

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING

Dumyat Community Centre

28 June 2017

10am - 12.30pm

Minutes

Present:

<i>Peter Sunderland</i>	<i>Business and Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Kyle Barrie</i>	<i>Stirling Council - Agency</i>
<i>Bridget Clark</i>	<i>Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Mike Ewart</i>	<i>Land Management, Central Scotland Green Network Trust - Community</i>
<i>Janice Kennedy</i>	<i>Scottish Enterprise - Agency</i>
<i>Carolyn McGill</i>	<i>Clackmannanshire Council - Agency</i>
<i>Celia Burn</i>	<i>Community, West Dunbartonshire</i>
<i>Debbie Spray</i>	<i>Scottish Natural Heritage - Agency</i>
<i>Julie McGrath</i>	<i>Community, Clackmannanshire TSi</i>

Apologies:

<i>Brian McColgan</i>	<i>West Dunbartonshire Council - Agency</i>
<i>Douglas Johnston</i>	<i>Community, Stirlingshire (Chairing the Meeting)</i>
<i>John Armstrong</i>	<i>Community, Stirlingshire</i>
<i>Tony Teasdale</i>	<i>Community, Rural Stirling Housing Association</i>
<i>Colin Tennant</i>	<i>Historic Environment Scotland - Agency</i>
<i>Jason Clark</i>	<i>Business, Stirling Enterprise Park</i>
<i>Susan Brooks</i>	<i>Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency</i>
<i>Mike Strachan</i>	<i>Forestry Commission Scotland - Agency</i>
<i>Lynn Hamilton</i>	<i>VisitScotland - Agency</i>

In Attendance:

<i>Anne-Michelle Ketteridge</i>	<i>LEADER Programme Manager</i>
<i>Sarah Phillips</i>	<i>LEADER Development Officer</i>
<i>Ashley Robinson</i>	<i>LEADER Development Officer</i>
<i>Irene Watterson</i>	<i>LEADER Claims Officer</i>

Guests:

<i>Neil Ramsay</i>	<i>Tyne & Esk LEADER Programme Manager</i>
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	ACTIONS
<p>1. Welcome, Sederunt and Minutes of last meeting</p> <p>PS welcomed everyone thanked everyone for coming. He noted apologies from JC, BMcC, DJ, JA, TT, SB, MS and LH. As Debbie Spray is replacing Isla Campbell for her maternity leave, PS asked Members to carry out a round the table introduction.</p> <p>He noted the resignation from the LAG from Tony Teasdale due to competing work demands, thanking him in his absence for the work he had done to date in supporting the LAG.</p> <p>PS asked AMK if the meeting was quorate. She confirmed that it was.</p> <p>2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>PS asked if anyone had any issues in relation to the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting in March. No-one had any issues and the Minutes were proposed by KB and seconded by JMcG.</p> <p>PS asked AMK to give to give an update on matters arising. AMK asked the LAG if the amendments to the score sheet worked as requested. It was noted that only the scores were available to the members, not the comments. AMK to ask website designer to amend this.</p> <p>AMK also advised that Scot Govt had approved the updated business plan submitted following the last meeting.</p> <p>PS briefly spoke about the recent LAG Chairs meeting he had attended, in the context of Brexit looming, saying that the money that FVL has in the pot is guaranteed for now but he has an inclination that the LAG should award as many projects as possible and as quickly and efficiently as possible, as Scot Govt could opt for other LEADER areas who have allocated more of their budget, monies from areas who haven't.</p> <p>PS advised that Ayrshire LEADER increased their intervention rate 90% and has now fully allocated their budget for community projects, and although PS would not be comfortable with giving 100%, he suggested the LAG may want to consider raising the intervention rate for Applicants who are struggling to get match funding for their projects.</p> <p>PS also suggested that there is a good opportunity here for LAG-led projects coming to the fore.</p>	<p>ACTION: AMK</p>

PS said that FVL's strength was not only the cash available for projects but also the very good team working with Applicants. PS advised that the Strategy Sub-Group is looking at LAG-led projects in more depth. He also said that the Cabinet Secretary is now looking at the post-Brexit situation and how best it would be to invest into the rural economy; looking at other businesses along with farming businesses. A Council for Rural Advisors has just been set up to advise the Cabinet Secretary and the LAG Chairs have asked for a seat on this Council.

3. Projects for Discussion and Decision

AMK advised there are no conflicts of interest from the Members in attendance for the projects being assessed today.

