

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING

Kilmarnock Millennium Hall, Gartocharn

3 October 2018

10 am – 1 pm

Minutes

Present:

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| 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 |
| Lynne Cooper | Scottish Enterprise - Agency |
| Jim Livingstone | Clackmannanshire Council - Agency |
| Bridget Clark | Community, Stirlingshire |
| Brian McColgan | West Dunbartonshire Council - Agency |
| Mike Ewart | Community, Central Scotland Green Network Trust |
| Sue Wyllie | Community, Stirlingshire |
| Jason Clark | Community and Business |

Apologies:

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| Susan Brooks | Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency |
| Janice Kennedy | Scottish Enterprise - Agency |
| Julie Haslam | Community, Clackmannanshire TSI |
| Mike Strachan | Forestry Commission Scotland – Agency |

In Attendance:

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| Anne-Michelle Ketteridge | LEADER Programme Manager |
| Carolyn McGill | LEADER Development Officer |
| Nikki Kenn | LEADER Development Officer |
| Caroline Paterson | LEADER Claims Officer and Minute Taker |
| Ashley Robinson | FVL Local Food & Drink Co-ordinator |
| Jane Beaton | LEADER Cycle Tourism Officer |
| Shaun Marley | LEADER Community Broadband Officer |

| | ACTIONS |
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| 1. Welcome and Sederunt DJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from SB, JK, JH & MS. | |
| 2. Quorum and Conflicts of Interest AMK reported no conflicts of interest in today's projects for assessment. DJ asked AMK if the meeting was quorate. She replied that unfortunately not as there was one community member less than quorum required. As per the LAG's business plan, DJ asked for an agency volunteer to not vote on the projects. JL volunteered to desist from voting. | |

3. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

DJ asked if anyone had any comments in relation to the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting in June 2018. No-one had any issues and the Minutes were proposed by SMac and seconded by SW.

Matters Arising

AMK ran through matters arising from previous meeting:

AMK was to provide an update on Arnprior Glamping and Pool Project under item 7 on the agenda. She advised the LAG that the project had now provided all the required evidence that they had met all their grant requirements and had now been able to start commissioning contractors for the work on site.

AMK also confirmed that she had relayed the LAG’s comments regarding the John Muir Way website and the LAG’s interest in helping the project widen its impact with businesses in the FVL area.

AMK confirmed that the LAG’s consultation response on the future of rural Scotland’s economy had been submitted to the NCRA by the deadline, and copies circulated to everyone Consultation on Future of Rural Scotland Post Brexit. The NCRA had that week just produced a summary of their recommendations based on 10 key outcomes which had been presented to the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and he had said he would give his response by the end of Autumn.

AMK added that she received advice from Scottish Government yesterday that we no longer need to allocate funding by Brexit date (March 2019), as the government guarantee had now been confirmed as including LEADER allocations and the date by which all funds had to be allocated had now reverted back to December 2019.

AMK noted another bit of good news for the LEADER staff is that contracts will now be honoured until the end of the programme.

**MINUTE
APPROVED**

4. Recommendations from Strategic Activity Group

AMK advised SG has allowed LAGs to change their budgets for cooperation projects and rural enterprise/farm diversification projects which are based on percentage allocations. LAGs can choose to drop their minimum spend on cooperation projects from 10% to 5% and to merge the Rural Enterprise and Farm Diversification into one pot (20%) This invitation was discussed at the Strategic Activity Group held the previous day and they had agreed to seek approval to do this from the LAG and to amend our business plan accordingly as an LDS change, which has then to be approved by the SG.

AMK noted that the merging of the Rural Enterprise and Farm Diversification pots would give more flexibility as we have received more expressions of interest from businesses rather than farms. She added the Co-operation pot is currently 4% and although expected to reach 7% by next March.

