

## FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING

Via Zoom

11 March 2021

10 am

### Minutes

#### **Present:**

Douglas Johnston	Community, Stirlingshire (Chair - Community)
Bridget Clark	Community, Stirlingshire
Rory McLeod	Community and Business
Julie Haslam	Community, Clackmannanshire TSI
Sue Wyllie	Community, Stirlingshire
Mike Ewart	Community, Central Scotland Green Network Trust
Janice Kennedy	Scottish Enterprise - Agency
Lynn Hamilton	VisitScotland – Agency
Brian McColgan	West Dunbartonshire Council - Agency
Steve MacDonald	Stirling Council - Agency
Fiona Jackson	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency

#### **Apologies:**

Jim Livingstone	Clackmannanshire Council - Agency
Simon Orr	Community and Business, STEP

#### **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
<p><b>1. Welcome and Introduction to Today's Meeting</b></p> <p>DJ welcomed everyone to the LAG meeting via Zoom. He acknowledged it's been some time since last meeting in August 2020 and lots of change since then.</p> <p>AMK read out apologies from JL and SO and advised meeting was quorate and no conflicts of interest. She also advised that the meeting was being recorded but not for broadcast, just to help with the production of the minute.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>DJ asked if anyone had any comments in relation to the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting 19 August 2020. No comments received the minute was proposed by SW and seconded by LH.</p>	

<p>BC flagged that reports were that rural villages in Scotland would be inundated with visitors again this year and wondered what planning had been taking place to ensure that there would be increased litter collections and that public toilets and car parks are open. AMK advised this is pertinent to discussions at Rural Parliament at the moment. LH advised Tourism Task Force was set up by Fergus Ewing for all aspects of tourism infrastructure and revenue activity which will report back Friday, 19 March. Preparation will start to come out for summer regarding investment for additional support.</p> <p>JC added local authorities and National Park are much more aware of the issues and will be better prepared this year.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Sharing infographic – AMK advised she had emailed the infographic to the LAG. She added that there was some discussion to produce more infographics on various topics but due to LEADER teams across Scotland being stretched, it was decided to keep it to one.</p> <p>AMK/SMacD to meet – discussion has taken place and risk register will be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p>Virtual Conference – to be picked up later in the meeting.</p> <p>£1bn challenge document – SW had circulated information to the LAG.</p>	
<p><b>3. Latest from Scottish Government re current programme</b></p> <p>AMK noted she recently emailed an update but to recap: FVL LEADER Programme has been given permission to extend to 31 December 2021 to allow applicants to complete projects delayed by COVID or projects contributing to COVID recovery. She thanked Stirling Council for their support and acting as the Accountable Body. She noted initially it looked like not many projects were impacted by COVID but many were and will run on passed previous deadline of 31 March 2021.</p> <p>In response to LAG query regarding process for extended/additional funding, AMK explained that since September she had been submitting a monthly register to Scottish Government and also asked to flag which projects could potentially contribute to COVID recovery, along with costings. In January she received notification all flagged projects had been awarded additional funding.</p> <p>AMK highlighted Scottish Government are still keen for us to complete as many projects as we can by 31 March 2021.</p> <p>Staff costs have been extended to December 2021 on a reduced basis but, as some were aware, Nikki Kenn left the LEADER team in December 2020.</p>	
<p><b>4. Latest from Scottish Government and LAG Chairs re Future Programme</b></p> <p>DJ advised on 25 February the National Chairs Group met with representatives from Scottish Government, led by Elaine McGregor from Rural Communities Team. A</p>	

wide ranging discussion on where we could be going and what could be happening and some of the things that came out of that were very interesting.

