

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING

Drymen Business Hub (above Fraser C Robb showroom)

9 October 2019

10 am – 1.45 pm

Minutes

Present:

Douglas Johnston	Community, Stirlingshire (Chair - Community)
Steve MacDonald	Stirling Council - Agency
Susan Brookes	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency
Lynn Hamilton	VisitScotland – Agency
Jim Livingstone	Clackmannanshire Council - Agency
Brian McColgan	West Dunbartonshire Council - Agency
Simon Orr	Community and Business, STEP
Mike Ewart	Community, Central Scotland Green Network Trust
Sue Wyllie	Community, Stirlingshire
Bridget Clark	Community, Stirlingshire

Apologies:

Janice Kennedy	Scottish Enterprise - Agency
Rory McLeod	Community and Business
Fiona Jackson	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency
Julie Haslam (maternity leave)	Community, Clackmannanshire TSI
Ashley Robinson	FVL Local Food & Drink Co-ordinator

In Attendance:

Anne-Michelle Ketteridge	LEADER Programme Manager
Carolyn McGill	LEADER Development Officer
Nikki Kenn	LEADER Development Officer
Shaun Marley	LEADER Community Broadband Officer
Jason Clark	LEADER Cycle Tourism Officer
Caroline Paterson	LEADER Claims Officer and Minute Taker

	ACTIONS
1. Welcome and Sederunt	
DJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies noted as above.	

<p>2. Quorum and Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>DJ asked AMK if the meeting was quorate. She confirmed the LAG meeting was quorate.</p> <p>AMK reported a few conflicts of interest in today's projects for assessment:</p> <p>West Highland Way – A more sustainable future (SB - National Park) Weigh Ahead (SMacD - Stirling Council and SO - STEP) Changes to Leny Falls (SB - National Park, SMacD - Stirling Council & LH - VisitScotland)</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>DJ noted that we have 2 meeting minutes to approve – 6 March 2019 and 19 June 2019.</p> <p>SW noted her name was missed from the list of who left the room before item 5.2 More than a Post Office and returned after item 5.3 Lower Station Yard Improvement Works, Crianlarich due to conflicts in both. Minutes of 6 March were proposed by SW and seconded by LH.</p> <p>Matters arising from 6 March 2019: AMK noted that Lower Station Yard were not successful is gaining their RTIF match funding but are working with Stirling Council on options.</p> <p>Minute from 19 June proposed by JL and seconded by SMacD.</p> <p>Matters arising from 19 June 2019: AMK advised Bowling have now confirmed match funding and an offer of grant for £250k has now been issued. Bowling have started on preparatory works.</p>	<p>MINUTE APPROVED</p> <p>MINUTE APPROVED</p>
<p>4. Process for assessing today's projects</p> <p>AMK noted that there are enough funds in the Rural Enterprise pot for today's projects but short in the Community pot so proposed a ranking system after projects have been heard. The Sustrans project has already been submitted to current round of funds for reallocation and we are awaiting the outcome. AMK noted approvals today will go to the central pot.</p>	
<p>5. Projects for Assessment</p> <p>5.1 West Highland Way – A more sustainable future</p> <p>SB left the room.</p>	



Funding Request

Applicant: Loch Lomond & National Park Authority	Total Project Cost: £ 70,000
Start Date: 01/11/19 Finish Date: 31/11/19	Eligible Project Costs: £ 70,000
Planning Permission: N/A	Total LEADER requested: £ 70,000
	Intervention rate: 100% (Inter-Scotland cooperation project split equally between FVL LAG, Argyll & Isles LAG & Highland LAG)
	£23,333 each LAG

CMcG presented this project to the LAG advising that the West Highland Way will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2020.

This project seeks to employ a full time project manager to deliver a year of business planning, commercial development and marketing activity towards sustainability of this long distance route.

The existing WHW Management Groups focus is on the maintenance and statutory requirements along the route and don't have the capacity or skill resources for marketing and developing the site, activity to date has been delivered at low scale by the National Park authority.

