

MINUTES

Local Action Group – Communities Group Meeting

Wednesday 6 December, 10am

Held at: The Belted Galloway, Newton Stewart

Present	Peter Ross – I (Chair) (PR)	Clair McFarlan - I (CM)
	Ed Forrest - I (EF)	Mairi Telford Jammeh - I (MT)
	Harry Harbottle - I (HH)	Rob Wells - I (RW)
	Anna Johnson (AJ)	Jennifer Wilson - I (JW)
Staff	Nicola Hill (NH)	Lewis Boddy (LB)
	Jessie Mason (JM)	
Apologies	Norman Burns -I (NB)	McNabb Laurie - I (ML)

1. Welcome & Apologies

Interim Chair, Peter Ross, welcomed everybody to the meeting, he also thanked the retiring Chair, Heather Brash, stating her hard work with the group was much appreciated.

Update on LAG membership – the new list had been circulated last week and everyone should have a copy. The refresh of the new LEADER Group formed from members coming from both of the Communities and Rural Enterprise groups was now complete. The Group was asked for nominations for a Chair, any proposed names would be welcome. An election process will be held and completed by the next meeting. NH suggested an ad hoc meeting of the new group be held prior to the next meeting to allow all members to come together.

Discussion around funding thresholds – NH invited the meeting to consider the option of revisiting the thresholds of both groups and harmonising them. It was suggested to set the upper limit to £150,000. This will be tabled at both the Rural Enterprise and Strategic Management meetings.

It was questioned if the larger amount would be attractive to projects. NH advised we have had projects in the past who could have benefitted from this increased grant amount. The intervention rates can also be revisited, but we need to keep operating costs in line with delivery of the programme, and we need to make sure the intervention is appropriate. Many LAGs are experiencing difficulties with Farm Diversification projects, each making decisions which help them to allocate funds. We need to try to engage with groups who will use the money – any ideas would be much appreciated from the Group. We need to be pragmatic to achieve our objectives.

A show of hands was requested to show agreement to harmonise the Groups thresholds to an upper limit of £150,000 – 7 yes, 0 no.

Declarations of interest for Agenda item 3 were asked for. PR and JW both advised the meeting they had been on the Amaze Me LEADER steering group, but had removed themselves from any decision making as soon as they were aware that an application was to be made to LEADER. This was not considered to be a conflict of interest.

2.1 Minutes of previous Meeting held on 6 September was approved. Proposed by HH and Seconded by CM.

2.2 Update on the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project – LB advised the meeting that the papers had been circulated and a quorate approval obtained from the Scottish Borders LAG. Once the funding agreement is signed an offer of grant will be generated and it will be approved with Scottish Borders being the lead LAG for the project. Scottish Borders LEADER team will take responsibility for the day to day decisions required but any significant changes will come back to the Dumfries and Galloway LAG for comment.

2.3 Update on draft applications not coming to this meeting – All Roads Lead to Whithorn and Creetown Building Preservation Trust – both have deferred to the March meeting due to match funding not being in place. Wide Open’s ‘Quests and Wilderness Retreats’ has deferred and will possibly come back to a future meeting.

Consideration of Applications

All project decisions are based on Scottish Government issued Guidance version 4.0

C180 - Douglas Park Redevelopment

Applicant is the Newton Stewart Initiative, total eligible expenditure is £188,701.98, grant of £80,599.73 requested (42.71%)

Douglas Park: The Douglas Park Development is a community charity led project that will encompass a 4 man BMX race track, improved football facilities, the provision of car parking, footpaths, fencing and a general overall improved presentation of an area of deprived parkland in Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire. The project will engage, develop and support people through active participation in meaningful sporting activity as well as informal recreation to improve both physical and mental health and wellbeing, reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness through social engagement and community involvement and reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, drug/alcohol abuse and crime, particularly among our younger population.

This was considered to be an exciting project which allows development of different skills, getting communities and young people involved and highlighting the benefits of healthy living. A very well written application showcasing what LEADER should typically be supporting. BMX/Road/mountain bikes and all different elements – BMX tourism could lead to a great opportunity to come to the region.

HH asked if Planning had been involved as there did not seem to be a maintenance agreement included. LB confirmed that planning had been confirmed and that there is a maintenance agreement uploaded as a file attachment in LARCS which will be signed once all funding is secured. Newton Stewart Initiative and Dumfries and Galloway Council will organise the maintenance of the site, but the land will stay in ownership of the Council. This project has started as a local need, but has developed into something much larger. The LAG agreed it was good to see they had interacted with other groups in D&G.

The last piece of match funding from Sports Scotland is still to be confirmed, and the NSI expect to get a decision in December. If the Group are minded to approve, the offer could be made in principle.

Following discussion the group then scored the project.

