

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING
Camphill Blair Drummond, Blair Drummond House, Cuthil Brae, Stirling, FK9 4UT
6th March 2019
10 am – 1 pm
Minutes

Present:

Douglas Johnston	Community, Stirlingshire (Chair - Community)
Sarah Phillips	Stirling Council - Agency
Fiona Jackson	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency
Lynn Hamilton	VisitScotland – Agency
Mike Ewart	Community, Central Scotland Green Network Trust
Julie Haslam	Community, Clackmannanshire TSI
Rory McLeod	Community and Business
Bridget Clark	Community, Stirlingshire
Jim Livingston	Clackmannanshire Council - Agency
Sue Wyllie	Community, Stirlingshire

Apologies:

Mike Strachan	Forestry Commission Scotland - Agency
Brian McColgan	West Dunbartonshire Council – Agency
Janice Kennedy	Scottish Enterprise – Agency
Caroline Paterson	Claims Officer

In Attendance:

Anne-Michelle Ketteridge	LEADER Programme Manager
Carolyn McGill	LEADER Development Officer – Minute Taker
Nikki Kenn	LEADER Development Officer
Ashley Robinson	FVL Local Food & Drink Co-ordinator
Shaun Marley	LEADER Community Broadband Officer
Jason Clark	LEADER Cycle Tourism Officer

	ACTIONS
<p>1. Welcome and Sederunt</p> <p>DJ welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted apologies from MS, BMcC, JK and CP. SP was attending in place of SMaD</p> <p>Introductions were made to new community LAG member Rory McLeod, representing the land management sector, being the Estate Manager for Moray Estates and a member of Scottish Lands and Estates.</p> <p>Senad Cehaja was also introduced as the student intern working with FVL LEADER. Senad is studying International Studies at Linneaus University, Sweden.</p> <p>Both were warmly welcomed and brief round the table introductions were made.</p>	

<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 on conflicts of interest with the following projects for assessment at today's meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) More Than a Post Office – FJ,SP, SW (LLTNPA, Stirling Council as funders, and SW as a contributor to the project Crowdfunding campaign) 2) Lower Station Yard FJ,LH,SW (LLTNPA and Stirling Council as funders, and SW as a member of Strathfillan Community Development Trust) 3) Social Enterprise Hub – FJ (LLTNPA as funders) 4) Fishing in the Forth – RM (Moray Estates are one of the participating estates) 	
<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 December 2018. No-one had any issues and the Minutes were proposed by JH and seconded by LH.</p>	<p>MINUTE APPROVED</p>
<p>4. Recommendations from Strategic Activity Group</p> <p>AMK circulated updated allocations report advising that the LAG had £93K remaining in the main programme, prior to any decisions made today, and £241,102 in the rural enterprise pot. If all projects are approved today there will be £16,116 available in the main programme and co-operation and £67,754.56 in the Rural Enterprise Fund.</p> <p>Further discussion to be had during agenda - item 7 with regards to re-allocation of under-spent funds.</p>	
<p>5. Projects for Assessment</p> <p>5.1 Achray Farm Ice Creamery</p> <p>NK presented to the LAG. The applicant is looking at small scale diversification of Achray farm through production of goat milk ice-cream. Funding is for the ice-cream production unit, the conversion of a horse-box for use as a mobile sales point at festivals and events, and an electric delivery bike.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated that they have undertaken considerable research and training in preparation for this venture.</p> <p>Recently planted fruit trees and hedgerows will provide raw produce for developing wild flavours in future, and they are also exploring the possibility for cheese making.</p> <p>Applicant has also been successful in getting a place on the FVL LEADER 'Wild Food Training Programme'.</p>	

The farm ethos is built on environmental principles, and have an 'open farm policy' welcoming groups to visit and learn new skills. Summer job opportunities will also be created.

DJ thanked NK for the presentation and asked the LAG for comments and questions.

- 1) LAG questioned the level of community engagement –
 - This was considered high, as they were working with the community Council, local Scout groups etc. in bringing visitors to the farm.
- 2) Would the business be sustainable with just a small herd of goats?
 - The farm currently has three goats who are all pregnant, so the herd is anticipated to grow in due course. They are proposing to grow the business slowly at small scale.

The LAG noted the strong fit with the LDS because of the focus on the creation of a new local food product, tourism and the link with the community through the High School. The project will also support employment if the business grows as the applicant expects. The LAG also noted that the project had scored very highly on innovation and having a strong business plan.

