</u></b></p> <p><i>AMK asked the Members if they thought that the Score Sheet captured what they wanted covered and if the SG example circulated previously had raised any extra criteria they wanted included.</i></p> <p><i>There was a brief discussion round the table and it was agreed that the Score Sheet was adequate, although two of the criteria could be expanded to reflect the SG example ones, the Business Planning criteria could include legacy beyond LEADER funding period and the community impact criteria could be expanded to include an equality view.</i></p> <p><i>Some LAG members questioned why scores were required prior to the LAG meeting however after discussing this, it was agreed that doing this forced members to read the application form and this also gave an indication of Members thoughts prior to a fuller discussion and vote at the meeting.</i></p> <p><b>JA arrived at the meeting</b></p> <p><i>IC requested that project papers be sent out earlier than they were for this LAG Meeting as there was not much time to review the application documents. AMK agreed this would happen for the next LAG Meeting.</i></p>	<p>SCORING MATRIX APPROVED</p>

AMK asked the Members their thoughts on Fast Track projects, where smaller projects could be assessed by the LAG by e-mail without waiting on a LAG Meeting. Fast Track projects were usually time-critical projects.

This would mean that all papers and score sheets would be done out-with a LAG Meeting via email and LARCs when this is up and running.

The LAG discussed this and approved the principal of Fast Track projects being assessed without a LAG meeting. The detail on this will be discussed later in the meeting.

LH asked about the appeals process. AMK replied that SG were preparing the details on this and she had seen a draft of this as part of the work she was doing on standard templates. She would check the status of the guidance on appeals and circulate accordingly.

JB asked if there was scope for the LEADER staff to give recommendations on projects. AMK responded that at the end of the Technical Assessment there is a section for Officers to give their recommendations.

It was agreed to return to the discussion on scoring after the discussion on the projects.

3

### **Project for Discussion - Gartmore Glamping Project**

PS advised that he has no financial conflict of interest with this project however thought that as this project was on Gartmore House's doorstep that he would remove himself for this part of the meeting. PS handed over chairing of the meeting to DJ and left the room.

On screen, NR displayed a map of the area where this Project is situated. NR explained that this project is in the very early stages and an informed discussion by Members would assist with the development of this project.

NR displayed another slide showing what the accommodation would look like. He explained that the original Application was to install four pods however the Applicant has advised that they are now thinking of fully insulating each pod which would double the cost and would mean installing two pods to begin with. Ultimately, they wish to install 20 pods in total if planning allows this. NR advised the Applicant is at initial stages of discussion with the Planning Authority who have said they are supportive but need to do a site visit. They will possibly need a Caravan Site Licence and MS said a Woodland Management Plan would likely be needed too.

The Members discussed this project and agreed that according to the photo of the 'pods', they were more like wooden chalets and not what they expected 'glamping' to be, which would be yurts, pods, tipis and such like. A more imaginative approach to the design would be welcomed by the LAG.

<p>3</p>	<p><i>The Members agreed that this Application has the potential to be a good project in this area as they liked the integration of the business with the community and there is a need for different types of accommodation, but highlighted a few concerns they had at this early stage which should be relayed back to the Applicant.</i></p> <p><i>They advised that the Applicant should be encouraged to work on the application providing a more detailed business plan and focus made on visitor numbers and market analysis. The Members would like to see the plan for the whole site for when the 20 pods would be in situ (if that is what they continue to choose to do). The Members were less keen on the gym equipment element as they couldn't see the need or benefit given the woodland setting and easy access to outdoor activities and exercise.</i></p> <p><i>The Members agreed that in future Applications shouldn't be brought forward to LAG Meetings until all statutory approvals/permissions had been granted, or at least were very far down the line.</i></p> <p><b>PS returned to the room.</b></p> <p><b><u>Project for Scoring - Balmaha Pontoon Project</u></b></p> <p><i>LLTTNPA currently lease the land to which the pontoon would be attached. They are currently exploring the best way for The Oak Tree Inn to take over the Lease, but they could potentially have a conflict of interest so JW left the room.</i></p> <p><i>NR displayed a screens showing the site plan for the Pontoon and informed Members that it was 8m x 6m in size, on the route of the WHW and very close to Tom Weir's Memorial Garden.</i></p> <p><i>All Members contributed to the discussion centred on a need for more detail on the actual operation of the Pontoon once it was installed and open access to the Pontoon. It was noted that the existing road to the site was not ideal for wheelchairs, and there was often litter, although the Community Council was supportive of the Project. This led to discussion on which 'community' was the LAG's priority - the local community where a project was located or the wider LAG area community. Consensus was that it was LAG area - although taking on board a local community's view should this ever be different.</i></p> <p><i>The Members agreed that this was a good Project with a good fit with the LDS and would have significant community benefit and a strategic benefit to the National Park. It was noted that this project would have a wider community benefit however there could be local dis-benefit with increased litter etc although it was noted that the Community Council is supporting this Project with a letter of support to the Application.</i></p>	<p><b>ACTION: NR/ APPLICANT</b></p>
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*On this basis, the LAG agreed unanimously to approve this Project with the following specific conditions.*

