

FORTH VALLEY & LOMOND LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING

Dumyat Community Centre, Menstrie

21 March 2018

10.30am – 1pm

Minutes

Present:

Douglas Johnston	Community, Stirlingshire (Chair)
Mike Strachan	Forestry Commission Scotland – Agency
Steve MacDonald	Stirling Council - Agency
Lynn Hamilton	VisitScotland – Agency
Bridget Clark	Community, Stirlingshire
Julie McGrath	Community, Clackmannanshire TSI
Jim Livingstone	Clackmannanshire Council - Agency
Jason Clark	Community and Business
Susan Brooks	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency
Brian McColgan	West Dunbartonshire Council - Agency
Sue Wyllie	Community, Stirlingshire

Apologies:

Janice Kennedy	Scottish Enterprise - Agency
Colin Tennant	Historic Environment Scotland - Agency
Paul Roberts	SNH - Agency
Mike Ewart	Central Scotland Green Network Trust - Community
Ashley Robinson	FVL Local Food & Drink Co-Ordinator

In Attendance:

Caroline Paterson	Claims Officer
Anne-Michelle Ketteridge	LEADER Programme Manager
Rachel Sedman	LEADER Development Officer
Nikki Kenn	LEADER Development Officer
Sarah Phillips	LEADER Development Officer
Hanna Deblen	LEADER Project Assistant
Fiona Jackson	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority - Agency

	ACTIONS
1. Welcome and Sederunt DJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from JK, CT, PR, ME & AR. A particular welcome was given to Hanna Deblen who is an intern working with the LEADER team from Sweden and will be assisting with some of the LAG projects over the next 3 months. DJ then wished to acknowledge the great support the LAG had received from his predecessor, Peter Sunderland, who had decided to step down due to other work commitments.	

	ACTIONS
<p>2. Quorum and Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>AMK reported a number of conflicts of interest in today's projects for assessment:</p> <p>Art 4 You Scotland Ltd – JC (advisor to business) Falls of Leny Visitor Destination – SB & FJ (applicant), MS (landowner of part of project), PR (match funder) & SMacD (match funder) Loch Lomond Watersports Hub – SB & FJ (project partner) Bowling Viaduct Phase 2 – BMcC & CT (project partners) Brenachoile Pier – JC (advisor to business) Loch Earn Railway Path - SB & FJ (project partner) Tyndrum Bike Track – Design – AMK noted SMacD no longer has a conflict of interest</p> <p>The meeting was quorate although noted that when the Tyndrum Bike Park project, the Art4 You Scotland project, the Holiday Lets at Woodhill Fishery, and the Brenachoile Pier project, an Agency member would need to desist from voting. JL volunteered to desist from voting on the Tyndrum Bike Park project, LH volunteered to desist from voting on the Art4You project, BMcC volunteered to desist from voting on the Woodhill Fishery project, and SMacD volunteered to desist on the Brenachoile Pier project.</p> <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 2017. No-one had any issues and the Minutes were proposed by LH and seconded by JMcG</p> <p>4. Budget Position and Proposed Assessment Procedure</p> <p>AMK previously circulated budget allocation update paper and advised Members that the LAG is now in the situation where we have more projects than funds available in the Community pot. She added that the Brenachoile Pier was being resubmitted as major delays to the start of the project meant it required re-assessment. She noted that funds are still available in the rural enterprise, farm diversification and cooperation pots.</p> <p>In terms of a fair assessment procedure in light of not enough funds being available, the Strategic Group and Chairs group propose that the LAG discusses all projects first as normal, then identify any projects that could be funded from another source, or could proceed with a reduced grant, then go through the remaining community projects, ranking them in order of preference. Once projects up to £455,600 are awarded those left will go on a reserve list. This was agreed by the LAG as a fair and transparent process.</p> <p>AMK advised that there was a possibility that the Scottish Government would allow LAGS to move funds from the co-operation pot into other pots, although it was not clear when this would happen, or indeed whether it would happen at all. This would allow us to create a reserve list for when or if this happens. SMacD reported that at the last Accountable Bodies meeting it was discussed and the Scottish Government</p>	<p>MINUTE APPROVED</p>