LAG Decision: Project application 'Approved with Standard Conditions '

FJ, SW and SP left the room

5.2 More Than a Post Office, Killin

NK presented to the LAG - The applicant is the Killin & Ardeonaig Trust, with the project delivery partner being MacGregors Community Enterprise.

This project is about protecting two valuable local services. The News First newsagent which was privately run, but with the owner intending to retire at the end of 2018, and the nearby Post Office managed by the McGregor Social Enterprise, who rented premises of which the future lease was both uncertain and expensive.

The solution was, rather than lose both services, for the Trust to purchase the News First property with assistance from the Scottish Land Fund, and merge the newsagent and post-office under one larger premises, with the Trust being the landlord, and the Social Enterprise as the tenant, managing the day to day operation of the services.

LEADER funding would be to purchase the fixtures and fittings and cover the employment of a shop manager for 16months.

The purchase of the News first shop has been completed, but the purchase of the business will be completed in April 2019. The National Park have contributed to the refurbishments of the shop which is been carried out at the moment.

DJ thanked NK for the presentation and asked the LAG for questions.

- 1) What was McGregor's Social Enterprise contribution to the community, and what will they do with any profits?
 - NK advised they run as a Social Enterprise with volunteers any profits would be reinvested back into the newsagent/Post Office. In the past all profits have had to pay for the lease.

- 2) The indicative profits are very low, will the project be sustainable?
 - NK advised that there was an opportunity to do more in the new premises and this would identify other income streams. It was also suggested project could be supported by the Third Sector Interface's social enterprise officer.

The LAG thought the approach of combining 2 retail outlets into a community enterprise a sensible one, from an economic viability perspective, but with additional community services which would safeguard key services and jobs, with benefits accruing to locals and the tourism economy. There would also be benefits from providing volunteer work training, skill sharing and resources.

Decision: Project application 'Approved with Specific Conditions' - A full business plan from MacGregors for the running of the shop is provided for review by June 2019. It was agreed to pass on the suggestion that help can be provided by the Social Enterprise Officer at Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise.

LH joined SW, FJ and SP outside the room

5.3 Lower Station Yard Improvement Works, Crianlarich

CMcG presented this project to the LAG. The applicant is Strathfillan Development Trust and the project is to upgrade the Lower Station Yard site with facilities for tourers and campervans. The site is already being used on an informal basis but this would allow the provision of facilities and for the community to generate some income. An application has been submitted to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund under the umbrella of Stirling Council who had also provided the costings for the work to be undertaken from their facilities team (based on works undertaken elsewhere) although the work would be procured and contracted out as per LEADER’s requirements. Stirling Council would manage the works.

The LAG liked the economic impact of the project where a demand would be met for local infrastructure improvements and create two part-time jobs. There will also be benefits to the local community as the project will resolve a significant problem for local residents, and create more welcoming attractive facilities for tourists. The approach of the community working with the Council was also to be welcomed. Significantly there would be environmental benefit as the project would resolved the issues of waste, in an environmentally sensitive area – particularly the problem of chemical toilet waste. Value for money was high with a large contribution expected from RTIF. The Business Plan was light on some detail, with more detail expected to be provided by the Council. It was noted that there was no budget identified to deal with routine maintenance and repairs although it was noted that the income from the fees is expected to cover this. The land transfer and pre-planning issues still need to be addressed as the land transfer from the Council to the Trust hadn’t yet gone through.

LAG Decision Approved subject to a more detailed cost breakdown of works being provided, match funding being confirmed, full planning permission granted and the land transfer being completed.

LH, SW, SP came back into the room. FJ stayed outside the room

5.4 Social Enterprise Hub for Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park

CMcG presented this project to the LAG. The project is to create a new social enterprise hub for the many emerging social enterprises located in the national park. The project is being led by the National Park Community Partnership. The project proposes to buy in the hub model from the Social Enterprise Academy which is similar to the model they have implemented with much success with their overseas schools. The applicant wants to test the model – the LEADER contribution is to cover the set up of it.

The LAG discussed the project and it was commented that it was a difficult application to read, and questioned whether a Business Development Manager AND a Learning Coordinator was needed as well as the desk hire cost. However felt there was potential for this to be of high impact by supporting for new and existing social enterprises in the National Park area. The project would also contribute to making communities more sustainable and resilient and ideally would facilitate the emergence of new innovative social enterprises. The programme would be delivered

locally so would reduce the need to travel long distances to workshops which is the barrier to organisations accessing the currently nationally available training. The LAG liked the fact that the project could potentially create significant added value to the local economy, through social enterprise and job creation and so agreed it was worth giving the project a chance.