AMK formally asked that LAG if they agree to:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To merge Rural Enterprise and Farm Diversification into one pot -> 20% 2. Reduce Co-operation Minimum from 10% -> 5% 3. To amend LAG Business Plan accordingly 4. Move remaining funds into Community (Main) Fund, thereby bringing £139,000 extra into Community Fund 5. Still continuing with Co-operation activity where fits with LDS 6. Prioritising strategic projects <p>The LAG members unanimously agreed to all recommendations.</p> | LAG Approval Given |
| <p>5. Projects for Assessment</p> <p>5.1 Kilmaronock Old Kirk Feasibility Study</p> <p>CMcG presented project to the LAG advising that most would have passed the Old Kirk on the way to today's meeting. Currently owned by the Church of Scotland it's a B listed church building dating from 1813.</p> <p>The Kirk is situated within the National Park boundary on the A811 between Gartocharn and Croftamie and the development of the site would benefit communities from both West Dumbartonshire and Stirling. The Kilmaronock Old Kirk Trust was set up in 2017 with the specific purpose to buy the building from the Church of Scotland, restore it and run the building for community benefit. The Trust is set up as a SCIO because of the commercial aspects.</p> <p>CMcG advised match funding for stage 1 is sourced from Scottish Land Fund and KOKT funds from donations and fundraising. She noted match funding from SLF will be decided today.</p> <p>DJ thanked CMcG for her presentation and invited questions. Overall the LAG were supportive of the project as they could see the community and commercial potential of the building, which if brought back into use could become a great community asset. Given the proximity to existing cycle routes, it was noted that there might be a missed opportunity by not linking into this and wondered if this could be fed back to the applicant, although not made into an actual condition. AMK advised that the LAG could ask for this to be reflected in the study. The LAG also discussed whether it duplicated the offering of the Millenium Hall in which we were located for the LAG meeting, but after discussion it was agreed that what was being proposed was a different offering with the community enterprise element. It was then discussed whether a 5 year building conditions survey was long enough when the business plan and project would run for much longer, especially given its listed status and age of the building.</p> <p>The LAG voted to approve with specific conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building conditions survey commissioned to explore the medium and longer term condition of the building (i.e. not just the first 5 years) 2. Feasibility Study to reflect the potential walking and cycling accessibility of the site. 3. Confirmation of match funding | Project Approved with Conditions |
| <p>5.2 Nourish Co-operation Project</p> | |

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| <p>CMcG presented the project in outline form as the applicant had not yet formally submitted the project, as having discussed it yesterday at the Strategic Group, the group felt it merited feedback from the LAG regarding costs even at this stage.</p> <p>The Rural Development Through Supporting Local Food Production project led by Nourish is proposed to be a co-operation project funded 100% from 6 LAG areas (Angus, Ayrshire, Borders, Fife, Shetland, Tyne & Esk and FVL). FVL would be the lead LAG and so CMcG had been leading on discussions with the applicant. She circulated the project costs as proposed by the applicant, advising that her worry was that over the course of developing the project with the applicant, the staffing costs had grown and grown, which along with office set up and next step costs which meant that the overheads were now more than half of the project costs. She has already suggested to them to take out some none essential (to the LEADER project) costs from the application, but the applicant was not keen. To speed things up and to avoid wasting anyone's time, CMcG had gone through the costs and had been able to identify which costs were essential to the LEADER project and which were not. She was now recommending to the LAG that they invite the applicant to submit a reduced cost version based on the essential costs only. The total LEADER funding would reduce to £106,355.20 or £17,726 per LAG.</p> <p>DJ thanked CMcG for her presentation and invited questions. There was some discussion about if the LAG was resistant to advice and recommendations from the LAG and the LAG staff, then maybe it could be an opportunity for the LAG to do this in house (AR & STEP) which would get more buy in from local businesses. LAG members noted this could be a large piece of work and would only work if all LAGs were in agreement. CMcG advised she has already spoken with Fife and Angus who had also expressed concern at the staffing costs now proposed in the project.</p> <p>It was also discussed whether it was ethical for the LAG to design a project based on someone else's project, albeit at reduced costs. After discussion, the LAG felt that this would be a last resort, as they would prefer the applicant to amend their project costs based on their advice, but at the end of the day they were duty bound to think about what was best Value for Money and what was best for businesses in the area. The LAG decided to invite an application based on the reduced costs as per the discussion (LEADER funding one FTE project officer and 1 project admin officer only, reduce office set up costs, remove the next step costs.) Also to strengthen the link between the FVL part of the project and the FVL Local Food and Drink project.</p> <p>As a final point AMK asked the LAG if they were keen to take on the lead LAG role with the project. LAG agreed as they thought it a strong fit with their Local Food and Drink project</p> | <p>LAG Agreed to invite an application based on the reduced costs</p> <p>LAG agreed to take on lead LAG role</p> |
| <p>5.3 Wild Wonders Transnational Co-operation Project</p> <p>This is a cooperation project which Finland has been leading on as the lead LAG although NK has been developing the part that would take place in Scotland (in the FVL area). Although the project is not yet ready for scoring as some of the cost documents still need to be finalised, NK was able to present the detail of the project in the hope that the LAG would then agree to score the project by written procedure within the next 4 weeks.</p> | |

The project will involve an exchange of ideas and non-accredited training – both food related and tourism related – around Wild Food. Partners will visit each other’s countries to benchmark activities and business models, and share learning. In Scotland’s case we will visit the Wild Food Festival in Finland (2019) and Latvia (2020) to help develop our own festivals in September in addition to our participants learning from other countries’ business models and workshop content.