DJ reported that Elaine had stated this was an opportunity to discuss how we retain the important capacity held by the LAG to delivery Community Led Local Development (CLLD), which is the focus rather than LEADER, so there is an interest in maintaining the LAG infrastructure to delivery local development. Her colleague Karen, gave a presentation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – 3 elements, 1 interim fund for 21/22 of £220m for all UK with Scottish allocation approx. £20m on competitive basis, the larger fund over 5 years of £1.5bn but it will not be run by Scottish Government, but from the Housing Communities and Local Government department in Westminster. DJ cautioned that this is where it becomes political and the LAG will need to tread carefully. The first element is the Community Renewal Fund and local authorities have been given a priority status, and although West Dunbartonshire was a priority 1, Stirling and Clacks were not priorities so didn't look likely to be supported through this funding.

Elaine was then outlining the possibility of some SG funding which they are making available to rural areas to run some pilots. With this funding, Elaine was keen to encourage LAGs to test change and she has been keen to stress that CLLD is not the same as LEADER. Also flagging that they are looking to learn from the past with greater focus on communities. DJ thought this fitted very well with the LAG's legacy work to date.

Next chairs meeting is 24 March 2021 and DJ will be able to feed back after this.

## **5. Finance Update**

AMK noted FVL LEADER original allocation was £2,881,740 and an additional £180,237 has been allocated for the COVID recovery projects, totalling £3,061,977. This includes the allocation for admin costs of up to 25% with FVL's admin costs currently running at 24%.

AMK advised at the moment we are currently overcommitted by £2,251, which is quite comfortable because we have projects regularly coming in at final claim with underspends.

We have the Old Manse Farm glamping project which hasn't started but due to extension they still have time. The holdup was due to hold ups getting the SEPA drainage license.



**FORTH  
VALLEY &  
LOMOND  
LEADER**

Applicant	Project	Amount Requested	Amount Approved	Original Amount Approved	% of Original Amount
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 16,662</b>	<b>£ 16,662</b>		
Bannockburn House Trust	Bannockburn House	£ 4,409	£ 4,409	£ 153,000	2.88
FVL LAG	Legacy Project	£ 850	£ 850	£ 17,165	4.95
Strathard Development Trust	Strathard Business Development Project	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 54,881	3.64
FVL LAG	Crowdfunding Coaches	£ 4,500	£ 4,500	£ 40,000	11.25
FVL LAG	Cycle Tourism	£ 4,027	£ 4,027	£ 131,108	3.07
LLTNPA	Leny Falls	£ 876	£ 876	£ 100,000	0.88
Japanese Garden	Teahouse at Japanese Garden			£ 33,466	

AMK displayed the figures for the projects which had received additional funds through her delegated authority since our last LAG meeting in August 2020. She reminded the LAG this was where projects had incurred increased costs to deliver their existing project. She asked the LAG if they would approve a further increase to the Cycle Tourism project to allow an extension of LEADER funds to end of June to allow promotion to take place using the materials JC has been creating but not been able to use given continuation of Covid lockdown – more detail on materials in JC’s presentation on agenda. This would involve an additional cost of £12.5k which would take over 10%. LAG agreed as sensible use of resources.

#### 6. Latest on increased grant awards to projects for COVID recovery



Additional Covid Recovery Projects

- Local Food and Drink Project - £50k for business grants
- Regional Food Hubs – £28.6k to extend staffing to support more markets
- Community Broadband – £11.1k to extend staffing to allow more communities to be supported with their connectivity
- Smart Digital Villages – additional £50k for more project activity
- Crowdfunding coaches – additional £40.5k to extend contract with Crowdfunder

AMK had already emailed LAG members for approval as she had to start the award process for 5 projects listed above. It was noted that approval for these extensions had been given by email and the purpose of today’s discussion was to agree some of the detail. She started with the Food and Drink grant:

**LAG Noted their agreement for these projects being extended with the details outlined.**



### Local Food and Drink Business Adaptation Grant

Proposed



How will grants be assessed ?