3.1 Loch Lomond Coffee

SP presented this project to the Members explaining that Lomond Developments want to establish Loch Lomond's first coffee roasting facility, creating a premium roasted coffee bean product to be served in coffee shops and in retail bags. The product will be branded as Loch Lomond Coffee. The project would fit well with the LAG's food and drink priority.

The total project cost is £50,325 and are looking for £25,000 from FVL. The Applicant confirms that Lomond Developments is using its own funds to match fund this project.

PS thanked Sarah and asked Members if there were any questions.

JK advised that it was Scot Enterprise who had suggested approaching LEADER, agreeing that these family run businesses are bringing visitors to the Loch Lomond area and are working towards keeping visitors there for longer, which is beneficial for this area.

A question was asked about whether the applicant really needed the money as it was related to a seemingly very successful business - The Oak Tree Inn.

This was discussed at length and SP advised that the bank had told the applicant they were at the maximum for their bank loan facility.

A question was asked about the current status of the Pontoon project which had previously been approved by the LAG. AMK

informed the LAG that the Pontoon project has now had the lease and sub-lease agreed so this project should press ahead very soon.

Everyone liked the idea of the link with the High Schools for sourcing trainees, and liked the circular nature of the local economy with this kind of project - making it more sustainable environmentally. It was also noted that people will travel a great distance for a good cup of coffee.

The LAG agreed to approve this project subject to the applicant working with the local high schools to recruit the trainees locally. An updated VAT document should also be requested.

3.2 Wester Third Kota Cabins/Glamping

SP presented this project to the Members explaining that Wester Third Farm is a dairy farm situated just outside Gartmore and would like to diversify into the glamping sector. The Applicant envisages visitors who stay would be looking for a family-friendly and farm- friendly tourism experience.

SP displayed photographs of the structures whereby each booking would have their own hot-tub and private BBQ. SR displayed a site map showing the Kotas and SP confirmed that match funding would be from a bank loan which has been confirmed. SP also confirmed that planning permission is in place and the applicant is going through acquiring a caravan licence at the moment. SP informed the LAG that two part-time posts would be put in place for ground maintenance and the cleaning of the Kotas.

The Members discussed this application and thought it was a robust and thorough application, demonstrating good value for money for the area and for the job creation, however the LAG asked if any of the Kotas were equipped for disabled visitors. SP said that she had asked this question as currently there is no disabled access to the three Kotas proposed as don't lend themselves to disabled access.

The LAG would like to ascertain the reasons/justifications as to why the Kotas could not have disabled access.

Members asked about the water quality and dealing with the waste water. SP explained that flooding had been discussed with SEPA and this would not have a direct impact on the Kotas. Also, that the applicant has no other option than using a septic tank as Scottish Water says there is no more capacity at the treatment works for the Kotas to be connected to the public

**PROJECT
APPROVED
SUBJECT TO
SPECIFIC
CONDITIONS**

sewers/draining. SNH confirmed that they did not expect there to be any negative impact on the nearby SSSIs or SACs.

The Members discussed further and agreed that BC and CB are the LAG's delegated authority to explore the disabled access question further, and check that the applicant's response was adequate for the LAG's purposes and agreed that this project would be approved on condition that the applicant is to consider if they can provide disabled access to at least one of the Kotas and that evidence from SEPA is provided regarding the waste water treatment complying with their requirements.

4. Feedback from Sub-Groups

AMK informed the Members that there are currently just two sub-groups, which are Strategic Activity Group and the Cycle Tourism Group. There is also a steering group for the Food and Drink project, membership of which is wider than just LAG members. AR will cover more of this in her presentation.

The Strategic Activity Group has been looking at the Eols submitted - now up to 96 Expressions of Interest received, so no shortage of interest in the area. The Strategic Activity Group is looking to see more projects being LAG-led, one of which is a cycle tourism project which is meeting this afternoon to discuss and scope out a cycling tourism project. They have also been discussing a LAG-led project for a Community Broadband Officer with Stirling Council, possibly both coming to the next LAG meeting.

5. LAG Food and Drink Co-Ordinator

AR gave a presentation in her new role as Local Food and Drink Co-ordinator

AR reminded the Members of the aims of the project, which are to have more local food - more producers, more local food businesses and more food outlets, done in a way that makes it accessible to everyone, getting everyone who has a stake in food to start talking to each other, working with each other, all working towards the same goal of making Stirlingshire a good region for good food - all having a common vision to make this work.

One of her first activities has been to help deliver the Stirling Food Summit on 20 and 21 May. The Summit was split into a strategic day on the Friday and a Community Day on the Saturday.