Funding from LEADER would allow them to address some of the key proposals that came from the 2017 review, namely governance, marketing and sustainability of route

CMcG referred to comments from scores advising that LLTNP are already underwriting the project and that they were turned down for EventScotland funding due to being deemed too small for national and international funding.

DJ thanked CMcG and asked the LAG for comments. LAG were supportive of project and happy to be lead LAG, but queried arts event mentioned throughout the project plan raising concerns of time required to organise an event, and could take over whole project. CMcG advised that event management is not part of LEADER officer responsibilities and will seek clarification in the form of a brief from LLTNP. AMK advised she received an email from applicant advising they plan to appoint someone internally to the tourism team at the NP in November who will be commissioning the event. LAG concerned about tight timeline.

LAG unanimously agreed to approve subject to specific condition

- clarity provided about the event element of the project – how is it going to be managed and funded.

AMK noted detail to be circulated to the LAG by email for approval. Adding that project is also subject to pre-approval check for Scottish Government and will be submitted to central pot.

SB returned.

APPROVED WITH SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

5.2 Weigh Ahead – Zero Waste Shop, Dunblane

SMacD stayed out of the room and SO left the room.



Applicant: Weigh CIC
(Rosie Hunter)

Start Date: 01/11/2019

Finish Date: 31/03/2020

Planning Permission:

Listed Building Planning Consent - In Progress with Stirling Council [expected to be straight forward]

Funding Request

Total Project Cost: £ 25,794.50

Eligible Project Costs: £25,794.50

Total LEADER requested: £12,897.25

Intervention rate: 50%

Match funding:

Firstport - £5,000 (C)

Dunblane BID - £500 (C)

Stirling Council Community Pride - £1,500 (C)

Braes of Doune Windfarm - £2,822.75 (TBC)

*E-Bike Grant - £3,074.50 (TBC)

*Weigh CIC to cover any unsuccessful applications from income

CMcG presented this project to the LAG advising that applicant ran a successful crowdfunding campaign raising £15,366 in 34 days. Crowdfunding money is being spent on internal refurbishing, plus purchasing the dispensers, scales and stock. LEADER funding is providing the added value enabling them to extend the basic offering and develop the business faster.

CMcG advised Stirling Council Planning have visited the shop and are happy for the proposed changes to the shop-front in line with listed building consent – formally a bank hence why the premises has added security features (high window, metal framework).

Applicant has received lots of buy in from local traders and already has offers to sponsor shelves which is a good demonstration of that buy-in.

DJ thanked CMcG and asked the LAG if they had any questions or comments. LAG thought it was good use of a vacant shop and in keeping with LDS. They had some queries about the use of the electric cargo bike and van. CMcG advised cargo bike was to allow deliveries to customers within 3 miles, the van isn't included in this application but an ambition for year 2 is to obtain a grant for an electric van to widen delivery area. LAG member liked that a store front will be restored and idea of connecting with the local school. LAG member queried why applicant isn't VAT registered. CMcG advised that they plan to become VAT registered, they just haven't done it yet. She added that applicant can retrospectively claim back VAT.

LAG agreed to approval with specific conditions:

- Planning consent being in place for the window
- Permission from landlord for changes to building
- Record to be kept of volunteer input and workshop events in first year
- Full match funding being confirmed
- Eligible costs to be net of VAT

SMacD and SO returned.

**APPROVED
WITH SPECIFIC
CONDITIONS**

5.3 Strathblane Community Council – Cycle Path



Funding Request

Applicant:
Strathblane Community
Development Trust

Total Project Cost: £ 52,440

Eligible Project Costs: £52,440

Start Date: 11th Nov 2019
Finish Date: 17th April 2020

Total LEADER requested: £17,066

Planning Permission:

Intervention rate: 32.54%

Approved with Conditions 28/08/19
Working with Stirling Council Roads
team to re-position the access for
cyclists.

