

MINUTES

Local Action Group – Communities Group Meeting

Thursday 17th November

Held at: Holiday Inn, Crichton Campus

Present: Heather Brash (Chair) (HB) McNabb Laurie (ML)
Clair McFarlan (CMc) Rob Wells (RW)
Norman Burns (NB) Harry Harbottle (HH)
Jennifer Wilson (JW)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Ellen Grant (EG)
Derek Hextall (DH)

Apologies: Joan Neilson Ed Forrest

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair, Heather Brash welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Joan Neilson and Ed Forrest.

1.1 Update on LAG membership: DH informed members that both Heather Hall and Chick McKenna have resigned from the Communities Group and a note of thanks had been sent to them on behalf of the LAG. Mairi Telford-Jammeh will be joining the Communities Group. Mairi worked within Dumfries and Galloway Council under the Communities Directorate but has since retired. Her application has been accepted by the LAG chairs and NH will be scheduling an induction meeting.

1.2 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest

2. Minutes of previous Meeting held 7th September 2016

HH proposes minutes. JW seconds. Minutes are accepted.

3. Consideration of Standard ‘Conditions of Grant’ in all offer letters

DH sought approval from LAG members to include two standard conditions of grant with every project approval. These are:

1. “You will be required to attend a Claims Workshop”
2. “Any net income generated by the project will need to be evidenced and will be removed from the grant at final claim stage.”

DH explained that it was very important for Applicants to attend a Claims workshop due to the nature of the Claims process and therefore should be an absolute condition. He informed members that the second condition was an EU regulation and important that Applicants are aware of this throughout their project. The Rural Enterprise Group had asked that the second condition be amended to read “Any net income generated by the project **during the project period** will need to be evidenced and will be removed from the grant at final claim stage”. **Members agreed with this amendment and unanimously approved these as standard conditions of grant.**

4. Consideration of Applications

All project decisions are based on Scottish Government issued Guidance version 2.0

C136 Kirkcudbright Galleries Project

DH introduced the project, the total project cost is £322,498.73 and the applicant is requesting a LEADER grant of £125,000 (38.76%).

DH advised members that the Applicant has attempted to address all of the feedback that was communicated to them after the draft submission, however struggled to profile their cash flow and spend, stating that it was too difficult to forecast spend that far into the future. Members discussed this and felt that the Applicant should have attempted to include a more detailed budget, as every Applicant coming forward to LEADER must do this. HH felt that Art Exhibitions at this level should be well planned in advance. JW explained that the Applicant will be likely to approach exhibitions that are already on tour and therefore should not be difficult to populate the calendar in advance and forecast spend. NH reminded members that the Cashflow and Milestones are part of the Group scoring sheet and this should be considered when scoring the Application.

DH also informed members that as part of this LEADER project the organisation intend to recruit 2 members of staff; one temporary Arts Officer and one Arts Intern in Year 2. It has become apparent that an additional job which had been created for a permanent Arts Officer had been advertised and that the temporary officer was included in this advert, although the Applicant confirmed no appointment had been made, the recruitment process had started as it was noted the job was advertised in October. As there were no recruitment costs within the budget, this was technically eligible; however as LEADER can only support safeguarded or new posts, if the employee contract is dated prior to the project start date the staff costs will be ineligible.

DH advised members that one of the main points of feedback during draft stage was the additionality, in that the Applicant made it clear this is a Council priority and will go ahead with or without LEADER funding. However, it was felt that the applicant strongly argued throughout the application that the LEADER funding will enable the project to reach National Significance much more quickly and in time for their launch. JW agreed and felt that in order to become more sustainable the project must be launched at the highest level possible. JW felt that the Galleries project must aim high and increase their level of interest at an early stage, and felt this was achievable with LEADER funding. This is a good opportunity to showcase private collections, ones that local people can relate to. The intern will help this be achievable and the Temporary officer will enable staff to be brought up to speed.

CMc took comfort from the fact this is a Council project and felt there would be support financially. RW agreed, feeling this will be a sustainable project due the nature of the applicant.

HH was concerned around the innovation of the project and did not necessarily feel the Applicant made a strong enough argument around innovation. Members agreed with this, however felt that the 'National Significance' element of the project was innovative due to the fact there are few galleries in Scotland that are at this level.

HH also felt that the Applicant could have made a better out reach. There is very real cultural aspect to this project and HH felt this was not taken into as much consideration. He mentioned the UN Convention Article 31 - "That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”

All Governments bar two have signed up to this and it is suggested that because of the cultural aspect of this project, reference should be made and possibly delivered against.

HB queried if there was any engagement or support from schools, DH informed members that within the Action Plan there were mention of support from schools included.

ML felt that the project has key audiences and without LEADER funding they may miss their chance to make the right impact. LEADER funding can help to push their launch at the top level. ML feels that if the application is not supported and this chance is missed, Kirkcudbright could seriously lose out on the benefits this project has to offer.

NB queried that with the unstable financial climate, is the council able to guarantee financial support. DH explained that the Council have given a 3 year commitment to this project.

RW explained that he instinctively liked this project and JW agreed, reiterating there is a real audience for this project.

Following the discussion the group then scored 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?	3
10. Are you happy that this project fits comfortably with the LEADER LDS?	YES
TOTAL SCORE	28

Number of Members APPROVING: 6

Number of Members NOT APPROVING: 0

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

1. *"You will be required to attend a Claims Workshop"*
2. *"Any net income generated by the project during the project period will need to be evidenced and will be removed from the grant at final claim stage."*
3. *"Before your project can start you must resubmit the Cashflow/Milestone forecast with a more accurate spend profile to reflect the activities of your project for the LAG to approve."*

5. AOB

Update on Expressions of Interest

DH updated LAG members on Expressions of Interest; with 240 EOIs to date. Although interest has tailed off recently, there have been some new EOIs and some projects already in the pipeline potentially progressing to the March round. He also advised members that many of the projects that were aiming to progress their Application to this November meeting faced issues with Match Funding and there had been no negative impact relating to the rescheduled November LAG meeting.

NH informed members that following an official online article from Derek McKay stating that the Scottish Government will honour all EU funded projects until the point Britain leaves the EU, it is hoped an official letter will be received to reiterate this. This should give comfort that the LEADER Programme will remain open to applicants for at least 2 years, however it is likely the LAG could not support anything after March 2019. This will not affect this project, however, as the Scottish Government have agreed to honour all project that are approved prior to the Autumn Statement, even if they run past the point Britain leaves the EU.

LARCs IT System

HB welcomed the opportunity to receive feedback from LAG members around using LARCs.

DH suggested members do not use Fire Fox browser as issues have been identified in accessing file attachments.

DH also suggested Google Chrome is a good browser to use which allows you to extend the text boxes and print.

DH agreed that the Team would incorporate most of the information LAG members look to assess into the Project Plan, to

minimise use of LARCs. These will be 'Fit with LDS', 'Match Funding', 'Milestones Summary' and 'Targets'. The team also plan to reschedule LARCs workshops to show LAG members how to better navigate the system.

Members all agreed that a positive of LARCs is having all of the supporting documents to hand.

Absolute Classics Site Visit

HB explained to members that herself and JW had attended a site visit for Absolute Classics with DH. JW gave a quick overview and both HB and JW agreed the site visit was interesting and demonstrated a beneficial investment of LEADER funds.

With no other businesses, HB thanked members for attending and closes the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

1st March 2017, Newton Stewart (Venue tbc)

Meeting closed at 15.10