- Max £1k per business
- Aims of the scheme:
  - To assist food and drink businesses in the FVL area to adapt their business operation as a result of Covid19
  - To assist food and drink businesses in the FVL area to re-open their businesses in a safe and socially distanced way, in accordance with public guidance
  - To assist food and drink businesses to begin/extend trading on-line, where appropriate, or develop their existing on-line presence.
  - Promote economic recovery, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

For:

Premises adaptation, equipment purchase, e-commerce or Covid related training  
Will be administered through the Local Food and Drink Network - although don't need to be a member to apply

- Application form based on BID application form
- Support with application will be given

- Quick and simple
- Two rounds (review after 1<sup>st</sup> round)
- Businesses will be encouraged to work with Business Gateway
- Carolyn will provide support with application
- Spreadsheet based assessment/by email
- Looking for volunteers to join Douglas + AMK

AMK has checked with Scottish Government who have agreed the principal of a mini grant scheme for food and drink businesses through the Local Food and Drink Project. Applications will be received through the Food and Drink Network but businesses won't have to be a member. It will be promoted on the Food and Drink Network website and shared on social media.

AMK looking for volunteers to assist with grant assessments – it was agreed that this would be DJ, SO and AMK.



### Regional Food Hubs

- Cooperation project with 4 LAG areas in total
- Discussed with all areas and applicant (Forth Environment Link)
- Agreement that focus of extension will be support the existing markets – from producer side and customer side
- Project will run to October 2021
- Focus on marketing of new markets
- Focus on mentoring of new market hosts
- Focus on increasing number of local producers selling through markets

Moving on to the Regional Food Hubs project, AMK advised the extension is for staffing as the learning from the last project is that more support is required for the markets which have just been set up. In the 4 LAG areas experience has been quite different. In the Forth Valley area our experience has been very positive with 3 full markets and 4 satellite markets now up and running. Rural Perth & Kinross experience has also been good also with independent NeighbourFood hubs set up as well as the 2 supported ones by LEADER. Borders and Fife had more difficulties setting up markets and have one each with extra support provided to work with the new markets to build up their network of producers and customers.



### Community Broadband Officer

- Extension by 3 months
- 28 communities supported so far
- Work with another 3 communities to implement broadband network solutions
- Support the extended development of the Smart Digital Village project

With the Community Broadband project, AMK noted that SM to present later in the meeting so explained that the funding is to extend SM's contract is support of Smart Digital Village which has been exploring some activities very relevant to Covid response and recovery, such as the car parking project and other visitor management related issues..



#### Smart Digital Villages

- More pilot projects
    - Build on the National Park car parking monitoring project
    - Pilot in more remote/non Council owned car parks
    - Explore what type of user interface works best
    - Work with the development trusts in the use of sensor data for visitor management purposes
    - Explore other monitoring requirements of communities eg flooding
    - Pilot timber traffic monitoring in [Balquhidder glen](#)
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With the car parking monitoring, which involves installing sensors in the car parks, information can be relayed in real time to apps or website so visitors can see when car parks are full or almost full. Currently being piloted in Council owned car parks only until NP and Council are confident of it working.



#### Crowdfunding Coaches

- Extension of coaching programme in 8 of the 9 original areas
  - Now running until end of July
  - Focus on 1 to 1 coaching rather than training events
  - Looking for more projects to Crowdfund in FVL area
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With the Crowdfunding project, this has been extended by a further 3 months, although as one LAG area decided not to extend due to low uptake this has meant the budget could be stretched to a 4 month extension. Previous training events were recorded and can be used as a resource so they don't need to be replicated, the support will all be based on one to one coaching with projects.

No. of projects coached	LEADER Area	Pledges total
79	Fife	£111,972
71	Forth Valley & Lothian	£196,325
57	Kelvin Valley & Falkirk	£31,903
56	Greater Renfrewshire & Inverclyde	£21,078
63	Lanarkshire	£11,335
120	Rural Perth & Kinross	£487,376
120	Scottish Borders	£183,259
111	Tyne Esk	£93,138
78	West Lothian	£82,503
755	SUM	£1,218,889

Figure 1: Table of projects supported by LEADER area. (Full project breakdown in Appendix B).

AMK displayed the final report results to January 2021 (see above) showing for the £40,000 FVL spend, projects raised £196,325.