Match funding:

- **Sustrans** - £25,868 + £2,006 (additional if funding secured from LEADER/CSET)
- **CSET** - £7,500

CMcG presented project to the LAG advising that Strathblane Community Development Trust have been working with Sustrans “Places for Everyone” funding programme and are currently at stage 5 (construction) of the process. To have Sustrans support for this stage, the Trust need to find match funding. CMcG displayed a map showing the gap in the route and its proximity to residential areas, school, allotments and the John Muir Way.

CMcG showed the LAG a revised signed path agreement with landowner with a minimum of 5 years lease which is the LEADER minimum. She added that Stirling Council Transport department are of the opinion that the proposed drop crossings are not required and don't support this element as this will impact on position and type of signs.

DJ thanked CMcG and asked the LAG if they had any questions or comments. LAG member with recent experience of cycle paths agreed with Planning/Roads regarding dropped kerbs. They queried if Sustrans have agreed to the change as from their recent experience this is a requirement which is easily overlooked? AMK suggested flagging up to Applicant and including it as a condition. LAG queried Match funding from CSET. CMcG advised we will find out on Friday (11 October 2019) if successful. LAG queried if 2014 wildlife survey was still relevant. CMcG advised that Trust are happy to do another survey but it will cost around £600 – LAG wondered if this could this be included in the grant? Another LAG member suggested that Planning department may have already done this by walking the route. Chair requested clarification if the survey or similar had been carried out by another body and if not, a new survey is carried out which will be included in the LEADER grant at the intervention rate (32.54%). Another LAG member raised the question of whether it is a strategic route for the area. Another LAG member agreed but liked that it was filling a gap linking strategic facilities within the village. LAG member queried if its good value for money considering it's only for 110 metres. CMcG advised cost it high because the land is very boggy and will need a lot of work. AMK noted that there are links with our LAG led cycle tourism project and the costs are on a par with other LEADER funded cycle paths and that cycle paths appear to be just very expensive to build.

LAG agreed to approve with specific conditions:

- Seeking clarity on status of 2014 Phase 1 survey to see if it is still current.
- If survey not current, LAG agrees to part fund cost of new survey
- If survey is greater than £600 then CSGNT may be able to undertake survey

**APPROVED
WITH SPECIFIC
CONDITIONS**

- Point to note on promotion of route is recommended. Also to ensure Sustrans is aware of design changes.

5.4 LEADER Legacy Project



Funding Request

Applicant: FVL LAG	Total Project Cost:	£17,165
Start Date: 12 Oct 2019	Eligible Project Costs:	£17,165
Finish Date: 30 Apr 2020	Total LEADER requested:	£17,165
As a LAG led project, subject to SG Pre-Approval	Intervention rate:	100%

AMK presented project to LAG noting it had previously been discussed at the June LAG meeting and a subgroup has met separately since. She explained that the project aims to prepare and support communities and businesses to help them get through this extended period of uncertainty facing rural areas with the imminent withdrawal of EU funding, currently on 31 October 2019, without knowing what will come next in terms of support for rural development. The idea of the subgroup is to convene a series of consultation events introduced by an inspirational video based on LEADER projects grouped under the five themes of Creating resilient and smart communities, Investing in sustainable actions, Preparing climate actions, Fostering partnership working and Social inclusion and addressing inequalities.

AMK reported that project scored well and comments all positive. Four consultants have been approached with two quotes received so far. Managed to bring costs down with a modest day rate. Currently awaiting approval from Scottish Government as it's a LAG led project.

DJ thanked AMK and asked the LAG if they had any questions or comments. LAG asked about the brief. AMK advised that the consultation, brochure and website brief had been uploaded to LARCs in documents – with the video brief to follow soon. LAG member queried whether SRUC were doing similar work? AMK advised that SRUC had been commissioned by Scottish Government to evaluate the lessons learnt of LEADER across Scotland and will run in parallel to our project if approved by the LAG.

LAG agreed to approve with standard conditions.

