

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING
Carrochan, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Headquarters

27 September 2017

1:30pm – 4:30pm

Minutes

Present:

Peter Sunderland	Business and Community (Chair)
Steve MacDonald	Stirling Council - Agency
Mike Ewart	Land Manager, Central Scotland Green Network Trust - Community
John Armstrong	Community, Stirlingshire
Lynne Cooper	Scottish Enterprise - Agency
Jason Clark	Community and Business
Susan Brooks	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency
Mike Strachan	Forestry Commission Scotland - Agency
Lynn Hamilton	VisitScotland – Agency (Vice Chair)
Paul Roberts	SNH - Agency
Colin Tennant	Historic Environment Scotland - Agency

Apologies:

Brian McColgan	West Dunbartonshire Council - Agency
Douglas Johnston	Community, Stirlingshire (Vice Chair)
Bridget Clark	Community, Stirlingshire
Julie McGrath	Community, Clackmannanshire TSi
Celia Burn	Community, West Dunbartonshire
Jim Livingstone	Clackmannanshire Council - Agency

In Attendance:

Anne-Michelle Ketteridge	LEADER Programme Manager
Rachel Sedman	LEADER Development Officer
Nikki Kenn	LEADER Development Officer
Irene Watterson	LEADER Claims Officer
Ashley Robinson	FVL Local Food & Drink Co-Ordinator
Caroline Paterson	New Claims Officer

	ACTIONS
<p>1. Welcome and Sederunt</p> <p>PS welcomed everyone thanked everyone for coming. He noted apologies from BC, BMcC, DJ, CB JMcG and JL. PS told the Members that CB is recuperating at home after having critical surgery. The LAG wishes her well and back to good health.</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>2. Quorum and Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>PS asked AMK if the meeting was quorate. She confirmed that it was overall, but not in terms of community/agency ratios. Paul Roberts, Lynne Cooper and Colin Tennant volunteered not to vote on today's projects in order to ensure quorum. PS thanked them for their assistance. Stirling Council has declared an interest in the Bannockburn House project as interim owner of the house and funder of some of the ineligible aspects of the project. Stirling Council has also declared an interest in the Community Broadband Project as match funder.</p> <p>3. 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 June. No-one had any issues and the Minutes were proposed as accurate by ME and seconded by PS.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>PS asked AMK to give to give an update on matters arising. AMK introduced RS and NK, the LAG's new Development Officers and SMacD as the Accountable Body Representative.</p> <p>At the last meeting, the LAG asked if they could get a copy of their comments together with their scores when they submitted them. AMK informed the LAG that the web designer had done this and now both scores and comments are showing on the LAG members' account on the website. The LAG agreed this was much better for their records.</p> <p>AMK reminded the LAG that at the last meeting, they approved the Wester Third Kota Cabins/Glamping Project with one of the conditions of grant being for the Applicant to consider if they could provide disabled access to at least one of the Kotas. BC and CB volunteered to be the LAG's delegated authority to check that the disabled access had been thoroughly explored and approve the project on the LAG's behalf. AMK informed the LAG that the Applicant welcomed the feedback from the LAG and has actually taken this further by making all three glamping pods with disabled access. On this basis, the project has been approved. PS thanked BC and CB on behalf of the LAG for their assistance.</p> <p>4. LEADER Update</p> <p>4.1 CLLD Working Group</p> <p>AMK gave a brief update on the CLLD (Community Led Local Development) Working Group which has been set up to raise awareness of the benefits of the LEADER approach to rural development. Discussions to be had are to ensure politicians know about the LEADER method and to broaden their understanding. AMK advised that a piece of work to consult all LAG members in Scotland was about to be advertised.</p>	<p>MINUTE APPROVED</p>