**PROJECT
APPROVED WITH
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**ACTION: CYCLE
TOURISM GROUP**

Both days were well attended and was a great opportunity to let people know and get initial input to the local food and drink strategy work. A number of LAG members had also attended and the consensus round the table was that it had been a very good event.

AR also mentioned some of the strategic connections she had been making through attendance at events such as a conference on Sustainable Food Cities. AR went on to say that there already some good models to work from, lots of places to learn from and also a lot to build on.

AR said that if anyone wanted to join the steering group, or get more information about the project to contact her.

PS thanked AR for her update.

KB Left the Meeting

6. Project Allocations and Projects Requiring LAG Attention

AMK handed out the Project Allocations Update and talked the Members through the different areas of it, highlighting that prior to today's allocations £550,777 had already been allocated which is 26% of the budget. This is broken down with community projects being allocated £400,637 (33% of the community pot), Rural Enterprise £81,101 (29% of the enterprise pot), Farm Diversification £62,574 (23% of the pot) and Co-Operation Project £6,465 (2% of the co-operation pot).

In terms of projects requiring LAG attention, going through the list, the **Tyndrum to Crianlarich Path** is now completed and has their official opening on 25 July. She asked if anyone would like to attend. BC volunteered to attend.

A number of projects have been delayed and need to request the LAG's permission to delay the start of their project by a further three months.

This includes the **Balquhiddier Broadband Project** which has been delayed however they are now finalising discussions with Community Broadband Scotland and Stirling Council and we are just awaiting an update on the start date for the project manager role.

The Japanese Garden has been delayed in getting match funding, only securing £5,000 to date with another funder giving their decision in September.

ACTION: BC

The project has also just found out that a road survey is now required to finalise their planning permission.

Dounans are in the process of changing banks and are waiting for this to go through before securing their bank loan.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the **Balmaha Pontoon** should now go ahead as the Lease and sub-lease have been sorted out and should be signed next week.

Arnprior Glamping and Pool have not yet applied for their planning permission.

They have been advised that as tenant farmers, there is a special form for the landlord to sign to approve the diversification on the farm. This has held up the project by 6 - 8 months.

AMK recommended that all five projects have their offers of grant extended for a further three months. The LAG agreed to extend the offers of grant for a further three months for the five projects listed.

**AGREED: A
FURTHER 3
MONTHS FOR
PROJECTS TO
START**

7. Local Area Update - Menstrie and surrounds

AMK informed the Members that the LAG's former Development Officer, Neil Ramsay, had agreed to come along to the meeting and give a brief update on Menstrie and surrounding area as he has lived in Menstrie for a number of years.

PS welcomed NR and invited him to take the floor.

NR said that Menstrie is a wee town of two halves with the older housing built in the 70's on one side of the town and the newer houses built in 2007. Menstrie is home to a lot of heritage including Menstrie Castle, a beautiful Community Garden, the Nova Scotia Park, the story of the fox boy, and of course, the Forge café (a LEADER project in the last Programme). There area also some good cycle routes around the area offering some great circular bike rides. Menstrie has a new Community Action Plan where the feedback/questionnaire from 400 households was received.

NR said that Menstrie has a strong link with Poland as after the war, a lot of Polish displaced persons were welcomed. Today there are second and third generation Polish in the town and the EU Flag flies with pride.

From the economic perspective CMcG said that Diageo are a major employer in the area with their site at Cambus being the largest of their properties. They have also invested £1.5M into the biggest archive of whisky in the World and have a museum for the whisky and an online video archive. CMcG handed round a summary of the economic story of Menstrie.

NR said that Menstrie was rated one of the most attractive postcode areas to live in Scotland.

As the mining and textile industries declined, Menstrie became a commuter dormitory, spreading over the adjacent farmland with a growing population.

PS thanked NR and CMcG for their area update.

8. AOCB

AMK advised that there is a plan afoot for LEADER to organise a public event on rural community funding post-Brexit that she is helping to organise (with others). She asked if any of the Members would also like to be involved, to let her know.

9. News of Another LEADER Area (Tyne & Esk)

NR advised that they have a similar pattern of many Eols but not many coming through as applications. They are keen to do a co-operation project and mentioned an up and coming Co-Operation Project for the John Muir Way. ME confirmed an EOI will be submitted soon.

10. Date of Next Meeting - 27 September 2017

The date of the next meeting will be 27 September and held in the W Dunbartonshire area. IW will get back to Members once firm arrangements have been made.