

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING

Tolbooth Attic

4 December 2019

10 am – 12.45 pm

Minutes

Present:

Douglas Johnston	Community, Stirlingshire (Chair - Community)
Steve MacDonald	Stirling Council - Agency
Fiona Jackson	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
Theresa Correia	Scottish Enterprise - Agency
Rory McLeod	Community and Business
Anthea Coulter	Community, Clackmannanshire TSI

Apologies:

Julie Haslam	Community, Clackmannanshire TSI
Nikki Kenn	LEADER Development Officer
Ashley Robinson	FVL Local Food & Drink Co-ordinator

In Attendance:

Anne-Michelle Ketteridge	LEADER Programme Manager
Carolyn McGill	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 requested a round of introductions for the benefit of TC who was attending in place of JK and AT who was attending in place of JMcG who is on maternity leave. All apologies were noted as above.	
2. Quorum and Conflicts of Interest DJ asked AMK if the meeting was quorate. She confirmed the LAG meeting was quorate. AMK reported only one project with conflicts of interest - Leny Falls Bochastle Car Park – FJ National Park, SMacD Stirling Council, LH VisitScotland and RMcL as representative of owner of adjacent land.	

<p>3. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>DJ asked if anyone had any comments in relation to the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting in 9 October 2019. SW noted that JC had been missed from the list of attendees of the previous minute.</p> <p>Minutes were proposed by LH and seconded by JL.</p> <p>In response to Matters Arising, AMK advised that Strathblane Community Council Cycle Path project were happy to carry out an updated wildlife survey at their own cost to allow project to progress.</p> <p>AMK noted that Community Broadband and Foraging Fortnight projects were both successful in receiving funds from the central pot of underspent funds from elsewhere - projects were previously approved by LAG by written procedure.</p>	
<p>4. Recap of LAG Timelines, Funds Available and Maximising Allocations</p> <p>AMK ran through the LAG timelines –</p> <p>31 December 2019 last commitments to be made (projects with outstanding conditions will lose funding) 31 October 2020 – last date projects can spend money 31 December 2020 – last date LAG can pay projects 31 March 2021 – last date LAG can submit claims to Scottish Government.</p> <p>AMK noted two glamping projects at risk of losing funding due to still waiting on planning permission. Gartness Glamping was rejected by National Park planning department, they have appealed the decision but may not get an answer in time. They changed location to apply to Stirling Council planning but still awaiting a decision. Still no timescale on Old Manse Glamping who submitted their planning application in August.</p> <p>AMK advised last date to reallocate underspends is 31 December 2019. Discussion at the most recent Strategic Group concluded that that it would be prudent to over commit. AMK flagged up that if today’s projects were approved there would be an overcommitment which Stirling Council would need to agree to underwrite, even though it was highly likely other projects would underspend to absorb that overcommitment.</p> <p>The Strategic Group had recommended putting in place a mechanism for delegated authority for allocating additional funds to existing projects that show a need for additional funds from the declared underspends of other projects - with the purpose of maximising use of funds to the area. Members agreed delegation to Chair(s) and Programme Manager for project re-allocation before the last date by which funds can be committed.</p>	<p><u>Delegated Authority Agreed</u></p>
<p>5. Projects for Assessment</p>	

5.1 Kilmaronock Old Kirk



Applicant:
Kilmaronock Old Kirk Trust

Start Date: April 2020
Finish Date: September 2020

Planning Permission:

On-going discussion with planning Authorities – formal applications pending transfer of asset from Church of Scotland to Trust – Feb/ March 2020

Funding Request

Total Project Cost: £ 111,748

Eligible Project Costs: £111,748

Total LEADER requested: £56,748

Intervention rate: %

Match funding:

- Fraser Foundation £55,000 – Confirmed
- (Land Fund confirmed for 90% towards purchase)

CMcG presented this project to the LAG advising that we have already funded the feasibility study and business plan. Scores averaged at 5.58 and decisions 4 standard conditions, 3 specific conditions and 3 rejected. Specific condition being confirmation of transfer of ownership and clarification over whether planning permission and building warrants were required.

DJ thanked CMcG and requested questions and comments from LAG members. LAG members who rejected project felt it was too reliant on volunteers and questioned if there was a demand for it. Others thought making a building wind and water tight in the hope of more could be done in the future seemed unambitious and disconnected from other heritage and cultural activity or facilities in the area. The decision not to include a café made the whole proposal less likely to be viable on an ongoing basis. It was noted that there was a risk that the sale and permission would not happen within the LEADER timescale given the delays experienced by other projects. It was also noted that as it's no longer a church it's not eligible for the planning and building Ecclesiastical Exemption. Questions were also asked about equalities and accessibility as there didn't seem to be any evidence of making the facility accessible and inclusive for all.