	ACTIONS
<p>The idea was to use an online discussion platform, possibly Viima, to explore what rural development might look like in the future. There will also be some face to face workshops, but the timescale was very tight as the idea was that the work would be ready to inform the work of the National Council of Rural Advisers which the Cabinet Secretary had set up to advise him on rural Scotland post Brexit and that was due to report back in early Spring.</p> <p>4.2 Accountable Bodies Meeting</p> <p>SMacD advised the LAG that he was not able to attend the recent AB meeting but Kyle Barrie attended in his place. He told the Members that KB described the meeting difficult to follow and had described it as ‘a bit of a rammie’. From KBs notes of the meeting, LARCs has been discussed and the comments were not all positive. Timelines had been discussed for this Programme as well as the recent LARCs training which seemed to have been well received by LAG staff. SMacD said that it sounded like not all areas were using LARCs in full as the Service Level Agreement didn’t mentioned it, although AMK added that this would probably create audit problems for areas not using LARCs so wouldn’t encourage this. SMacD advised that KB had also said there was nothing definitive on penalties as yet.</p> <p>MS advised that he heard that the length of time had been extended to 2022 for some EU programmes, SMacD said that structural funds have been given the 2022 date. AMK confirmed that formal guidance received was that that LEADER is still working towards a 2020 end date.</p> <p>5. Projects for discussion and decision</p> <p>5.1 Braeport Centre Feasibility Study for Redevelopments</p> <p>RS presented this project to the Members showing some photographs on screen and explaining Dunblane Development Trust has been managing the centre since 2004. In 2015, a business plan including community and user group consultation was produced in order to take the facility into community ownership. Stirling Council confirmed their decision to transfer ownership of the facility in April 2017 although the legal documents are not yet finalised.</p> <p>RS explained that the application to LEADER is for a feasibility study to develop their facility to be better suited to their users and to provide other essential services for the community, namely services for older people and local businesses including a dementia café and flexible office space.</p> <p>PS thanked RS and invited the Members to discuss this Application. The LAG thought it was a fairly straightforward project which would strengthen community empowerment and assist small businesses needing space and facilities. However, it was noted that the draft brief produced focused more on the architectural feasibility although financial feasibility needed to be explored too. The LAG was also concerned about the procurement method being used for this piece of work as the application implied they would only look at local</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>SMacD returned to the room</p> <p>5.3 Cycle Tourism Project</p> <p>RS presented this Project advising the Members that it was highlighted as a recommended action in the Rural Stirling Economic Action Plan, FVL LEADER Local Development Strategy and further discussed by the Strategic Activity sub-group and also at a scoping meeting in June. A project specific steering group has also been set up, due to the meeting in October if the LAG approves the project. BC has offered to sit on the steering group on behalf of the LAG, if the LAG is supportive.</p> <p>RS went on to say the project activities have been based on national research done by a number of key organisations as well as looking at projects such as the Scottish Border’s Leisure Cycling strategy and local research done by BC and the Strategic Paths Group.</p> <p>Overall, the project is focussed around bringing together cycle infrastructure and tourism activities that already exist in our area, promoting this all in a way that makes the sum greater than the parts and additionally finding the gaps and opportunities in the cycle tourism offering, and looking for creative ways to fill them with the help of LAG partners.</p> <p>The Project is looking for 100% LEADER funding on the basis that in-kind support will be provided by partners and new activities highlighted by this project will be funded by partners such as Sustrans and Cycling Scotland who can only fund capital projects.</p> <p>RS advised that it fits within the LEADER strategy under four out of five of our priorities including strengthening the rural economy, building community resilience, increasing access to our natural and cultural environment and realising the economic and community potential of our strategic landscape assets.</p> <p>PS thanks RS and invited the Members to discuss.</p> <p>LH advised that with her VisitScotland hat on, cycle tourism brings £239M per year to the Scottish economy with mountain biking alone resulting in £48.5M GVA. This is why the Strategic Group had been so keen to develop the project and employ someone to work exclusively on developing the cycle tourism product of the area and to promote the excellent cycling facilities which already exist. It was also noted that mountain bike tourism is a growth sector for Scottish Enterprise.</p> <p>The LAG were very supportive of this LAG-led project and wanted to encourage linking with neighbouring LAGs such as KVF LEADER with their Canal By Bike Project which is also being developed. The LAG also wanted the emphasis of the job to be less about reviewing what there is already and more towards action. Also recommended making links with the Scottish Enterprise Tourism Team. The</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>key to the success of the project will be the ability of the person to engage with businesses in the area.</p> <p>The LAG approved this project with standard conditions.</p> <p>5.4 Community Broadband Officer</p> <p>SMacD left the room</p> <p>RS presented this project advising that the improvement of rural broadband was explicitly written into the LEADER Local Development Strategy both in terms of improving access to vital services for rural communities and strengthening the rural economy but also in terms of community empowerment.</p> <p>RS advised that although identified as a priority for the area, few applications have been received, and consultation with groups has found there are barriers due to the technical and complicated nature of the broadband projects which meant that communities that did not have technically confident volunteers were less likely to take forward broadband projects.</p> <p>RS said that after much discussion at the Broadband Delivery Group and also discussions with individual communities, it was identified that a person to add capacity to a number of communities is needed, who will have the knowledge and time to progress the improvement of broadband services to several areas. With the employment of the Local Food and Drink Co-ordinator, we seem to have hit upon a model for development that is well received and works. It is proposed that this Officer will work alongside the part-time Broadband contractor at Stirling Council, so wouldn't be working in isolation, although in a role with a greater community focus and targeting particular communities.</p> <p>PS thanked RS and asked the Members for their comments.</p> <p>The LAG agreed that improving broadband will benefit the rural economy by benefitting existing businesses and attracting new business and potentially new residents, and welcomed the potential of this project's hands-on support to enable and assist communities to find solutions to improve their broadband provision. The project was an excellent fit with the Local Development Strategy and good value for money as it was piggy-backing onto the existing work of the LEADER team.</p>	<p>APPROVED WITH STANDARD CONDITIONS</p>
<p>The LAG approved this project unanimously with Standard Conditions.</p> <p>SMacD returned to the room</p> <p>As this is the last LAG meeting for IW as she was moving on to pastures new, PS took the opportunity of a comfort break to speak on behalf of the Members to thank IW for her work over the last few LEADER Programmes as Claims Officer and presented her with a card and a token of their appreciation.</p> <p>6. Feedback from Subgroups/Working Groups</p>	<p>APPROVED WITH STANDARD CONDITIONS</p>