Scoring

Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?	4
Does the project applicant demonstrate adequate knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to deliver?	3
Does the project demonstrate clear linkages to other related local activities or strategies?	3
Does the project demonstrate evidence of community, market or business need/demand?	3

Does the project demonstrate value for money?	3
Does the project clearly demonstrate additionality?	3
Does the project adequately recognise and address participation barriers or risks?	3
Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: Economy b. Land, Coast and Marine Environments c. Sustainable Settlements	3
Does the project clearly demonstrate what will be achieved by the project – Outcomes/Indicators/Target Groups?	3
Are you happy that this project fits comfortably with the LEADER LDS?	Yes
TOTAL SCORE	28

Application group score:28/36
 Number of Members APPROVING in principle: 7
 Number of Members NOT APPROVING: 0

The decision was taken to **APPROVE** this project in **principle** until the funding from Sports Scotland is confirmed.

C199 – Year of Young People 2018

Applicant is Dumfries and Galloway Council Young Persons Service, total eligible expenditure £299,632, grant of £141,632.80 requested (47.26%).

YOYP: A yearlong programme of activities and events for young people in Dumfries and Galloway during the Scottish Government’s Year of Young People 2018 delivered in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council, young people and Third Sector Organisations across the region. The programme will focus on developing confident young people, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens and building community capacity.

LB stated that the final match funding is to be confirmed, and is expected in January, once all other funds have been confirmed. The group felt that the project could have went further in proving that year of the young people will benefit the young and that more activities could be added. NH advised that the list of activities was a proposed list and not yet confirmed, the list would be added to when the final amounts available for funding were known. It was also felt it was a good umbrella for coordinating events, giving a legacy in later years. The project showed good vision with strength in the mentoring element.

NH sits on the working group and is in a prime position to cross reference this and the Amaze me LEADER project (if it is supported). It was agreed by the LAG that it was good to hear that youth forums are being reinstated over the region. We need to give our young people the confidence to stay in the region. LEADER can retain an interest in how the programme is shaped and NH will feedback on this to the Group. This application has already been sent to Scottish Government for pre-approval, comments received back were positive, the comments fed back from SMG were positive too.

Following 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?	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?	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: 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	26

Application group score: 26/36
 Number of Members APPROVING: 7
 Number of Members NOT APPROVING: 0

The decision was taken to **APPROVE**, this project in **principle** until the final amount of match funding from Dumfries and Galloway Council is confirmed. A recommendation from the group was to make connections with established groups in the region eg Biosphere, Langholm Initiative, The Stove, and The Morphy Richards Engineering Education Centre, Dumfries House which hosts a Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre.

C202 – Amaze Me LEADER

Applicant is Dumfries and Galloway Council on behalf of D&G LEADER LAG, total eligible expenditure £116,000, (100%).

AML: This project will deliver an exciting programme of activity during August 2018 making best use of the diverse network of LEADER funded projects and partner organisations across Dumfries & Galloway. The project is aimed at young people aged 18-28 years old with an interest in rural community development. Applications will be filtered through local LEADER LAGs and participants will represent their area during the event and will be responsible for providing a report on their experience. These reports will be collated into a document that can then be used by all participating areas to help inform and promote opportunities for young people to get involved in community development and/or local decision making in their areas.

NH left the room at 11.27. Comments from the group were very positive and supportive of the well written application. It was questioned why such large vehicles were to be considered – there are insurance implications ie cover can only be obtained for those of 25 and above, which cuts the amount of people available for driving as the upper age is 28. Larger vehicles are more accommodating for both space and our roads, ie 10 people carriers as opposed to 25 cars. How was it envisaged all youngsters were encouraged to apply? D&G will fill a proportion of the spaces with the remaining being opened up to Finnish Partner LAGs, other Scottish LAGs and the wider EU LEADER network. There will be a huge media push in D&G once the tender has been awarded, this will cover all avenues of age appropriate groups.

There was a figure of £19,000 identified in the budget for a piece of work to be commissioned on social return on investment. This piece of work is required to be done externally as there is no capacity within the team to undertake this valuable offering.

JW asked if all groups were to be included, ie less mobile, less confident. It should be made clear in the project's intention to be fully inclusive, and subsequently managed. A recommendation should be to work with vulnerable groups.

At the end of the project there should be a crossover of YOYP/AML and the lessons noted should be shared and learned from.

Following 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: Economy b. Land, Coast and Marine Environments c. Sustainable Settlements	4
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	29

Application group score: 29/36

Number of Members APPROVING: 7

Number of Members NOT APPROVING: 0

The decision was taken to **Approve**.

It was suggested that connections were made with the Year of the Young People project. A recommendation that inclusivity should be demonstrated of working/liasing with groups who work with vulnerable people, and also those who work with and in disadvantaged areas eg Lincluden. As well as the aforementioned, with regard to hard to reach groups, Young Farmers should be targeted.

NH returned to the room and lunch was served at 12.00.

The group reconvened at 12.15 and worked through lunch.

C204 – Barhill Community Woodland

Applicant is Kirkcudbright Development Trust, total eligible expenditure £52,961, grant requested £23,581 (44.52%).

Barhill: To bring the Barhill Woods into community management to enhance the woodland for the benefit of community cohesion and health and to reconnect people to their natural environment and the ecology of place. To improve the woodland habitat to secure the future of the Red Squirrels present and to build a Red Squirrel hide to engage and educate locals and visitors alike. Paths will be created and improved to secure access for people of all abilities including wheelchair access. To build an outdoor classroom to provide an all-weather base and learning facility for local schools and community groups. To construct an access path to a Dark Skies area for astronomy courses in conjunction with Kirkcudbright Dark Skies Visitor Centre. To help create a self-sustaining community.