## 7. Project Presentations

### 7.1 Cycle Tourism

JC advised that despite lockdown restrictions, there is still lots going on in terms of creation of materials.

New printed route cards and PDFs – with the help of BC, produced a series of 4 day rides as PDFs to put on Visitscotland cycling pages website which have been really successful, also printed these route cards which will be distributed to tourism information centres, key businesses along the routes, accommodation providers, etc. once lockdown restrictions are lifted. Working on 4 two day trips and a few more day trips.

Held 4 cycle tourism webinars in November 2020 across 3 LEADER areas with around 60 participants and receive some really good feedback. Arranged 1-2-1 follow up sessions with businesses on digital marketing skills with an expert to help audit their online marketing and digital media and providing online top tips and advice.

Following last spring's success with ebike fast chargers in cafes and stops in the National Park, we've bought 8 more and will be rolled out across keys stops and cafés in the Forth Valley area.

Accessible for all route (N7) from Callander to Strathyre but a number of barriers prevent adaptive bike accessing routes properly. Working closely with Sustrans engineers working on solutions, particularly the one at Bochastle crossing. Tied to that was new Sustrans grant scheme which is to encourage partners to apply for funding to get barriers removed. Scheme went live in February but National Park and Forestry and Land Scotland were unable to meet deadline, hoping to apply to round 2.

Stirling Council also are looking at barrier removal in Callander as part of Spaces for People Fund.

<p>Most of the infrastructure for the Gravelfoyle trail has been delivered although waiting on the trail headboards being signed off by Forestry and Land Scotland. We had a Gravelfoyle pre-launch in December with a full page in the Herald, along with coverage in the Stirling Observer, the usual cycling magazines and online presence. Website, teaser film and brand are all ready to go, once installation plans are confirmed.</p> <p>Promotional cycle films have been produced which can be used by partner agencies to promote the area. Videos can be found at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q79pL5zvrjl">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q79pL5zvrjl</a></p>	
<p><b>7.2 Local Food and Drink Network</b></p> <p>In addition to the proposed Food and Drink Business Adaptation scheme which AMK had already covered, the network had organised the Forth Valley Virtual Food and Drink festival in October 2020 which grew to being a two week festival – with a couple of events being able to open as physical events including Achray Farm and Arnprior Farm pumpkins. The network is already thinking about the Forth Valley Food Fest for October 2021 – hoping COVID restrictions are lifted and can be bigger this year.</p> <p>CMcG noted this time last year we were considering the viability of the Forth Valley and Food and Drink Network but within a year we’ve achieved a lot. She recapped on the funding noting £5k from Connect Local to set up the network, awarded in excess of £25k from Scotland Food and Drink/Stirling Council to develop the network, along with benefiting from funding for the members for PR training and in December £5k from Scotland Loves Local to support and promote local places and businesses.</p> <p>She highlighted Scotland Loves Local funding to be spent by 31 March 2021, so used winter to develop campaign for Spring/Easter but still a bit early to promote getting out and about. She gave an overview of the campaign which includes an ‘interactive living map’ for the website to promote food and drink businesses.</p> <p>Social media is also being developed to encourage to buy from local producers to enjoy at scenic locations (all designated picnic spots) which are also shown on the ‘living map’. We’re also aware of waste and litter, so we plan to add a litter pick and bag to our logo to encourage people to take rubbish away with them.</p> <p>Lastly, thanks to the Cycling project 2 one minute films of The Broch café and Achray Farm were produced.</p>	
<p><b>7.3 Community Broadband and Smart Villages</b></p> <p>SM advised that he’s working on the hard to reach areas, although it’s been difficult getting contractors on site this year due to COVID. Managed to complete projects at Blair Drummond, Touch Estate and Gartness. Hoping Stronachlacher/Inversnaid, Aberfoyle and Kilbride extension will be ready March/April 2021.</p> <p>Smart Villages pilot project was demonstration for tourism in Gartness i.e. flood monitoring, footfall counter for West Highland Way and weather information. SM</p>	

noted the weather sensor is based within the local primary school and data is being incorporated into lessons. Businesses looking at how they can use this data to make informed decisions on the way forward.