	ACTIONS
<p>was being encouraged for this to happen sooner rather than later, otherwise LAGS wouldn't have time to allocate it before the programme closed.</p> <p>LAG Members agreed to this way forward and for the projects to be presented in order of which received the highest score at the pre-LAG scoring stage.</p> <p>MS left the meeting.</p> <p>5. Projects for discussion and decision</p> <p>Bowling Viaduct Phase 2</p> <p>BMcC left the room.</p> <p>RS started her presentation with a short video.</p> <p>She advised project is part of a comprehensive regeneration programme designed to reinvigorate the Bowling Basin area as a vibrant and economically active destination. Phase 2 Viaduct works will create a new walkway and cycle path utilising the historical viaduct which had long ago stopped being used.</p> <p>RS reported positive comments received from the Members including excellent leverage potential, an innovative approach and idea, significant impact on the cultural heritage environment and very good route for cycle tourism project to promote. She noted Members comments including a lot of support for the project from a strategic cycling and tourism perspective, but there was a need for signage and mapping to be improved and there were comments regarding the level of LEADER grant being requested (£350k) considering what's left in the pot. Match funding was still to be confirmed from Sustrans although a very supportive letter had been provided from them, ownership of the land needed to be finalised and planning permission was still required.</p> <p>DJ thanked RS and invited Members to discuss. The LAG asked if we could contribute less? RS explained that the question had been asked, and they had replied that they would be happy with whatever they received, but it may take longer to finalise the package. She added they already have a long list of funders on board and it's possible that Sustrans may be able to give them more. The LAG then questioned if project could be cut back? The LAG noted any delays in the project would have an impact as it's very close to end of LEADER Programme. LAG members pointed out that this would be a significant legacy project and was as strong fit with the LDS. It was also noted that the project is not far from the station, but no mention of linkages to the station had been made and given the scale of the project, and economic impact assessment of the project once it was finished would be useful.</p> <p>BMcC returned to room.</p>	
<p>Loch Earn Railway Path (LERP)</p> <p>SB & FJ left the room</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>RS presented project to Members advising that Sustrans funding has already confirmed their funding for what is being referred to as Phase 4 of constructing sections of an all access path which will provide an off-road route between Lochearnhead and Comrie, as well as linking to NCN7 and forming part of the longer Iona to St Andrews Pilgrims route. Planning permission was not yet in place.</p> <p>DJ thanked RS and invited Members to discuss. Members commented on the strong strategic link with the LAG's cycle tourism project, and also the fact that the full funding package was already confirmed. The contribution from LEADER of £50k would lever in quite a lot from other funders which made the project attractive, as well as the track record of the community group with their previous phases. It was then asked how would the group promote the new route as a marketing budget had not been included. It was noted that the group had a Facebook page but that was not enough for tourists coming to the area.</p> <p>SB & FJ returned to the room.</p>	
<p>Tyndrum Bike Tracks Park – Design</p> <p>NK presented this project to Members explaining Strathfillan Community Development Trust (SCDT) are requesting funds to employ someone to work with the local community to design a bike skills park in Tyndrum Community Woodland. This development will contribute to improving the community's amenities and economic resilience, complementing the new section of cycle path previously funded by the LAG at Tyndrum.</p> <p>Local demand for such a development was identified in The Community Action Plan (CAP). The CAP also identified a lack of tourist facilities, and this project could meet that requirement.</p> <p>A previous feasibility study into demand for bike hire suggested installing a bike skills park before embarking on a bike hire scheme as this could provide a draw to keep visitors in the area, which will have economic benefits to the local businesses.</p> <p>DJ thanked NK and invited members to discuss. The LAG noted that this was for the design phase only, and was only for a small amount, so they queried the economic impact. Members discussed the benefit for the wider area including increasing dwell time. The LAG questioned the location of the site as it needed to be close to the centre of Tyndrum. NK replied that the exact location was on the details to be explored as part of the design phase. LAG suggested contacting Comrie Croft regarding potential and how can it be developed.</p> <p>The LAG discussed how businesses might benefit from the project and the economic benefit a bike park can bring to an area, as it was a similar conundrum with the path project. AMK added that she had been impressed that when she did the path project inspection, she could see that some of the tourism businesses along the route had already started building connecting paths to the cycle route which would suggest they were deriving economic benefit from the path.</p>	