- *Provision of a copy of the (minimum) 25 year lease*
- *Provision of an Operation Management Plan for the pontoon*
- *Access to the pontoon being for the benefit of the public for the lifetime of the pontoon.*
- *The path being constructed will be Disability Discrimination Act compliant*
- *Clear evidence provided that other water access solutions were explored prior to deciding to build a new pontoon.*

*The LAG suggested it could ask the LLTTNPA to provide a letter which evidences that other water access solutions had been explored but without success.*

**Back to Scoring**

*CB asked for clarity for the difference between approving a project with conditions and deferring a project.*

*AMK explained that approving a project with conditions is saying the LAG likes the project and as long as the Applicant can supply all the information/evidence in the conditions, the project is approved.*

*If the LAG defers a project, this means that the project has the potential of being approved subject to specific further piece(s) of work is/are carried out and brought back to the LAG for approval.*

*A deferred Application must be revisited by the LAG for reconsideration/final approval. The Members would be checking that the reason for the deferral had been fully addressed.*

*AMK asked the Members whether they wanted to continue to have presentations on projects from the Development Officer, or in a different format.*

*The Members discussed this and advised that they would prefer the presentation not to be too long, especially if all the information has been passed to the Members prior to the Meeting. This will be more important when several Applications are being appraised. The Members would like the presentations to focus on comments and visuals and the headlines from the technical assessor and recommendations.*

*The members also advised that visual information is especially good so that the Members can see what the Applicants are wanting from their Project and this could assist with scoring, so would like photos and drawings to be sent out in advance if possible.*

***ME left the Meeting***

**PROJECT  
APPROVED WITH  
SPECIFIC  
CONDITION**



*Banners were taken along to the Meeting today and were erected in the Meeting Room for Members to see and Neil said that Leaflets had been also been delivered and Business Cards, Letterheads and Compliment Slips have now been ordered. AMK asked Members if they would be interested to have some FVL LEADER Business Cards for themselves. The Members said they wouldn't want personalised cards but maybe a business card size information card with the five priorities for projects listed but then decided this was already covered by the leaflet and so should stick with that for now.*

*The Members thought the leaflets were very good and so some extras that were brought along to today's meeting were distributed for Members to use.*

*LH asked if there was any merit in trying to organise a training session for Applicants to understand the Application Form. She asked if the Communications Group could look at how such an event might be delivered - maybe a roadshow linking with other workshop organisations or perhaps a YouTube video.*

*The Members discussed this and decided that the Communications Group should take this forward and can be discussed at the next LAG Meeting.*

#### **Strategic Activity Group**

*On screen, LH presented a slide proposing the Group to become a Strategic Sounding Board and proposed that the Group guide and work with the LEADER Support Team. She proposed that the Group monitor and advise on EOIs coming to FVL and also explore LAG-led projects. These currently include Camping/Budget Accommodation Toolkit, Local Food & Drink Co-ordination, Supporting Communities with Broadband Solutions and giving support to the New Strategic Landscape Partnership.*

*The Members discussed this and agreed this would be a good idea and would assist in headlining what is in the pipeline by assisting the LAG to target EOIs.*

*BC advised that the Strategic Map Group met yesterday to look at the map which will become a tool for the LAG. It will be a map with routes/aspirational routes and with each aspirational route, there would be a table with more detailed information explaining any issues or observations. BC informed the Members that IC had volunteered to set this up. This map has the potential to help prioritise information and assist the LAG with path-related and tourism projects.*

