

MINUTES

Local Action Group – LEADER Group Meeting

Thursday 29th October 2015, 2pm

Held at: Douglas Arms Hotel, Castle Douglas

Present: **Heather Brash (chair) (HB)** Jenny Wilson (JW)
Harry Harbottle (HH) Chick McKenna (ChM)
Isobel Henkelmann (IH) Heather Hall (HHall)
Ed Forrest (EF) Clair McFarlan (CM)
Rob Wells (RW)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Gary Davidson (GD)
Derek Hextall (DH)

Apologies: Norman Burns

Welcome

Heather Brash welcomed everyone to the first official meeting of this group and asked for a quickround of introductions and backgrounds.

Delegation of Responsibilities to LEADER team

Items discussed under this heading will be taken forward to next meeting of Strategic Management Group (SMG) so that decision can be taken on behalf of full LAG. Delegation of certain responsibilities allows daily operations to continue more easily without requiring individual approval from LAG meetings.

Expenditure: Agreed £1500 ceiling for expenditure on a single purchase. This was felt to be a sufficient amount for the day-to-day running of the programme but it was noted that this can be reviewed at the programme midpoint.

Action: HB to take decision to SMG

'Change Request' Threshold: Agreed the following threshold criteria, barring any changes by Scottish Government, which are the same as in the previous programme.

- Any budget changes up to 25% in any budget heading can be decided on by the finance coordinator.
- Any budget changes between 25% and 50% can be decided on by the LEADER coordinator.
- Any budget changes between 50% and 75% can be decided on by the Chair of the group under which the project was supported.
- Any budget changes between 75% and 100% of any budget heading must be circulated to the group members. The decision will be made based on the majority of the answers received.
- Any new budget headings must be circulated to the group members. The decision will be made based on the majority of the answers received.
- Any other changes such as new contact details etc. can be decided upon by the finance coordinator and the LEADER coordinator.

Action: HB to take decision to SMG

Overseas business travel/Conference attendance: Agreed that the team are given general approval for travel both nationally and overseas, as well as for attendance at conferences, where appropriate for business needs. This approval will be taken to the Accountable Body for a similar general agreement.

Action: HB to take decision to SMG; NH to provide updates on agreement with Accountable Body

Application Deadlines and Process

Deadlines are fixed to allow applicants to be made aware of stages and process. An additional stage deadline has been added to allow an opportunity for feedback to be provided by LAG prior to application arriving for decision. All applications which reach the LAG should have been screened for eligibility by the team.

5% private 'match' funding

Previous programme had a requirement for applicants to provide a minimum of 5% match funding from a private source, which could include in-kind donations. This requirement is not present in the guidance for the current programme but it has also been stated that in-kind donations will no longer be recognised as eligible for matching.

Discussion took place regarding the need for a minimum level of match versus proof of an ability to manage the necessary cash flow.

Agreed that there would be no minimum level of private match funding however applicants would be expected to provide evidence of community buy-in and financial management for duration of project. DH to manage expectations of applicants when dealing with initial contact.

Expressions of Interest

Discussion took place regarding some EoI's already received which have requested a significant contribution from LEADER. Question was raised if there should be an upper limit on how much LEADER will provide to a single project.

Agreed it would be unusual to provide support of over £150,000 to any one project. However applications would be considered on their own merits and higher amounts could be offered to the right projects.

Meeting locations/venues

Agreed that meetings should alternate between two venues, one in Dumfries and one in Newton Stewart. Meetings should be scheduled to begin in the afternoon but this could be revised if an agenda suggested additional meeting time would be required.

AOCB

Membership Organisations: Discussion took place regarding providing support to organisations who limit their membership based on certain criteria. It is expected that any such organisation applying to LEADER would need to show benefit to everyone, not just the club itself, otherwise would be unlikely to be eligible.

Group Name: It was raised that there was a potential lack of clarity regarding the way in which this group is described. The whole LAG is known as the LEADER LAG and this group being known as the LEADER Group can lead to confusion. Additional group descriptor to be considered once application form finalised by Scottish Government.

Community Councils: Three new Community Councils have been created in the West of the region since the launch of the new programme who may not be aware that LEADER is open.

Action: GD to ensure contact database is fully up-to-date and also to contact new groups directly



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Communication and Publicity: The weekly e-newsletter providing information of activity in the region has been well received and used as an example in other LEADER areas. Question was raised regarding public awareness of LAG membership. No contact details to be publicised but was considered potentially useful to make a list of LAG members available to applicants.

HB thanked all for attendance and closed meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

9th December 2015 – The Usual Place, Dumfries – 2pm

