

MINUTES

LEADER Local Action Group – Strategic Management Group Meeting

Wednesday 9 January 2019, 10.00am

Held at:	The Usual Place, Academy Street, Dumfries DG1 1BZ	
Present	Peter Ross (PR) Cathy Agnew (CA) Harry Harbottle (HH)	Caroline Graham Brown (CGB) Alastair McNeill (AMcN)
Staff	Nicola Hill (NH)	Jessie Mason (JM)
Apologies	Barry Dunne (BD) David Rennie (DR)	Archie Dryburgh (AD) Andrew Wood (AW)

Meeting started at 10.05am

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked members for attending, wishing them all a Happy New Year.

Apologies

The apologies were read out and as listed above.

Minutes

The Chair asked if the minutes of the previous meeting were a true and accurate record and asked for a proposer and seconder. Unfortunately the meeting was not quorate so an approval could not be finalised. CA suggested, could we recommend the minutes be approved with the rest of the group being asked to confirm this electronically. This was thought to be a good idea and the minutes were then proposed by HH and seconded by AMcN.

They will be sent out to the rest of the group for their electronic approval.

Staff Report

NH asked if anyone have any questions on the report – there were none.

NH It was great that the LEADER funds had been fully committed, but noted there was still some monies in the FLAG. It was felt that the March meeting will probably see all of their funds committed fully.

There has been a social media post put out about small amounts of funding perhaps becoming available from projects which underspend, we are keen to see it recommitted. The project officers

are fielding enquiries at present and encouraging EO's in order to keep any prospective projects up to date if any funds become available. We are encouraging small scale, 'shovel ready' applications which have match funding in place and short timescale.

The focus for the project officers is shifting with a change of responsibilities for them, they will be spending time with applicants and helping them through the claims process. They are still very much wanting their applicants to get their projects over the line with as little underspend as possible. It was agreed that this was a good idea and a good use of their time.

Rural Awards, NH will be setting up a steering group and the PO's will also be involved in the planning of the event.

CA asked if there would be any opportunity for the Project Officers to make recommendations on how to improve the process. NH said absolutely, we will use their experience on the application process and on the grant administration/claims to feed into both national evaluation and D&G LEADER external evaluation.

CA/CGB queried how all the data contained in LARCs is being used. HH felt the focus would not be on LEADER in the next couple of years so it was up to us to propose solutions, both the good and bad, how it could be streamlined but still remain robust with proper systems.

AMcN asked if feedback would be requested from all people who have been involved to feed into the evaluation next year. NH confirmed they will be asked for their thoughts and recommendations on how it can be improved as part of the evaluation process.

Team performance reviews are to be held in January to draw up an agreed development work plan for the next 12 months.

FLAG – RL is still working with applicants, but it should be noted when he leaves, the administration will fall to Marine Scotland at Central level, who are financially responsible. If applicants need additional support, Marine Scotland will have to provide it.

AMcN, They will have to pick up everything, it has been the same previously, they should be made aware this is likely to happen.

Local Action Group will still have responsibilities with change requests and project changes etc, we therefore need to remain quorate. There will be a certain amount which can be done electronically, but we need to keep the LEADER group in place. Next years scheduled meeting's are presently being arranged with projects potentially hosting meetings. An email will be sent to members when confirmed.

Amaze Me LEADER – good news, Estonia are going to be delivering AML in August 2019. There will be a contingent of young people from Dumfries and Galloway attending, an update will be produced for the next staff report. Participants from Dumfries and Galloway are being brought together at the beginning of February to discuss and identify key priorities they want to take forward.

Partners from Estonia and Finland are intending to hold a meeting in mid-February 2019, and NH asked for confirmation that the group were happy for her to travel to the meeting in Finland (if travel proved to difficult to arrange, NH will skype into the meeting) – a show of hands unanimously confirmed their agreement for her to travel.

Audits - NH advised that the Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Government internal audits had both been completed. There had been a positive response from the DGC audit and it had now been sent to the Audit Committee.

Scottish Government's action points are being worked on, they have said they will come back to us in due course, but in the meantime, we have given ourselves a completion date for end of January. A number of the items which were raised were down to interpretation of what was being asked. Additional evidence had been requested from projects where necessary.

AMcN Updated on the development of the Cackle project, it had to be withdrawn due to complications being experienced with regard to financing through University of Glasgow. RL then put the application out to tender and we are presently hoping there will be funds left in the Central Fund to take it forward. A vote of thanks to Rowan for all the extra effort he has put into this project.

Chair Report

Scottish Rural Parliament – a great thanks to the staff and everyone – report available in staff report, or by following the link www.sra.scot

It was thought locally that it had been a success. Hotels were all full, a local café won the contract to supply the food and the bus contract was provided by a local company.

HH reiterated that it was great to hear 400 local voices saying what was possible, giving loads of good examples of very good projects both locally and nationally. Disappointing attendance from senior members of Dumfries and Galloway Council. AMcN was pleasantly surprised to see how many people came from out with the area. Mike Russell was a very positive voice, taking back the good news stories from the area to Scottish Government.

Break at 10.55am and resumed at 11.00am.

LEADER Futures Group – SMG were asked to recommend proceeding with a funding application to SOSEP to deliver our LDS in the interim after Brexit. The group at the meeting confirmed their agreement to continue to pursue this.

Royal Society of Arts was attended by PR – there were lots of high level people in attendance. Link to report



RSA Agenda.docx

National Economic Forum attended by PR in Dundee – Discussion Paper



NEF 2018(2) -
Discussion groups -

Chairs Group met in September, they agreed to hold a Parliamentary Reception on 27 February. There are limited numbers available for this event. Hopefully all Chairs will attend to speak to MPs and feedback to them on the positives from LEADER. Theme - A Celebration of LEADER – 25 years of LEADER.

There is the possibility of funding for some Academic Research on the LEADER ‘effect’ which should be able to be will be launched at the Reception.

Agri Network Assembly was attended by PR and Alistair Prior. It was a good networking event.
Report

<https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/food-farming-countryside-commission-our-common-ground>

A thank you was given for staff input, above and beyond.

Date of Next Meeting

10/04/19 Venue to be advised.

Meeting closed at 11.40am



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