#### **Chairs Group**

**ACTION:  
COMMUNICATIONS  
GROUP**

**APPROVED:  
STRATEGIC  
SOUNDING BOARD**

	<p><i>PS informed the Members that LH, DJ and himself met with Stuart Carruth, Chief Executive of Stirling Council, and said the meeting went well. Stuart Carruth had been worried that the LAGs priorities were not closely enough aligned to the Council's priorities, but was now reassured.</i></p> <p><i>PS added that they had worked on the Scoring Matrix prior to it going out to the LAG and also had assisted AMK with recruitment.</i></p> <p><i>AMK added the Members that CMcG, DJ and herself were currently interviewing for Sue and Neil's replacements with two interviews held yesterday and three being held tomorrow. Two Development Officers are required, each working three days per week until the end of December when this will be revisited.</i></p> <p><b><u>Farm Diversification &amp; Enterprise Group - next meeting due</u></b></p> <p><i>AMK informed the Members that the Group has not met since the last LAG Meeting in December and it would be good to get a date in diaries. This will be after lambing in May.</i></p> <p><b><u>Finance (Admin) Update</u></b></p>	
6	<p><i>AMK had circulated the Financial Update sheet to the Members. She advised that although the Finance Budget runs for the whole of the Programme, she had shown the annual expenditure (January - December) separately to show the Programme is running on track. AMK informed the Members that the only costs incurred in the last four month period (December until March) is for admin costs.</i></p> <p><i>The Members asked what flexibility they had with any cost savings due to the Programme being a late starter. AMK advised that there would be some flexibility and any spare funding would be able to be transferred annually however this would be subject to SG approval.</i></p> <p><i>PS said that Finance for the Programme is important to us all and so Members should feel free to ask AMK or himself any questions, anytime.</i></p>	ACTION: FARM DIVERSICATION & RURAL ENTERPRISE GROUP
7	<p><b><u>Local Area Update</u></b></p> <p><i>PS gave a quick update on Gartmore and Aberfoyle with their previous LEADER projects including the Village Hall, the Village Shop, the Garage in Aberfoyle and the Bike Skills area. Current issues include flooding and broadband. CB added that the Community Partnership is working on some community engagement re forest management and natural flood management.</i></p>	
8	<p><b><u>60 Seconds Feedback from LEADER Conference</u></b></p> <p><i>AMK started off by saying that the Rural Network and SG were impressed at the FVL representation and thanked everyone</i></p>	



*involved for attending. PS had given one of the keynote presentations as a LAG Chair, which seemed to go down very well.*

*LH informed Members that she had run a workshop with AMK on LAG-led projects. She said that in a general sense, she was pleased at how enthused LAGs are for developing their own projects, and surprised that so few have done this themselves.*

*TT told Members that he found that there was a better sense of what it is all about by talking to other LAG areas. He also enjoyed the Cooperation Café session on the Saturday as he got a better feel for the types of projects other areas were thinking about.*

*DJ said that he found the conference very useful with meeting other LAG areas. He also said that the Farm Diversification workshop was excellent, giving a clear picture of the changes that are happening. DJ said however that the civil servants didn't seem to be particularly well informed on Co-operation projects if the Cooperation Workshop was anything to go by.*

*CMcG said that she attended the Enterprise Workshop and Farm Diversification workshop which were very good, and understood there would be more guidelines provided for supporting businesses. FVL of course, has had experience of this with having dealt with Sustainable Tourism projects from businesses in the last Programme, which was referred to in the workshop. She also enjoyed the project visit to a historic site in a poor state which LEADER helped in Cairngorms.*

*JK said that as a new LAG member herself, she was slightly overwhelmed at the Conference where every LAG is doing something different. She would have liked more time for workshops and to have been able to go to more of them as she found these to be beneficial.*

*BC told the LAG that she enjoyed the Conference and used the Strategic Mapping idea as a possible co-operation project for the future at the Co-Operation Café session that TT had mentioned. She particularly liked the way it brought completely new players who may have an opposing perspective and forced you to think from a different viewpoint.*

#### **ACOB**

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*AMK informed the Members that the film of the event can be found on the Rural Network website and apologised for the sound not working properly at the beginning of the meeting.*

*PS introduced JK to the other Members explaining that she was replacing Frank Beattie from Scottish Enterprise. PS apologised for not introducing her at the beginning of the meeting.*

*And finally, as this was NR's final LAG meeting with FVL, PS thanked NR on everyone's behalf for the work that has been*

10	<p><i>carried out by him and wished him well for his future at Tyne &amp; Esk LEADER.</i></p> <p><i>He noted how many projects had appreciated his assistance and support over the three years with FVL, which he was sure would be equally appreciated by Tyne &amp; Esk Projects</i></p> <p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting - 29 June 2016 at 10am</u></b></p> <p><i>The venue has still to be organised and will be confirmed at a later date and likely to be in Clackmannanshire.</i></p>	<p><i>IW/CMcG TO ARRANGE</i></p>
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