SM advised this project has picked up a lot of press with an article in the Herald in December 2020 and Scottish Government have been heavily involved and a number of discussions on how they take this forward and roll it out on a national basis.

AMK had already mentioned some of the activities of the Smart Villages project earlier in the meeting but some developments being looked at are Balquhider to manage timber traffic, National Park and Stirling Council car parks monitoring at Aberfoyle, Callander, the Pier at Inversnaid, Balmaha and Drymen as part of the pilot project with contractors soon to be on site. Traffic monitoring, using the same sensors, on Dukes Pass, Invertrossachs Road and Balmaha to Rowendennan Road to monitor traffic flow and illegal parking, which we hope have in place for the start of summer. In discussions with Stathblane for flood monitoring sensors and Callander for flood monitoring and footfall counter.

SM reported a work in progress, along with BT, is looking at how connectivity can be used for interactive tourism. One area being looked at is a virtual walking trail at the Wallace Monument for the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

BC asked how can local village websites link into smart village information and provide links with project e.g. food, cycling tourism routes and support information? SM advised to get in touch with him direct. Currently looking at how sensors can be linked into local community/destination website. BC followed up if there is anything that can be done to link up the local websites although not sure how. SM advised he is asking various communities what websites they have available and making them aware of the project.

DJ expressed his incredible satisfaction in terms of what the presentations have done and how it's integrated in terms of the business and how it's working. I shouldn't be surprised but really brilliant. An excellent example of how what we deliver in terms of local development is the future and not the past.

## 8. Legacy Group presentation on Legacy Workshops



LEADER Legacy Project

- 5 themes = 5 online workshops
- Sustainable Economic Actions – 27 registered
- Resilient & Smart Communities – 32 registered
- Fostering Partnership Working – 25 registered
- Preparing Climate Actions - 35 registered
- Addressing Inequalities & Social Inclusion - 27 registered



AMK advised five workshops took place which were facilitated by Nikki Souter Associates. They were based on themes identified by the Legacy Group, and used the same themes as a brand for the brochure and film.

<p>AMK reported good promotion of the events through Stirling Council, social media and our contacts. Workshops were all well attended and required 2 breakout rooms for each session. They were kept strictly to an hour but sometimes felt it cut the discussion short.</p> <p>Consultants, Nikki Souter Associates, will produce a report for the LAG as a first part of the consultation process about the future, it's not a development strategy.</p> <p>DJ mentioned the main thing was to avoid being a wish list of projects or complaints. Some of the conversations went that way but a lot of them we got attitudes toward the themes and the future. What we instructed the consultants to provide was not a list of feedback but much more a framework to then use as our future strategy. Report should be ready in the next 2-3 weeks. This will feed into the next stage of the development.</p> <p>AMK reported how much participants enjoyed the sharing and hearing about other communities and hoped that something could be put in place for ongoing sharing/networking (like Zoom) in the future. She noted greater engagement because it's on Zoom, it made it more accessible to participants from all parts of our area, with Clackmannanshire and West Dunbartonshire communities represented more than in the past.</p> <p>After a discussion the LAG felt the workshops were very positive and shared optimism for the future.</p>	
<p><b>9. Any other business and date of Next meeting</b></p> <p>AMK flagged up that the Rural Parliament (virtual) is currently underway, 6-18 March 2021. This afternoon's session is on how digital is affecting rural Scotland – full details can be found at <a href="http://www.sra.scot">www.sra.scot</a>. She noted FVL LEADER were asked to take 2 virtual stands at the exhibition in the Food and Drink section.</p> <p>One stand is for Regional Food Hubs/Neighbourfood and the other is for the Wild Food Festival, which has been transferred over to Tir na Og who will run the festival in September, although no formal announcement yet due to COVID uncertainties.</p> <p><b>Date of Next meeting</b></p> <p>DJ suggested our next meeting should be around 3 months time (mid June). CP to send doodle poll.</p>	