

## MINUTES

### Local Action Group – Rural Enterprise Group Meeting

Wednesday 8 March 2017, 2pm

Held at The Usual Place

Present	Gill Khosla (Chair) (GK) Heather Brash (HB) Teresa Dougall (TD)	Sharon Glendinning (SG) Lesley Jackson (LJ) Judith Johnson (JJ)
Staff	Ellen Grant (EG) Nicola Hill (NH)	Jessie Mason (JM)
Apologies	Gill Dykes Amanda Hannah	Eva Milroy Doug Wilson

### 1 Welcome & Apologies

1.1 Chair, Gill Khosla welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Gill Dykes, Amanda Hannah, Eva Milroy and Doug Wilson and thanked Heather Brash for joining the group to ensure we are quorate.

1.2 **Declarations of Interest:** there were none noted.

#### 1.3 Action points from previous meeting

- LARCS feedback to be raised with Scottish Government – it was noted that there had been no response received.
- Team to revise information in Project Plan – complete.
- Arrange LARCs training workshop – this had been publicised to LAG members but no uptake.

### 2 Minutes of previous Meeting held on Thursday 17 November 2016

2.1 Minutes were proposed by JJ and seconded by TD. Minutes were approved.

2.2 Matters arising – In the June meeting Happy Hooves was deferred for electronic approval as LAG members wanted more information. Subsequently the LAG approved by email on 15 July and the project started on 15 August. The Solway Bees Project is withdrawing from the Programme.

### 3 Consideration of Applications

**EG advised members that all project decisions are based on Scottish Government issued Guidance version 4.0 P00041/R054 –Bellymack Hill Farm Kite Feeding Station**

The total project cost is £43,873.92 and the applicant is applying for £21,873.92, which represents 49.85% intervention. All match funding is evidenced and the project is technically eligible for support.

GK used the example of the Red Kite Feeding Station to ask for cashflows specific to projects

EG confirmed that cashflow was no longer required by Scottish Government, but we could request this of our applicants locally.

JJ questioned innovation and felt that this project was primarily a business expansion and therefore an extension to what they currently do. It was not clear in the application that commercial funding had been sought. TD felt that extending a car park was not farm diversification and was not suitable for LEADER. Although the LAG would like to see the project go ahead, they did not think this should go ahead through LEADER.

SG doubted that it would provide value for money from a LEADER perspective and had scored it low on innovation. HB felt that improving a facility which was already there did not show innovation or diversification, and therefore did not fit LEADER

criteria for funding. GK stated several business expansions had previously been turned down on that basis and this should not be an exception. HB confirmed expansion had been referred to in the file attachments to the application.

EG advised that the business had been given this feedback at draft stage, however the applicant felt that the activities that are carried out by the organisation are innovative.

SG and JJ asked if there were alternative funding streams available. SG mentioned Growth Accelerator funding. NH said that this was an advice only.

LJ stated that applicants should be confident to say they have approached a bank and not been successful, as this is not considered by LEADER to be a negative point. SG suggested Visit Scotland, again this is advice only. GK wondered if Galloway Glens would be able to provide any advice on funding. Contact should be made by EG to McNabb Laurie to explore if any available. RSPB have previously supported the project as have LEADER. LJ stated LEADER is not and should not be considered a funder of last resort.

GK thought it looked like a self-funding proposition and should consider again to contact commercial lenders or look into crowd funding.

Following a full discussion, GK invited Members to score the project:

#### SCORING

1	Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?	1
2	Does the project applicant demonstrate adequate knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to deliver?	3
3	Does the project demonstrate clear linkages to other related local activities or strategies?	3
4	Does the project demonstrate evidence of community, market or business need/demand?	3
5	Does the project demonstrate value for money?	2
6	Does the project clearly demonstrate additionality?	2
7	Does the project adequately recognise and address participation barriers or risks?	2
8	Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: a. Economy   b. Land, Coast and Marine Environments   c. Sustainable Settlements	3
9	Does the project clearly demonstrate what will be achieved by the project – Outcomes/Indicators/Target Groups?	2
10	Are you happy that this project fits comfortably with the LEADER LDS?	NO
TOTAL SCORE		21

Number of Members REJECTING: 5

The decision was taken to **REJECT** the application

Standard condition 1 and 2

Recommendation was made for EG to contact Galloway Glens and feed back to applicant.

**P00032/C177 –Hold the Front Page!**

EG introduced the project, confirming all match funding was confirmed. The total project cost is £207,214 and the applicant is applying for £50,000, which represents 24.12% intervention. The project is technically eligible for support.

The LAG felt the project was very well put together and had plenty of in depth detail and felt it was Langholm at its best.

GK suggested it could be a guiding light to other parts of the region. Could be used as a strategic based project, media/communication if very forward thinking.