Activities within Scotland will involve a training program in the FVL LEADER area aimed at food businesses (producers and restaurants) and outdoor/nature tourism businesses, to increase their skills and abilities to use ‘foraging’ and wild food in their offerings.

There are some good examples of foraging based small businesses or where the skills enhance an existing business in the UK, some of them in Scotland, but these skills are thin on the ground in our area. Most of the foraging activities on offer here are run by businesses based in other parts of the country, who are contracted to run a session in our area. We believe there is real potential for our local businesses and start ups to seize this opportunity with the right training and support.

This project will contract a foraging expert to design the training program and organise delivery.

DJ thanked NK and invited questions. The LAG noted close links with Food and Drink Project. A LAG member noted a possible tie in with Nick Nairn as he recently appeared on Landward discussing foraging, NK advised she has already made contact. LAG member advised SNH had a project based on foraging a few years back and also have a policy on foraging to with some kind of life and death disclaimer. NK advised that she has been working up the project in discussion with the team at SNH who had worked on the previous foraging project and they were very supportive.

LAG agreed to written procedure.

Scottish Foraging Fortnight

Alongside the transnational cooperation, as a result of a lot of interest from a number of other Scottish LAGs, she was proposing to develop a parallel cooperation project to organised a Scottish Foraging Fortnight to celebrate Scotland’s natural environment and wild food involving a wide range of foraging and wild food activities across the country.

This project required further development and so the LAG would not be expected to look in detail at this project yet, but she wanted to make them aware that it was in progress. Up to 9 LAG areas have expressed interest in taking part to reflect their own LDS priorities in the activities they choose to coordinate in Foraging Fortnight. NK advised she is unsure of budget requirement but thought be less than £30,000.

LAG were supportive and agreed to continue as a complementary project to the Wild Wonders project. To be brought back to LAG in December 2018.

LAG
Approval in
principal

5.4 RSPB (Inner Forth Landscape Initiative) Co-operation project

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| <p>AMK introduced the LAG to this project idea from RSPB Scotland who have been developing this project idea with Fife LAG as lead, who wanted to get some initial thoughts from FVL LAG before they took it any further. As we are not the lead LAG, contact with us has come rather late, although the applicant is known to us as FVL LAG funded the HLF pre-application work which led to their ultimately successful Landscape Partnership bid. The project will also include KVF LAG.</p> <p>The idea of the project is to make the Inner Forth a better place to live, work and visit by improving marketing and awareness of its natural and cultural heritage assets and sustainable transport options. They plan to appoint a communications and marketing project officer, establish a Forth Heritage Network (to engage with local businesses), develop a new Forth heritage brand as well as webpage and app, creation of a Forth Heritage Social media group, pilot high profile public participation event and develop active heritage trails.</p> <p>AMK noted Fife still to undertake the technical check and that although costs seem high staff costs are quite low. She added previous feedback from FVL Strategic Group about an Inner Forth project had suggested the inclusion of a boat tour 'product'. Total project costs of approximately £148,476.67 but we are as yet unclear of the split between the 3 LAG areas.</p> <p>DJ thanked AMK and invited questions from the LAG. LAG members queried why the most recent HLF application was unsuccessful and questioned the group's ability to deliver the project. LAG were not keen on the project in its current form. The project would need to be re-thought and re-considered prior to a full LAG submission as it needs to be more integrated with wide geography in terms of existing tourism and routes, also needs a clear focus on what is the product and who is the market the project is trying to reach. LAG do not agree that another website is needed. Project encouraged to discuss with Sustrans their planned joint working with VisitScotland.</p> | <p>AMK to feedback to Fife LAG</p> |
| <p>6. Update from LAG Strategic Projects</p> <p>6.1 Local Food and Drink Strategy</p> <p>AR gave a detailed presentation on the finalised Local Food and Drink Strategy and the proposed actions within it. She also talked about the recent week long Farm Festival which had been designed to build on existing activities in the rural FVL area but had also included some new events and new players like the university who put on a film. The strategy is due to go to Stirling Council's Finance and Economy committee with the expectation that they will formally adopt the strategy thereby committing to take forward some of the actions - although so far it has been well received by elected members.</p> <p>AR advised there are 4 themes in the strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 a vibrant local food economy 2. investing in people 3. shaping a resilient future | |

4. showcasing & celebrating

She has been working with local food business network and hoping to formalise and open up to more businesses.

AMK advised the LAG that the steering group had asked to use some of the underspent consultancy budget to extend AR's contract until March 2019.

6.2 Cycle Tourism

JB gave a presentation on one of the initiatives that she has been supporting since she started in post - the Dukes Weekender Cycling festival which took place in Aberfoyle on 8-9 September 2018. It received amazing feedback from those involved and fantastic coverage in the media. So good in fact that a tour operator has already picked up on this and has launched Dukes Gold package nationally and internationally. This could bring the potential for a major sponsor for the event in the future.