LAG members voted to reject project on the basis that there were too many unanswered questions and there would not be enough time to complete a more comprehensive proposal that would meet the LEADER timescales.

Project Rejected

5.2 Arcadia Sculpture Park, Drymen



Applicant:
Rob & Susan Mulholland
[R Mulholland Ltd.]

Start Date: Dec 2019
Finish Date: 30th April 2020

Planning Permission:

Approved 27/11/19



Funding Request

Total Project Cost: £ 50,873

Eligible Project Costs: £ 50,873

Total LEADER requested: £ 25,000

Intervention rate: 49.14%

Match funding:

Business Savings A/C - £ 25,843.00

<p>CMcG presented project to LAG advising that match funding and planning are already in place. She noted that disabled access pods will be in the next phase – current phase not accessible due to location. She added that applicant is keen to make the site as inclusive as possible.</p> <p>CMcG noted project scored well with average scores of 6.67 and 7 approved standard conditions and 3 with specific conditions.</p> <p>DJ thanked CMcG and asked LAG for comments. LAG members thought the proposal very innovative and would be an attractor to the area as the applicant is well known for the quality of his sculpting work. A LAG member queried the removal of the man in the water sculpture at Loch Earn. CMcG advised that it wasn't the applicant that removed the sculpture. It was the hotel owner sold the hotel and took the sculpture with him. She advised that applicant is looking to reinstall it for the community. LAG member queried free bike hire with regards to insurance – would need to be a more formal. Another LAG member thought it the overnight charge would be too high for those walking the West Highland Way, although noted that that would not be the main market for the accommodation. LAG asked about the design and CMcG explained that applicant has had to change the design substantially to obtain planning permission and had worked very closely with the planners at the National Park.</p> <p>LAG unanimously voted to approval project with condition to have at least one day per year open to the public at no charge.</p>	<p><u>Approved</u> <u>subject to</u> <u>opening at</u> <u>least one day</u> <u>per year to</u> <u>public free of</u> <u>charge</u></p>
<p>5.3 Leny Falls Bochastle Car Park</p> <p>SMacD, LH, FJ & RMcL left the room</p> <p>This is a resubmitted application following a requirement to change the original project approved by the LAG as the applicant had been told they would not get planning permission to put a crossing across the main road. A subsequent issue was an expected delay in putting out the contract of works to tender which would put the original project out of the timescale of LEADER. For this reason, the applicant has procured the car park works separately in the hope that the LAG might allow them to continue with the same contribution to the overall project, but only use it towards the new car park at Bochastle.</p> <p>AMK presented project to the LAG acknowledging that Bochastle car park was second choice, but has other benefits as it also gives access to Ben Ledi, but its on the same side of the road so removes the a need for a crossing.</p> <p>LAG members noted that it is a well used car park and extra spaces would be good for the area, and it will become a heritage location in itself, although there was some discussion over whether spending £100k on a car park is good value for money. There were also some concerns over the management of the project, given all the delays and changes to date. Overall, it was agreed that the car park is the catalyst for making the rest of the project happen, and that a lot of the problems so far were symptoms of how the HLF funding worked as it encourages communities to go ahead with projects before a lot of the detail is yet known. It was noted, and welcomed, that the applicant intends to continue with the walkway and bridge</p>	

<p>which was reassuring. AMK was asked what would happen to the funding already ring-fenced for the project if this change wasn't approved. She advised that as there were no other projects at a stage to use the funding it is likely the funds would be lost from the area.</p> <p>After further discussion, the LAG voted to approve project with condition that applicant provide detail on how project will be managed and a reporting structure.</p> <p>SMacD, LH, FJ & RMcL returned.</p>	<p><u>Project approved subject to detail being provided on how delivery of project will be managed and a reporting structure to be provided.</u></p>
<p>6. Projects Requesting Changes</p> <p>There are none.</p>	
<p>7. Update from LAG Strategic Projects</p> <p>7.1 LEADER Legacy Project</p> <p>AMK advised Nikki Soutar Associates have been appointed to work on the celebration brochure, website and consultation events, which will be held in 2020. She added Paul Saunders is working on inspirational video footage based on interviews with LEADER projects which will be used for the consultations events and was able to show the LAG some first clips of the interviews filmed so far.</p> <p>The steering group had come up with 5 themes for the video, all based on UN sustainable development goals and issues most relevant to our area. Each interviewee is being asked how their project has reflected the theme in some way.</p> <p>RMcL is going to introduce the video and DJ will wrap up with next steps.</p>	
<p>7.2 Community Broadband & Smart Villages</p> <p>SM reported transnational Smart Villages event took place on 20 and 21 November and went very well. 74 people attended event from 9 countries, Scottish Rural Network, Scottish Rural College, Welsh Government, Scottish Government and community members. As well as conference, attendees enjoyed a social evening and study visits. SM noted that event generated £25k for the local area.</p> <p>SM thanked AMK, CMcG and CP for their help with the event.</p> <p>LAG member queried if event was publicised. SM replied that the event was mainly for the partner areas from the different countries, but he had widened the invites to anyone on his broadband forum list. He also advised that a press release will be going out soon. Another LAG member asked if anyone from Clackmannanshire was invited. SM advised Clackmannan Development Trust were invited but didn't attend.</p>	
<p>7.3 Cycle Tourism</p>	