LB advised the meeting that the project was awaiting written confirmation from Galloway Glens' HLF funding, this had been received verbally. It was noted that this may take a couple of months, after discussion it was thought that individual projects were being given the go ahead, no delays had been intimated to LEADER.

The LAG agreed that the application has lots of good ideas which have been identified, but unsure how they were to be achieved. It was clear that this was a good project idea, to bring the woodland back into community use. It was queried if planning was required for the outside classroom, LB confirmed they had been in touch with Planning and been advised as the height anticipated came below that where permission would be necessary, no application was required. The group were concerned about the lack of an agreed Woodland Management Plan. CM felt there should be a condition from the LAG that a plan is created to cover management of a native woodland, this is to be written and agreed for the duration of the project. This plan should also be endorsed by the council and the forestry commission. There is a cost associated with woodland management for the duration of the project, but not included for the future of the site. The LAG mentioned that there is written guidance available on Management of Community Woodlands which should be offered to the senior applicant. It is important that, the Management Plan, once written and agreed, is adhered to.

There is a benefit from making connections to comparable projects in the region, eg Lockerbie, they can then discover the highlights and the lowlights and be aware of them. EF had met with the Applicant Rob Asbridge and found him to be very enthusiastic and knowledgeable, with a relevant background in Forestry. He had already visited the Lockerbie project. It was suggested they also connect with the Lockerbie Red Squirrels, which they have done stated EF.

Discussion centred round strengthening and succession of the project – what happens after? An agreement has been put in place with the applicant DGC and FC providing the necessary permissions on the land. If the project was done properly it would be a fantastic asset to the area and community. It was felt, after meeting the applicant, there was confidence in this. It is already a part of the Core Path network and utilised as such. After successful completion of the project, it is possible that the woodland would look after itself for a number of years.

It was suggested that they join [Reforesting Scotland](http://www.reforestingscotland.org) where there is a vast, full breadth of information available and should be tapped into.

Following 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?	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?	3
8 Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: 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	27

Application group score: 27/36

Number of Members APPROVING in principle: 7

Number of Members NOT APPROVING: 0

The decision was taken to **Approve in principle** once match funding was confirmed. It was suggested that the group should make connections with Reforesting Scotland, Community Woods, Scotland and Plunket Foundation. A condition of grant being made was that a Woodland Management Plan is demonstrated which was approved/endorsed by experts.

C208 Colvend Recreation Ground

Applicant is Colvend Community Council, total eligible expenditure £50,769.60, grant requested £16,769.96, intervention rate of 32.92%.

Planning approval has been obtained, it included an all-access ramp, these plans should be made available prior to work starting on the project. The group felt it lacked in its demonstration of innovative elements. LB fed back that after many conversations with the applicant advising them to demonstrate this, they wrote the application to reflect what the community needs were. The recreation field is intended for wider community benefit and to add to the value of living in the Colvend & Southwick area. This was considered to be a risky strategy, but as some of the group had first hand knowledge of the area and the community, it was clear that the recreation area would be used by large sections of the direct community as well as 3 primary schools in the surrounding area. They already have a community orchard which is well used. The Group questioned if this would be a facility which could be used by visitors and tourists? LB confirmed that it could be used by all, as there is a footpath all the way round to allow total access to the facility. The project intends to produce an area which will be much used and enjoyed.

Following discussion the group then scored the project.

Scoring

1 Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?	2
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?	3
8 Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: 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	26

Application group score: 26/36

Number of Members APPROVING: 7

Number of Members NOT APPROVING: 0

The decision was taken to **Approve** the project.

AOCB

4.1 Update on Expressions of Interest – LB updated on EOI's – there is still a good level of interest and is expecting a good range will come to the March meeting.

4.2 The Chair updated the group on some meetings which he had attended recently. In Hungary, the European LAGs and practitioners are actively working on and considering options for their next programme, the Scottish Chairs Group are also considering this.

4.3 The point of feedback to Scottish Government was further emphasised that the Group should feedback on good news stories and projects reaching their outcomes. Any evidence of this would be appreciated and forwarded to Scottish Government.

4.4 SMG are considering a publication on D&G LEADER and its' impact over the last 20 years. This piece of work will be put out to tender to pull the information together. It is a good basis for stimulating discussions with elected members. JW suggested involving a journalist to write a digestible piece, other suggestions were to make it a visual offering instead or written. All ideas are gratefully received and will be taken into consideration.

The Communications Group are also looking at producing a publication based on National information.

4.5 The Chair brought the meeting to a close by thanking Ed Forrest for his support and acknowledging his attendance of the group and on the occasion of his last meeting. The thanks were also extended to Norman Burns who had opted to leave the LAG due to a change of circumstances. It was hoped we could call on either of them for their expertise in future if required.

5 Date of Next Meeting

14 March, 2018, venue to be confirmed, at 10.00am.

Meeting closed at 1.00pm.