**APPROVED
WITH
STANDARD
CONDITIONS**

5.5 Dounans Conference Centre



Summary Funding Request

Applicant: Dounans Conference, Meeting and Event Venue	Total Project Cost: £62,916.68 Eligible Project Costs: £62,916.68 Total LEADER requested: £25,000
Start Date: 31 October 2019 Finish Date: 31 March 2020	Intervention rate: 39.6%
Planning Permission: n/a	Match funding: private funding confirmed from SOEC Ltd

NK presented to this project to the LAG advising LEADER have previously funded them for refurbishment of accommodation block. This project is to refurbish and upgrade the Hall at Dounans Outdoor Centre to create a new Conference, Meetings and Events (CME) venue. After great use over 80 years, the Hall is a rather tired and underused resource and urgently needs refurbishment. Proposal to upgrade to provide new CME functionality creating new income streams and attracting new target groups benefiting both Dounans and Aberfoyle.

NK advised no planning permission is required as it's replacing like for like. She added that Dounans have provided evidence of exceeding targets from their previous LEADER application.

DJ thanked NK and asked the LAG if they had any questions or comments. LAG considered adding specific conditions i.e. 2 year post award income level update, independent market/business plan and ensure toilets are accessible for all but then decided this would be too difficult to monitor beyond the end of the LEADER programme.

LAG agreed it will improve the overall site and liked that it catered for disabled group and offered respite.

LAG voted 8 to approve with standard conditions and 2 for specific conditions. LAG agreed to approve with standard conditions.

APPROVED WITH STANDARD CONDITIONS

6. Projects Requesting Changes

6.1 Leny Falls (procurement delay = focus on just car park for LEADER)

LH, SB & SMacD left the room.

AMK reminded the LAG of the issues the project had faced regarding not being able to install a road crossing across the A84 to link the originally planned Leny Falls car park to the walkway for safety reasons. The applicant had come back to the LAG at the last LAG meeting in June with their idea to use a different carpark at Bochastle and to include the bridge in the LEADER project but without the planning permission, landowner consent or costings. LAG had decided not to agree the changes until at least the planning permission and detailed costings were known later this year.

More recently the applicant had advised AMK of major procurement delays which would put the project outwith the LEADER awarding period. In a final attempt to

find a way of supporting the project AMK had suggested separating out the car park works which the applicant thought could be procured relatively quickly. Car park would also provide new access to Ben Ledi. Applicant proposing to increase Bochastle car park capacity from 14 spaces to 29 spaces. As the LAG had previously awarded £100k to the project, and consultants costings for carpark are approximately £126k, the applicant is asking LAG if they can keep grant of £100k giving an intervention rate of approx. 80%. These costs are approximate as the work has not yet gone out to tender.

AMK asked the LAG for their thoughts - LAG queried if carpark was necessary and what would happen if the bridge and walkway didn't proceed? AMK advised the applicant has confirmed that they are committed to the project and they have match funding for the rest of the project. LAG were uncomfortable with change and costings and felt they didn't recognise the project so requested coming back with a new fully completed application form and project plan. In response to a question about the process, AMK advised if the project were rejected FVL LEADER would have to return the money to the Scottish Government and then bid from the central pot. LAG member queried how much originally was going to fund the carpark and could we fund at that rate?

LAG agreed for applicant to come back to LAG in November with tendered costings for the car park, along with a revised application form, project plan and change request form.

AMK noted LAG will rank projects at the end of the meeting and take amount as per Bowling project.

LH, SB & SMacD returned.

**APPLICANT TO
PROVIDE
MORE
INFORMATION**

6.2 #WildWonders (addition of Wild Food Festival website)

NK reported the Wild Wonders event in September went well with 545 visitors (this figure includes stallholders and volunteers). All stallholders were asked to do one paid event and one free event. NK noted the short lead in time for the first festival and hopes now established, that event in May will be bigger and better. Final value for ticket sales excluding the workshop bookings and lunch books were £1000 pre sales and £388 on the day. Both are net and inclusive of ticket service commission.

Responses from 50 questionnaires showed 50% lived locally, 100% came specifically for the festival, 5% were staying overnight, 55% beginner foragers and 100% interested in coming back next year.