	ACTIONS
<p>6.1 Strategic Activity Group</p> <p>AMK advised that the Strategic Activity Group has managed to squeeze two meetings in between the last and this LAG meeting. In addition to the two LAG led projects at today’s meeting the group have been keeping an eye on the 112 Expressions of Interest which have been received. The group had also been discussing some large cycling infrastructure related capital projects expected for the December LAG meeting – including a very large one in Bowling in West Dumbartonshire.</p> <p>A project AMK wanted to discuss with the LAG was the Japanese Garden in Clackmannanshire. This was approved in November 2016 to fund the approach and gate into the Gardens. The Applicant already had planning permission but Clackmannanshire Council’s Roads Department had overruled the permission due to the access off the A91 as it was classed as too dangerous and suggested that the entrance to the Garden should be rerouted to the back of the Garden. This would mean that the stone wall would have to be knocked through, a new gate to be constructed and new signage for directing visitors to the Garden would have to be made. AMK advised that as these were significant changes to the original project, LAG approval had to be sought. AMK distributed the plans to allow the Members to see what was now required for this project to go ahead and changes between the budget headings.</p> <p>Also, the Applicant would like to add to the costs a Project Manager to ensure the works are carried out smoothly – a position for 6 months and £8K more to the Application, and asked the LAG for its thoughts.</p> <p>The LAG are still very keen on the project going ahead and being supported by LEADER, as the gardens could have great economic impact to the surrounding villages.</p> <p>AMK informed the LAG that not all the match is yet in place as confirmation is now due in November. The Applicant has advised that the Garden will be officially opened in May 2018 and are working to this deadline.</p> <p>The LAG unanimously approved the change to the entrance arrangements and increased costs as proposed. The LAG also unanimously agreed to grant the extra £8K for the project management costs as they agreed the importance of this change being managed correctly.</p> <p>6.2 Communications Working Group</p> <p>NK gave the LAG an update on the communications work she has been leading on since she started in post. She has been representing the LAG on the Scottish LEADER Working Group which has been working on: templates for LAG usage, social media tips guide, guidance on video, farm diversification events, promoting nationally and locally in each area, made a short video on FVL’s tea plantation project, driving up FVL’s Facebook ‘likes’.</p>	<p>CHANGE TO PROJECT AGREED</p>