JB's role was to help the community see the benefits with the central part of the village being a focus for activities, with the race route looping through Aberfoyle twice during the day. She also helped arranged for a children's pumptrack to be built in the car park and organised a photo exhibition and school children to get involved with the hill race the day before by writing messages on the roads and making noise along the roadside just like they do for the Tour de France.

6.3 Community Broadband

SM began his presentation with a video showing how frustrating slow broadband can be. He advised that he's now been in post for 6 months and has been working with the previously identified 5 communities as well as other areas. He has also been helping Stirling Council distribute some funding for broadband feasibility studies which has brought him into contact with a lot of new communities. His workplan shows next stage is engagement with those communities to identify solutions, obtain funding and support with the build.

He then discussed other broadband innovations that have been going on, such as free town wifi, TV WhiteSpace and the development of digital hubs.

His plan is to soon starting working on developing a transnational cooperation project so we can learn from and be inspired by what is happening in other parts of Europe, but also to organise series of awareness raising and shared learning workshops.

7. Project Allocations & Projects Requiring LAG Attention

AMK noted that up to today £1.6m (79%) of budget has been allocated. With changes to the Co-operation pot this will free up more money into the Community/General pot which will allow the LAG to support some strategic spin off projects that have been emerging. AMK noted that just because we quickly meet

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| <p>the 5% minimum for cooperation projects, the LAG may still wish to support more cooperation activity – she was aware that other LAGs have co-operation projects in development but Scottish Government will get a penalty if they don't reach 5% overall so they are keen for some LAGs to go beyond their minimum.</p> <p>AMK displayed the LEADER comparison graph advising that Highland (largest allocation) are confident that they will fully allocate. Noting Argyll have been without staffing for some time and they also have quite a large amount still to allocate.</p> <p>Projects requiring attention:</p> <p>Regional Food Assemblies - NK updated the LAG that as a result of the international Food Assembly platform pulling out of the UK, Forth Environment Link had been exploring alternatives and had selected an Ireland based Neighbourhood platform. They ran two test markets alongside the Food Assembly over the last two sessions to help iron out any issues.</p> <p>She was bringing it back to today's meeting as South Lanarkshire didn't approve their part of the project so this means the total costs, although slightly reduced, required to be split between 4 instead of 5 LAGs. So this would mean an increase in contribution for £7,534.95 from each LAG area to allow project to continue. NK advised two other LAG areas already approved the increase. FVL LAG discussed this briefly, all in agreement that they were still supportive of the project and the increase in cost was not that great for the return of two new online food markets in the FVL area.</p> <p>Our Little Outdoor Classroom – AMK advised that Applicant has been very good at keeping in contact with the LEADER team regarding progress with Building Control and the Care Inspectorate, and they have asked if they could be considered for an increase in grant contribution by £2,758.77 due to extra work requested by the Care Inspectorate and Environmental Health (redirecting food serving away from toilet area, more fencing outside and more rubber matting around climbing frame). The LAG asked if this still kept them under the £25k maximum for businesses. AMK confirmed this was the case. As the LAG were happy to hear that the applicant was working closely with the Care Inspectorate and Environmental Health, they unanimously agreed the increase of £2,758.77 in grant award.</p> <p>Arnprior Glamping and Swimming Pool – As discussed earlier in the meeting, the project was awarded their grant in 2016 but due to delays project hasn't started yet. AMK & NK have been in regular contact with applicant who had finally managed to obtain the final piece of paperwork (confirmation that their pods would meet the requirements of a Camping and Caravanning license), which meant they could start with the project. The LAG were pleased to hear this and agreed to extend the award commitment on condition project starts in November 2018.</p> | <p>Grant increase of £7,534.95 agreed</p> <p>Grant increase of £2,758.77</p> |
| <p>8. AOCB</p> <p>AMK noted Scottish Rural Parliament taking place in Dumfries and Galloway and will be promoting this through our networks. It's a great networking event that anyone can attend. Can be booked direct or let us know and we can book.</p> | |

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| <p>SMacD noted he is attending Accountable Bodies meeting tomorrow so keen to get money spent and will continue to look for extra funding.</p> <p>NK noted that one of our projects, Art 4 You Scotland is having a launch party on 19 October 2018 and the LAG are invited to attend – she will circulate invitation by email.</p> <p>JB is leaving us on 31 October due to personal circumstances, the LAG thanked her for her impressive work to date and wished her well for the future.</p> | |
| <p>9. Date of next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 12 December 2019 at 10 am – venue to be confirmed.</p> | |