	ACTIONS
DJ thanked everyone for the discussion and moved on to the next project for consideration.	
<p>Falls of Leny Visitor Destination</p> <p>SMacD, SB & FJ left the room</p> <p>NK presented this project advising that although the LAG had seen a previous application from this project relating to the design element of the project, this was now for the construction phase of the project. However the feasibility study had just been completed and had indicated higher than originally expected costs so they are now only looking for LEADER to fund the construction of the bridge. The late submission of the detailed costs regarding the project showed some ineligible costs had been included in error and this would need to be rectified. The applicant proposes to look at different funding packages for the Victorian walkway, carpark and tracks. NK displayed and ran through some of the comments from LAG scoring. They have also just advised that they are proposing to match fund the bridge with a Crowdfunding campaign.</p> <p>DJ thanked NK and invited Members to discuss. The LAG questioned the timing of the other elements i.e. carpark, walkway, etc. and asked how hopeful are they of funding for these elements? NK replied that the applicant was hopeful, but the decisions on these other funds were some way down the line. LAG then queried what would happen if the other elements aren't successful with raising the required funds. Would the LAG be funding a bridge that didn't link to anything? LAG agreed that there are lots of unanswered questions and ring-fencing money for this just now could risk funding being wasted if the match funding for the bridge could not be confirmed in time. It was also noted that all the consultation work to date had been with the wider community and none had been specifically targeted at businesses, as it would be very interesting to hear the views of the Callander businesses regarding how the new bridge would improve the local economy.</p> <p>DJ concluded the discussion and moved to the next project on the agenda.</p> <p>SMacD, SB & FJ returned to the room</p>	
<p>Art 4 You Scotland Ltd.</p> <p>JC left the room</p> <p>NK presented this project to Members advising that it is to take on bigger premises alongside Oakwood Garden Centre and to refurbish this new space to make it fit for purpose (including new equipment and supplies) for an art school which will double the number of classes on offer and a growth in holiday/tourist offerings enabling the business to grow and make it more sustainable in the long term.</p> <p>NK advised how she had been impressed at how organised and focussed the applicant had been with the application process, and had shown an impressive amount of support from the community. The decision from Creative Scotland regarding the match funding is expected on 20 April.</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>NK noted LAG raised some concern over 6 year lease but advised LEADER only require control of asset for 5 years beyond payment of final claim.</p> <p>DJ thanked NK and invited members to discuss. The LAG queried £12k for PR Agency. NK had asked the applicant about this and this is because it's a big opportunity to generate and grow the business and they need to do this strategically and coherently. The LAG agreed that for a project like this to make the impact they were proposing then this level of marketing budget was required. The LAG also agreed it fits well with the local area where arts and crafts are growing in importance and interest. It was also noted that this project will be mutually beneficial for the neighbouring Oakwood Garden Centre who already have a car park and café. Potential gains for other local businesses with growth in weekend and holiday workshops bringing people to the area and the plans to develop more art based holidays gave the project a link with surrounding businesses and potentially also the John Muir Way. The LAG thought this was an excellent project.</p> <p>DJ concluded the discussion and moved onto the penultimate project for consideration.</p> <p>JC returned to the room.</p>	
<p>Holiday Lets at Woodhill Fishery</p> <p>RS presented this project to the Members advising it's to convert an existing building into 2 self-catering holiday lets on the bank of a fishing loch, using business diversification to secure the long-term future and increased employment of the organisation and bringing more visitors to Clackmannanshire.</p> <p>DJ thanked RS and invited members to discuss. The LAG noted they would have liked to have seen more direct market research to evidence demand for this specific site and the accommodation proposed. LAG agreed that it's a good opportunity for Clackmannanshire but raised a few concerns such as the high number of people expected to stay in such as small space, especially if it was expected to be a quality experience. They also queried the need for electric radiators when an air source heat pump was going to be installed. Also the costs did not seem to be detailed enough. RS advised she has requested Applicant get quotes before the meeting but he advised he was planning to do this once he had found out if the application was successful. LAG then raised concerns regarding Applicant building a house for him to live in. RS advised that applicant is serious about project and there is a clause in his planning permission for the property to be vacant for 4 weeks of the year. The LAG also asked about wheelchair accessibility as this had been requested of previous accommodation applications. It was agreed that this should become standard when supporting accommodation projects.</p> <p>The LAG said they would be uncomfortable approving the project as it stood and would be more inclined to a deferral.</p>	DEFERRED
<p>Brenachoile Pier (resubmission)</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>NK presented the project to Members reminding them the project is to restore the currently disused Brenachoile Pier to allow it to serve as a fully functioning pier for short cruises on Loch Katrine and to renovate the boat house to serve as visitor shelter and information/orientation point. The project had been delayed by more than a year as the applicant has been focussed on delivering their other LEADER project – the Ecopods project. This has meant the LAG is required to reconsider whether they want to continue to support the project.</p> <p>DJ thanked NK and invited members to discuss. The LAG confirmed that the applicant is currently in breach of its grant offer as they are over 1 year behind, so are considering this application alongside the other new applications coming in. The LAG noted that there wasn't much detail on what would go in the information centre and that the applicant had not provided any additional information to strengthen their application since they last looked at the project, which surprised the LAG as they felt the project was weak on the detail of the project and justification of why they needed LEADER money. The LAG then questioned match funding. NK advised the applicant has said it would come from ticket sales but it was not clear whether this was from future ticket sales or previous ticket sales. AMK to clarify if it's from this year or next year's trading as this is an eligibility issue. The Strategic Group had also looked at the project in the context of the LEADER limited funds, with a view to whether other funding might be available, and had wondered whether this project could qualify for a loan from Social Investment Scotland because of their trading activity.</p> <p>JC returned to the room.</p>	
<p>Loch Lomond Watersports Hub – Phase 1 (Design)</p> <p>SB & FJ left the room</p> <p>RS presented the project to the Members advising that it's for design and costs for a new watersports hub at Loch Lomond, and will include exploring land ownership issues and planning permission as well. A sustainable 'home for watersports' on Loch Lomond for local clubs, tourists and the economic development of the area. She then ran through some of the scores and comments.</p> <p>DJ thanked RS and invited members to discuss. A long discussion ensued about the potential for the project and whether the currently proposed project was too focussed on the needs of the clubs and their membership rather than an aspirational facility for all to use. The LAG could understand why the project had developed the way it had as it was being driven by these membership organisations, who understandably were focussed on the needs of their members. This could be an amazing facility on Loch Lomond, with wide appeal to many national and international visitors, and could also be a centre for international water events. However this was not reflected in the current business plan, but also the LAG felt it should not be the responsibility of the membership groups to lead on such a strategic development on Loch Lomond – although would clearly need to be one of the partners sitting round the table. The LAG felt that the business plan and the whole project needed to be revisited and led by an organisation with a wider tourism and recreation focus. The new project should incorporate the needs of the clubs but these should not dominate the use or ambition of the new hub, which might also</p>	