	ACTIONS
<p>NK then asked the LAG if, and how, they communicated the LEADER message/spread good news stories about projects. A show of hands re social media use such as Facebook showed some LAG members were quite active, some less so. NK suggested that those who do use social media liked the FVL LEADER facebook page and share our posts when possible, and followed us on Twitter/retweeting if comfortable.</p> <p>SMac suggested she contacted the SC marketing officer to see how they could support the LEADER communications.</p> <p>6.3 Local Food and Drink Strategy</p> <p>AR gave a presentation on what she has been doing as the FVL Local Food and Drink Co-ordinator.</p> <p>AR explained that she has been guided by the Steering Group, made up of LH, AMK, CMcG, CB, BMcC, SMacD (or KB) and Forth Environment Link. Her activity to date has been made up of meetings, information gathering by attending national and local events and starting the pull together the outline of the strategy.</p> <p>As part of her research, Stirling Council has asked her to help them find potential projects to apply to their £50K for shared kitchen facilities fund and she had been helping to identify possible projects, including possible mobile kitchen facilities – potentially Council owned and hired out at reasonable rates to businesses, organisations, or community groups to showcase their good food practices for use at events/festivals – and a low-risk, safe space option for existing food businesses to try.</p> <p>AR displayed photos of Borrowmeadow Farm which is derelict but is located close to the shore-line at Forthside and owned by Stirling Council which has the potential to be rejuvenated into a city farm with rentable space/service building/bunk house/outside event space with WCs/outdoor picnic area and outdoor market area.</p> <p>AR reported on the Local Food Business Network meeting (LFDC), held on 12 September. This is a continuation of the regular meetings that Forth Environment Link have set up and facilitated in the past. Included a range of producers, farmers, retailers, and processors from across the region.</p> <p>The meeting purpose was to facilitate networking and catch-up amongst members, inform the group of any relevant food news and updates (from Stirling Council, FVL LEADER, and Forth Environment Link), get feedback for the Strategy, and attend a Connect Local workshop on branding and marketing.</p> <p>Feedback for the Strategy centred around the questions of barriers to starting up and scaling up a food business. The main needs identified are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, low-risk commercial kitchen space 	<p>NK TO CONTACT LISA CAMPBELL</p>

	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person-resource to continue momentum of the local food group/activities • Alternative routes to market that cater to small scale (such as a wholesale 'Food Assembly' model) • More networking opportunities to continue sharing best practice and increase collaboration • More avenues to celebrate/signpost to local food (such as a local food directory) <p>These were just a few examples of the meetings and topics likely to be reflected in the strategy, she has many more so invited the members to chat with her out with the meeting for more detail.</p> <p>The Steering Group are looking for more members and so AR asked the Members if anyone was interested on sitting in the Group to contact her. LC thought someone from SE might be keen to be more involved but would need to discuss with colleagues back in the office as she was here today as a substitute for Janice Kennedy.</p> <p>PS thanked AR for her update.</p>	
<p>7. Project Allocations and Projects Requiring LAG Attention</p> <p>AMK displayed the Project Allocations Update on screen showing that the total allocations so far is £593,903 which is 29% of the total amount.</p> <p>AMK advised the Members that £393,763 has been approved for community projects (33% of the community pot), with £106,101 being approved for rural enterprise projects (38% of the rural enterprise pot) and only 2% of the co-operation pot being allocated to Co-Operation projects.</p> <p>AMK was expecting more farm diversification and rural enterprise projects were coming to the December meeting. She also circulated a sheet about the remaining budget and what amounts she was expecting to be requested at the December LAG meeting, advising that more attention will need to be given to developing Co-operation projects – which may need to be LAG-led.</p>	
<p>8. AOCB</p> <p>PS reminded the LAG that the December LAG meeting would also be the AGM.</p>	
<p>9. Date of next Meeting and AGM</p> <p>The next meeting will be held in the Engine Shed in Stirling on 13th December 2017 with HES hosting from 10am and finishing with a lunch.</p>	