LAG Decision Approved subject to Argyll & the Isles approving the project also.

Before starting on the project, SM gave an update on his broadband support activities in the area as this gives some context for the next project to be assessed. The following communities have had projects connected: Balquhider, Stockiemuir, Argaty & Kilbryde, Aberfoyle Public Town WiFi. The following communities have projects out to Tender: Trossachs, Carron Valley. The following communities have projects at design phase: Gartness, East Loch Lomond, Blairlogie and the following communities are actively exploring solutions: Stronachlachar, Killin / Ardeonaig, Crianlarich, Kinlochard

In addition he is working with INCA (Independent Networks Community Association) to bring an event to Stirling in June.

5.5 Smart Digital Villages Co-operation

Shaun then gave an overview of the proposed Transnational 'Smart Village' co-operation project he has been working on. Here is a link for more information on the Smart Village Network more generally:

<https://www.smart-village-network.eu>

Shaun attended the 1st Smart Village Network Meeting, in Finland 5-7th February 2019, to meet with project partners.

The aim of the project is to work with communities to maximise the use of the connectivity they have in place, this is not only thinking about the digital use, but considering how smart solutions can be integrated to benefit the wider communities be this for energy, leisure or learning.

The project will include learning visits with co-operation partners, this would then create an active network in which to share ideas and experiences.

Interested communities will be able to nominate representatives to attend these learning visits. This will be an open process, and the aim is to have a cross section of people, specialism's, skills and ideas to maximise the opportunities for peer to peer learning.

DJ thanked SM for presentation and invited the LAG to comment.

The LAG discussed the project and agreed that it would be great for community empowerment, and ideally would be opened to as many communities as possible. It would be great if a network of interested communities develops on the back of this. It was noted that on the ground visits provide a good opportunity for learning, which on the most part cannot be achieved through video links, Skype media tools. These tools however should be utilised for follow-up networking. Would be great if some

<p>of the visits could be filmed. The LAG liked the fact that the project sits strategically well alongside the current LEADER Community Broadband Officer project, so the good contacts that have been generated there can be encouraged to participate in this project, and widen the thinking of some communities once they have broadband – give them ideas of what they can do with it at a community and at a household level.</p> <p>Co-operation project ‘Approved with Specific Conditions’ – that the partnership agreement is signed.</p>	
<p>RM Left the Room</p>	
<p>5.6 Fishing On The Forth</p> <p>AMK presented the Co-operation project being led by Tyne & Esk LEADER. This is a marketing campaign project, of which the applicant is the River Forth Fishery Trust, a membership organisation seeking to promote the ‘wild fishing’ opportunities on the Forth & Teith Rivers.</p> <p>Although fishing has not been identified on the LDS as a priority, tourism is an important sector for the area, and this is a type of outdoor activity tourism. The target audience for this marketing campaign is visitors with an interest in fishing, which following AMK’s discussions with Stirling Council fishery department is a much larger market than originally thought. This was demonstrated by the launch of the fishing season in the Stirlingshire area on February 1st in Callander. It was reported that there was high occupancy rate for local accommodation providers across the area, in what is traditionally perceived as low season.</p> <p>The project is to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the River Forth Fishery Trust website. • Creation of film promotional material which will encapsulate both the fisheries and the scenic environment of the Forth & Teith Rivers. • A marketing campaign to promote the site & fisheries. <p>It was noted that VisitScotland do annually produce a Scotland wide fishing brochure, AMK showed the LAG a printed copy. It is anticipated that the River Forth Fishery Trust will liaise with VisitScotland to identify opportunities for editorial content to be included in future brochures to further promote the area.</p> <p>AMK highlighted that geographically, it would be FVL LEADER who would proportionally benefit from the project, as most fisheries were in the FVL LEADER area. AMK asked the LAG to consider if- should not all LAG areas approve the project, would the LAG be willing to support the project.</p> <p>DG invited the LAG to comment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The LAG discussed how the project identified the outputs of the project marketing plans, but not the potential growth in visitor numbers to the fisheries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring data would need to be put in place, to measure the project impact. 	