AMK added that she had been worried that people would struggle to find the venue given that Cardross Estate is so tucked away but no one reported issues. NK noted they required a license for signage which is why there were no signs outside the estate.

One of the issues reported in the feedback was that using the Foraging Fortnight website to host all the information about the festival and booking information had caused a lot of confusion as they layout of the website was not that of an event website and it looked like all events were fully booked, so not fit for purpose.

<p>NK requested and addition to the project for a new Wild Food Festival website. NK has gone out for quotes and received 2 so far. Prices range from £2,5k to £4k depending on ticketing requirements. The goal is for someone to take over the running of the festival and the website as a package, and NK advised she already has some warm leads after the event. LAG were pleased to hear this.</p> <p>LAG approved request for up to £4k for website.</p>	<p>APPROVED - UP TO £4K</p>
<p>6.3 Cycle Tourism (addition of Dukes Weekender Legacy)</p> <p>JC requested an addition to the project due to the success of the Dukes Weekender and the reputation of Aberfoyle for gravel riding ‘Gravelfoyle’ and previous discussions about how best to ensure there is a legacy to our support of the event so far. JC has been in regular contact with the organisers and an informal group of cycle people in the area and they have suggested some waymarked and promoted gravel routes in the forest as a legacy. If the LAG is still happy to be the financial lead, the group can pull in £8k from Forestry and Land Scotland and LLTTNPA as well as having them installed by F&LS. The routes would use existing forestry roads – 3 routes around Loch Ard have been scoped and Forestry and Land Scotland are on board and working on a Memorandum of Understanding which should be complete by the end of the month. Two key elements are the signage posts and marketing.</p> <p>JC has already received some quotes - £28k – looking for £20k from LEADER, Forestry and Land Scotland £3k along with in kind support and remaining £5k from LLTNP (match funding still to be confirmed). He added the potential for the area is significant and already have the locals on board.</p> <p>DJ thanked JC and asked if the LAG had any comments or questions. A LAG member queried which pot the money would come from? AMK advised it could either be the community pot (depending on ranking at end of meeting) or central pot. LAG queried timescales? JC advised next Summer. Stirling Council queried if it could be earlier as they might be able to add some funds to the project? JC advised they have a subgroup meeting arranged for the end of the month and will discuss then.</p> <p>The request was agreed to support the development of Aberfoyle gravel trails with up to £20K of support (for infrastructure and marketing).</p> <p>LAG requires written confirmation from partners; Forestry and Land Scotland and LLTNP of their respective financial contributions by the end of Nov 2019 and the purchase of infrastructure posts/signage/trail boards is completed by the end of March 2020.</p> <p>Forestry and Land Scotland to confirm timelines for the installation of infrastructure (Ideally before the summer 2020).</p>	<p>REQUEST AGREED</p>
<p>7. Update from LAG Strategic Projects</p> <p>7.1 Community Broadband & Smart Villages</p>	