HB questioned safeguarding jobs, NH confirmed that LEADER were able to do this as part of a new organisation. LEADER have a robust employment section which has been fully applied and demonstrates how the posts would cease to exist if project does not go forward.

LJ also felt the Applicant had been clear on the high risk involved and very clear on how this will be managed.

With regard to LEADERs reputation, Members felt that the Board is not sufficiently diverse and consideration should be given to including other members, perhaps a pupil from the local school. NH explained that the group had been established very quickly and the Board has possibly been made up from the expertise which was readily available. They should look to broaden the group.

JJ is happy to see this exciting project after a series of blows to the community. Everyone has come together in a sharing spirit. There are lots of people willing to contribute. If it could happen anywhere, it will be in Langholm.

Following a full discussion, GK invited Members to score the project:

**SCORING**

1	Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?	3
2	Does the project applicant demonstrate adequate knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to deliver?	4
3	Does the project demonstrate clear linkages to other related local activities or strategies?	3
4	Does the project demonstrate evidence of community, market or business need/demand?	3
5	Does the project demonstrate value for money?	3
6	Does the project clearly demonstrate additionality?	3
7	Does the project adequately recognise and address participation barriers or risks?	3
8	Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: a. Economy   b. Land, Coast and Marine Environments   c. Sustainable Settlements	3
9	Does the project clearly demonstrate what will be achieved by the project – Outcomes/Indicators/Target Groups?	4
10	Are you happy that this project fits comfortably with the LEADER LDS?	YES
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>29</b>

Number of Members APPROVING: 5

The decision was taken to **APPROVE** the application with the following conditions:

Standard condition 1 and 2

A recommendation should be made to have a more diverse board

**P00037/R011 – Wild Oak Woods Eco-Campsite**

EG introduced the project, with a total project cost of £158,000, and grant request of £50,000 – this came out as 31.64% intervention rate. EG confirmed that all match funding was from the Applicant’s personal funds and was in place. The application is technically eligible and EG invited LAG members to discuss.

TD had looked into other Eco-Campsite and were surprised to find so few. JJ felt it was completing infrastructure and worthwhile. LJ was concerned about the lack of tourism experience, could see they were passionate about conservation and how to protect it. The applicant will need a lot of support eg Business Gateway. The paying customer expects a certain standard and this is often not met.

EG confirmed that the applicant had tried on several occasions to contact banks about funding but the calls were not returned. The applicant was reluctant to use the area as collateral for a bank loan as it could be seized if the loan was defaulted on then the area could be developed, without care to conservation.

LJ felt the application could be improved and suggested contact with Visit Scotland. There seems to be a market in the region for the enjoyment of this style of camping, rather as the normal education element. They are protecting the land and this is admirable, but need to go into it with eyes wide open.

Members felt that the project was innovative as it was a different kind of campsite and there is a big market for green tourism. They also felt that the Application fit with more than one theme of the LDS, this is a positive as it fits well with LEADER.

EG confirmed the applicant had been in touch with Business Gateway. TD suggested a visit to another successful similar business in the Ribblesdale in the Borders to show the different levels which can be offered to customers.

Following a full discussion, GK invited Members to score the project:

**SCORING**

1	Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?	3
2	Does the project applicant demonstrate adequate knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to deliver?	3
3	Does the project demonstrate clear linkages to other related local activities or strategies?	3
4	Does the project demonstrate evidence of community, market or business need/demand?	3
5	Does the project demonstrate value for money?	3
6	Does the project clearly demonstrate additionality?	3
7	Does the project adequately recognise and address participation barriers or risks?	2
8	Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: a. Economy   b. Land, Coast and Marine Environments   c. Sustainable Settlements	3
9	Does the project clearly demonstrate what will be achieved by the project – Outcomes/Indicators/Target Groups?	2
10	Are you happy that this project fits comfortably with the LEADER LDS?	YES
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>25</b>



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Number of Members APPROVING: 5

The decision was taken to **APPROVE** the application with the following conditions:

Condition 1 and 2

Recommendation was that a cashflow be provided, update to be circulated to LAG.

Recommendation was to encourage contact to other start up tourism businesses.

#### **AOCB**

##### **Update on Expressions of Interest**

There are 6 new EOI's but there are still a further 34 pending.

The LAG discussed all of the recent EOI's with a view to receiving applications at later meetings, none were considered to be worthy of developing to application stage in their current form.

The LAG discussed several options were discussed around feasibility studies or research being undertaken in Health and Social Care to develop into a strategic project. Consideration should be given to what works in a rural area. GK would also be interested in developing a strategic project around Food and Drink. Members were asked to think about it for next meeting.

With no other business GK thanked members for the discussions and closed the meeting at 3.50pm.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting **14 June 2017** to be held at The Usual Place, Dumfries

Meeting closed at 3.50pm