<p>JC updated the LAG on his current projects i.e. Producing NCN7 content for new VisitScotland/Sustrans website, day trip A3 tear off PDFs, business engagement on NCR7, planning for learning journey Eurobike and Aberfoyle Developments.</p> <p>JC thanked BC for her help with riding routes, writing and providing pictures.</p> <p>Dukes Weekender will take place the weekend of 12/13 September 2020. Currently in the process of setting up as a social enterprise.</p>	
<p>7.4 FVL Food Festival</p> <p>AMK reported AR not in attendance today but has provided an update:</p> <p>Forth Valley Food Festival – over 15,000 visitors during festival (majority at Arnprior Pumpkins, seasonal products saw a 20% increase, Stirling Neighbourhood saw an increase of 30% from new customers during festival, 39 businesses supported. Festival had great coverage thanks to campaign by Stirling PR.</p> <p>Local food network held on 12 November 2019 with over 20 people attending, including livestock farmers, growers, cafes, restaurants, brewery, dairy, etc.</p> <p>Sustainable Food Places (previously known as Sustainable Food Cities) event took place on 24 October 2019 with over 30 people in attendance from 6 regions along with representatives from SFC UK, Nourish Scotland, NHS Scotland and Soil Association Scotland.</p> <p>LAG member queried if AR has linked up with Rhonda Archibald (Health Improvement at NHS). AMK to pass contact to AR. Another LAG member queried Bronze status. AMK replied that you have to apply for a bronze before you can apply for a silver.</p>	
<p>8. LAG Activities in 2020</p> <p>AMK noted 3 big things happening next year which will involve everyone.</p> <p>8.1 LEADER Legacy Project</p> <p>The legacy project will provide the building blocks of a future strategy. It's hoped that LAG members will contribute to consultation and attend some of the events.</p> <p>In terms of legacy, DJ added that he attends Chairs Group with other LAG Chairs. Of late, concern has been about the absence of detail on what will happen after the current LEADER programme. The group have tried to get information from the Scottish Government as there needs to be something in place to bridge gap but no-one has thought of a mechanism to do that. There is a real worry about loss of knowledge, skills, and volunteer commitment from staff and LAG members. DJ is working on a letter to Fergus Ewing on how to bridge gap with limited resources to get the message across that LEADER is vital.</p> <p>However the LAG's legacy project will really help to make a case as to why LEADER is so important for rural Scotland.</p>	

<p>8.2 Delivery of LAG Led Projects</p> <p>AMK noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Smart Villages events ‘learning journeys’ next year in Greece, Latvia and Finland – looking for interested participants • Eurobike in Germany – working with Sustrans to agree criteria on how to select who to take • Crowdfunding – helping to spread the word. AT offered to help organise an event in CTSI. 17 completed campaigns in FVL area – of all the participating areas, FVL is the most successful – although this could be down to Stirling Council offering up to £2.5k to some projects. • The Wild Food festival will be taking place again on 9th May at Cardross so it would be really great for LAG members to spread the word and ideally attend, taking part in some of the workshops, or even volunteer. Nikki is the person to contact for more details. • She is hopeful there will be another FV Food Festival in October, even without Ashley in post. But any way of encouraging more food producers – or organisations with an interest in food - to participate or related family friendly activities would be great. 	
<p>8.3 Programme/Project Monitoring</p> <p>Monitoring what the programme has achieved – in terms of numbers and also case studies as this will also feed into what happens next.</p>	
<p>9. AOCB</p> <p>It was noted that there a rural transport consultation has been issued and queried if we should respond as individuals or a group? It was felt that time was probably too tight for a LAG response, but members were encouraged to respond as individuals.</p>	
<p>10. Date of next Meeting – March 2020</p> <p>Date of next meeting will be in early March 2020. Venue TBC</p>	