<p>SM advised that Rural Broadband has been nominated for two awards – COSLA Excellence Awards and INCA Gold Awards.</p> <p>SM provided an update advising 5 projects are now built and providing a superfast service, 1 project is currently in construction, 5 communities are at the design stage and 7 communities exploring solutions.</p> <p>SM reported Smart Villages project is intended to provide an impulse for making rural areas fit for the future. With FVL LEADER area we wish the project to be the catalyst for the creation of smart villages/rural digital hubs which will enable the Community to developing new solution for the supply of local goods, communications, learning, health & Government.</p> <p>SM noted Trans-National meeting is planned for 20 & 21 November with 46 participants coming from Finland, Latvia, Greece, Ireland and Spain. SM then ran through the itinerary for the event. Project visits still need to be confirmed although SM has been discussing this with AMK as most visits will be to LEADER projects.</p> <p>SM asked if LAG had any ideas for entertainment for the visitor to please get in touch. NK noted that when her transnational partners came they loved local traditional music and that maybe a ceilidh would work? AMK encourage LAG members and other interested parties to attend the event. Anyone interested should get in touch with Shaun.</p>	
<p>7.2 Cycle Tourism</p> <p>JC advised that as part of the promotion of ebike tourism the project had purchased an e-bike branded with #ebike smile and FVL LEADER. The idea is for the bike to be seen out and about as much as possible and at events.</p> <p>Dukes Weekender took place on 7 & 8 September 2019, it increased number of race participants from 250 last year to 450 this year. Locals have got into the spirit and turned up to support on the day along with cafes staying open and creating special menus. JC stated FVL LEADER contributed £1,000 of sponsorship towards a pumptrack which proved popular with all ages as shown on the photos on screen.</p> <p>JC has been working on content for the new Sustrans website featuring key cycling routes. At present only Caledonian Way is on the website but JC is working on NCN7 (Lochs and Glens). JC has been working with Sustrans and Jim Riach from the Countryside Trust to develop all ability access route for disabled riders i.e. avoiding gates, pinch point at Callander Forest Lodge Café, etc.</p> <p>JC attended Eurobike in Germany in September which is the largest tradeshow for bikes. Travel talks took place on trade days. This was to scope out the event and to plan for taking a stand at next year’s event, along with the Sustrans project participants.</p> <p>DJ thanked JC for the update and opened up for questions and comments. LAG member queried the outcome of the Dukes Weekender gold package tour highlighted after last year’s event by predecessor, Jane Beaton. JC to investigate and report back to next meeting.</p>	<p>Action: JC</p>

<p>7.3 FVL Food Festival</p> <p>AMK reported AR is on a training course and unable to attend today's LAG meeting. AMK circulated leaflet produced for the Forth Valley Food Festival which starts on 11 October at 12 different locations with 46 opportunities to experience local food and supporting 39 local food businesses. AMK urged LAG to help spread the word through their social media channels.</p> <p>AMK stated that the first business network in June had to be cancelled and will now take place November.</p>	<p>Action: AR</p>
<p>8. Project Allocations & Ranking of Today's Decisions</p> <p>AMK referred back to the budget allocation sheet she circulated before the meeting, advising there is merit in overcommitting, typically around 10% due to project underspends. She added due to Brexit we have been told we won't be able to move money in projects i.e. underspends after December 2019.</p> <p>AMK noted Rural Enterprise pot is only slightly overcommitted (-£517) now that Weigh Ahead and Dounans Conference Centre projects have been approved but will easily make this up from project underspends. West Highland Way project will go to the Central pot.</p> <p>AMK asked the LAG to rank the LEADER Legacy and Strathblane Cycle Path projects along with Wild Wonders and Cycle Tourism change requests.</p> <p>After some discussion the ranking decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LEADER Legacy Project 2. Wild Wonders Change Request 3. Cycle Tourism Change Request 4. Strathblane Cycle Path. 	
<p>9. AOCB</p> <p>AMK and BC attended the celebration event for the Maid of Loch on Monday, 7 October. BC noted thought it looked stunning. Engines were running and 2 function rooms available for hire for weddings, etc. She noted they still have lots to do. LAG discussed the funding for the future for the project acknowledging the high level of competition for Heritage Lottery Funding but thought they should continue with their plans to apply as there is no other obvious funder on the horizon.</p> <p>On a different not, AMK advised she's received news that LAG member Janice Kennedy is not here today as she is undergoing treatment. The LAG wished her well and asked if AMK would send a card and gift.</p>	<p>Action: AMK</p>
<p>10. Date of next Meeting</p>	

<p>Date of Next Meeting will be 4 December 2019 at 10am – possibly at the Robertson Trust building in Stirling AMK suggested a Christmas lunch after the meeting or for sandwiches to brought in. She asked member to let her know what they would prefer?</p> <p><i>The venue for the meeting on 4 December has since been confirmed as the Tolbooth in Stirling. (Some) Parking is available at the Old Town Jail.</i></p>	<p>Action: All</p>
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