<p>2) There were a number of elements within the project plan/costs, it was unclear as to the tendering process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AMK explained the much of the web development work would be delivered in-house on the existing website. <p>3) How will this project be sustainable, who is maintaining the website? is this yet another layer of information not linked to existing website information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AMK highlighted that the site is an existing website and will be maintained by the Forth Fisheries Trust. <p>AMK invited ant LAG members with a specific interest in the project, that there was an invitation to sit on the project steering group.</p> <p>Project ‘Approved with Specific Conditions’ –The applicant is to provide monitoring data on bookings.</p>	
<p>ME gave his apologies and left the meeting for the day.</p>	
<p>6. Updates from LAG Strategic Projects</p>	
<p>6.1 Local Food & Drink Strategy</p> <p>The extension of contract for the F & D co-ordinator had been finalised. Both Stirling Council and the National Park have confirmed their contributions to the project which will be used as match-funding for the LEADER project.</p> <p>The F & D Strategy and Action Plan is scheduled to be presented at the Stirling Council Finance & Economy Committee in April 2019 followed by a formal launch in May 2019 at the Neighbourhood Food Collection to coincide with their monthly tasting events.</p> <p>A business event will be held on October 22nd 2019, hosted by LEADER F&D, STEP & Food & Drink Scotland, This event will target 50 SME businesses, providing the opportunity to raise their profile with an aim to encourage and build local supply networks.</p> <p>The local food/farm festival is scheduled for October half term – and AR is currently inviting more food businesses and farms to participate this year now that we have some hard evidence of interest and success from last year’s event.</p> <p>Food & Drink Fortnight is 31st Aug until Sun 15th September 2019.</p>	
<p>6.2 Cycle Tourism</p> <p>JC presented to the LAG an update on the Cycle Tourism activity.</p> <p>JC has been in post two weeks, and had met with the steering group, and Jane, his predecessor and had identified the immediate priorities going forward. The post is now part-funded by Sustrans which builds on the opportunities for partnership working.</p>	

<p>There is huge potential for cycle tourism, and one of the main tasks is to promote a clear and consistent message to visitors across all promotional platforms delivered by a wide range of partners.</p> <p>There will be no new website, but one of the main actions is to introduce the 'Business Barometer' scheme to build a picture of the economic impact of cycle tourism in the area.</p> <p>The next priority is to develop content with businesses to populate the VisitScotland website.</p> <p>DJ invited the LAG to ask questions – no questions.</p>	
<p>6.2 Wild Wonders & Foraging Fortnight</p> <p>NK gave an update to the LAG on the progress of the trans –national co-operation project – 'Wild Wonders' and the trans – Scotland project 'Foraging Fortnight'.</p> <p>The Wild Foraging training Programme, being delivered through the 'Wild Wonders' project previously approved by the LAG, received a very good response. There was 50 written applications, with 40 of these within the FVL LEADER area. 14 places have been allocated.</p> <p>As there were a number of strong candidates, £5K has been identified within the 'Foraging Fortnight' sister project to potentially deliver workshops for those individuals and businesses.</p> <p>NK has asked the LAG to be aware of the timelines for their scoring of the 'Foraging Fortnight' project: Application and documents will be loaded to LARC's on 15th March, with the LAG to agree by written procedure by the 21st March. If and once the project is approved, the partner LAG's can then proceed to score the project activity in their LEADER areas.</p> <p>DJ thanked NK and invited the LAG to ask any questions – no questions.</p>	
<p>7. Project Allocations & Projects Requiring LAG Attention</p> <p><u>Bowling Viaduct Project</u></p> <p>AMK advised that the Bowling Viaduct project, has still not confirmed their match funding from Sustrans, therefore AMK has not been able to formally confirm the LEADER funding of £300K.</p> <p>AMK has received communication update confirming that they are still really keen for the project to proceed.</p> <p>AMK has asked the LAG to approve reducing the grant awarded by £10K, in view that Sustrans has indicated that they would be in a position to cover any small shortfall within the Bowling Viaduct project. This would free up £10K for the LAG to cover the shortfall in the FVL LEADER pot, which would enable the 'Foraging Fortnight' project to be fully funded.</p>	

<p>DJ asked the LAG for comment – LAG approved the retention of £10K and up to £20K as required against the funding agreed for ‘Bowling Viaduct’.</p> <p><u>Lenny Falls</u> AMK updated the LAG on the Lenny Falls project which is approximately 4months behind schedule. The project will commence, but planning permissions relating to the road crossing provision is still pending, and the tendering process is yet to commence.</p>	
<p>8. Updates from Scottish Government and the Future</p>	
<p>9. AOCB</p>	
<p>10. Date of next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 19 June 2019 at 10 am – venue to be confirmed.</p>	