	ACTIONS
<p>include hosting major sports events. An income stream would also be required to run the hub and this had not been reflected in the business plan. On this basis, the LAG decided to reject the project as proposed.</p> <p>LAG voted to reject.</p> <p>SB & FJ returned to the room.</p>	REJECTED
<p>Project Decisions</p> <p>Having discussed all the projects, DJ invited all members to rank the order of the projects they wanted to see supported. To aid this process, AMK circulated a project summary with the amounts requested, dates, match funding confirmed or not, and any other outstanding issues.</p>	
<p>Bowling Viaduct</p> <p>LAG voted to approve a reduced amount of £300,000 subject to confirmation of match funding, confirmation of ownership of land and provision of an economic report at the end of the project.</p>	APPROVED WITH SPECIFIC CONDITIONS
<p>Loch Earn Railway Path</p> <p>Approval of £50,000 subject to planning permission approval and provision of detail on how they are going to promote route.</p>	APPROVED WITH SPECIFIC CONDITION
<p>Tyndrum Bike Tracks – design phase</p> <p>Approval of £5,000 subject to confirmation of match funding and agreement to produce a report on the economic benefit of bike park after construction phase.</p>	APPROVED WITH SPECIFIC CONDITION
<p>Leny Falls Visitor Destination</p> <p>The LAG voted to defer their decision until there was clarification of eligible project costs, the match funding was in place – particularly the crowdfunding campaign - and also some certainty over the funding for the Victorian walkway and car parking which were crucial for bridge being a success.</p>	DEFERRED
<p>Holiday Lets at Woodhill Fishery</p> <p>The LAG voted to Defer the project until the following information was provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of internal layout plan and clarification over numbers to be accommodated 2. Evidence that at least one of the accommodation units will be wheelchair accessible 3. Market research being provided on who will use the accommodation and how accommodation will be designed to accommodate their particular needs 4. Provision of further breakdown of costs 5. Preparation of a risk assessment and safety plan for site 	DEFERRED

	ACTIONS
<p>Brenachoile Pier</p> <p>The LAG unanimously voted to defer subject to projections being provided on number of new cruises, cruise passenger number and income generated as a result, clarification over match funding (future income cannot be used as match funding), detail provided on what information will go into the information centre and encouragement to explore other funding solutions such as loan funding (Social Investment Scotland).</p>	DEFERRED
<p>6. Crowdfunding Co-operation Proposal (FVL Leading)</p> <p>RS explained to Members that Crowdfunding has been under discussion for a long time now, with it being raised initially by the Strategic Group as a possible legacy project following LEADER, and then Stirling commissioning a Crowdfunding portal for the Stirling area along with some basic training for staff from the Council and partner organisations. More recently, the LEADER workshop in February on different funding mechanisms included a session on Crowdfunding as the way to go. All the way through though has been an emphasis on the importance of knowing what you're doing and the time to commit to running a campaign properly – with Crowdfunder having produced a lot of online training materials, and also having a small team of 3 coaches for the whole of the UK who trawl the Crowdfunder portal looking for projects they think would benefit from coaching. This training and resourcing requirement has been highlighted as being essential for some projects to make them successful as opposed to mediocre. This training or coaching element is the basis of this Crowdfunding co-operation project. There are currently ten LAGs interested in having a coach in their area, although recognising the value of the coaches working together to learn and get good ideas from each other. RS advised that the research showed that with expert coaching, project success rate goes from 31% to 70%.</p> <p>RS advised that, as discussed previously, the proposal is that FVL would be the lead LAG on the project, which was the reason why this is being discussed here first before going to other LAG areas. FVL would take lead with each LAG contributing £40,000. As there just wasn't enough time to prepare all the paperwork prior to the LAG meeting, AMK asked the LAG if they would consider assessing the project between LAG meetings to give the project the best chance of success, as the procurement process would likely take quite some time and this couldn't be started until the LAG had approved the project.</p> <p>LAG agreed to the written procedure between LAG meetings.</p>	LAG AGREED TO WRITTEN PROCEDURE
<p>7. Update on LAG Strategic Projects</p> <p>AMK checked that everyone had received Ashley's update on the Local Food and Drink project which was circulated before meeting. She asked if anyone had any questions, or wanted to discuss any of content of the strategy further to raise this with her or Ashley outwith the meeting.</p>	

	ACTIONS
In terms of the Cycle Tourism Project and Community Broadband project, both these recruitment processes had recently been completed and AMK advised that Jane Beaton had started as the Cycle Tourism Officer on 9 March and Shaun Marley will start as Community Broadband Officer on 3 April. BC said she had agreed to sit on the Steering Group of the Cycle Tourism project to represent the LAG's views, so if anyone wanted her to raise anything at any point, to let her know.	
<p>8. Projects requiring LAG attention</p> <p>There were no projects requiring immediate LAG attention.</p>	
<p>9. AOCB</p> <p>AMK noted that a blessing was due to take place in Balquhiddy for the Balquhiddy Community Broadband project on Friday, 23 March. She asked if anyone would be able to attend. SMacD said he would be attending on behalf of the Council and would be happy to attend on behalf of the LAG as well. This was agreed.</p>	
<p>10. Date of next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 20 June 2018 at 10am – venue to be confirmed. <i>(This has subsequently been confirmed as Gargunnoch Community Centre in Gargunnoch).</i></p>	