



Kirkbank House, English Street, DUMFRIES  
 Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS  
 Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

## MINUTES

### Local Action Group – LEADER Group Meeting

Wednesday 11 March 2020 10.00am

Held at The Smiddy, Balmaclellan

Present	<b>Peter Ross (PR)</b> Juliette Cooke (JC) Archie Dryburgh (AD) Gill Dykes (GD) McNabb Laurie (ML) Eva Milroy (EM) Jenny Wilson (JW)	<b>Harry Harbottle (HH)</b> Teresa Dougall (TD) Barry Dunne (BD) Sharon Glendinning (SG) Clair McFarlan (CM) Rob Wells (RW)
Leader Staff	Nicola Hill (NH) Simone Tyrie (ST)	Alistair Cumming (AC) Jessie Mason (JM)
Apologies	Cathy Agnew Caroline Graham-Brown Judith Johnson David Rennie	Tony Fitzpatrick Anna Johnson Alastair McNeill Andrew Wood

Meeting commenced at 10.02am

#### 1 Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 PR opened the meeting and welcomed all members, thanking them for attending. He asked everyone to give a brief introduction to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were read out by JM, see list above.
- 1.3 The Chair asked for any Expressions of Interest – SG confirmed her interest in Crawick Multiverse as she is working closely with the organisation.
- 1.4 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December were accepted as a true and accurate record and were proposed by EM and seconded by CM.
- 1.5 The Chair asked if there were any items for Matters Arising which were not to be covered by the Agenda. GD asked for update on position with regard to writing to Ministers. PR advised this would be covered during discussions on Chairs meeting.

**Members were advised that all project decisions are based on Scottish Government issued Guidance version 6.0.**



Kirkbank House, English Street, DUMFRIES  
 Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS  
 Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

## 2 Project Updates

### Experience Galloway

The project which was supported by LEADER in September 2019 initially had a loan agreed in principle from a local bank. A later change in bank officers withdrew the offer. This left them with the shortfall which was funded by an HP agreement. It transpired fully when the project claimed that the way HP funding is delivered does not meet with the criteria required by LEADER ie that the funds are paid into the applicants bank. NH/ST met with the project to ask if they were able to fund any of the shortfall. They confirmed they were unable to do this. The meeting was asked if they would consider increasing the intervention rate.

The Chair opened up the discussion and asked the LAG for their comments.

Members questioned if the applicant had made a concerted effort to secure alternative finance. They applicants confirmed that they had. It was suggested to take a vote with a show of hands on whether to withdraw funding and decommitment of £150,000 or increase LEADER intervention rate.

Reject – 0, Support – 12. The recommendation was that the lodges which are fully supported by LEADER should be badged with accordingly and that the Applicant be asked to provide sight of their HP agreement to ensure detail meets with LEADER approval.

### South of Scotland Golden Eagles Project

This is a Cooperation project in which our colleagues at Scottish Borders are the lead applicant. Southern Uplands Partnership are the Applicant and have experienced difficulties with the LEADER claims process which have proved challenging as an organisation for them, giving them cashflow problems. SUP have other projects to deliver in both Regions and it may cause problems. The group asked if there was any help which could be provided by D&G LEADER, there is little D&G LEADER team can do under the circumstances. Scottish Borders are the lead applicant and as such responsible for the claims process and helping applicants through it.

10.46 – SG left the room in order for the group to discuss Crawick Multiverse project.

### Crawick Multiverse

Crawick Multiverse have submitted a change request to extend their project end date to 30 June as they have identified an underspend which the extra time would allow them to utilise. Their spend profile had concerned the team but with a huge concerted effort by the Project Officer at Crawick this had been brought up to date.



Kirkbank House, English Street, DUMFRIES  
 Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS  
 Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

ST explained the concern for the team of extending their end date means that it adds to the peak of those finishing at the same time and resources are already stretched. All that said, all of the monies are to be spent and drawdown paid by DGC by end of 2020. After 31/12/20, no drawdown can be claimed from Scottish Government.

The consensus of the meeting was that they were happy to extend the date to allow best outcome for the project and let them spend the identified underspend.

Show of hands

Approve – 11

Reject – 0

Recommendation to finish earlier if possible as it added to the burden of the team to extend the date.

SG returned to the meeting at 11.00

### **Exercise to Happiness**

Greystone Rovers have withdrawn from the process citing unrealistic timescales spent on making claims with LARCs. There was a question of monies being paid and having to pay them back. The team were happy that Greystone Rovers had demonstrated sufficient of delivery milestone one had been delivered so there was no need to repay any money.

Administration of the Grant is known at the outset. It was felt that the process, although onerous, was not hidden from the applicant. They were asked if they were able to provide the necessary administration to complete the claims and they confirmed they did.

The team confirmed their thanks for the Groups support, it is a difficult process but our aim is to assist all through it.

A show of hands was requested to confirm acceptance of their withdrawal.

Approved – 12    Reject - 0

### **Loch Ken Alive**

ML gave the group some background on the project and how it had evolved over the last few months. The money from LEADER was awarded in September last year the Loch Ken Advisory Board were happy to receive this money to allow interaction with external bodies and areas to see how they performed. The Board took the position to concentrate on the home grown activities as the preparation of the external visits far exceeded the comprehension of those previously involved. It was felt that the money



Kirkbank House, English Street, DUMFRIES  
 Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS  
 Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

should not be spent just because it was there, if it were to be without benefit. It was with sincere regret that the Loch Ken Management Advisory Group advise the LAG they wish to withdraw from the grant awarded.

11.07am ML left the room as he had expressed an interest in the project (having arrived late to the meeting, this was not recorded at the time)

The group were sorry that Loch Ken Alive did not have the capacity, but their original decision, not to be insular, appeared to have been to be insular. As they said, there was a lot more in the preparation than envisaged, with a lot of staff time. Unfortunately, it was a bit of a poor show, LEADER funding had been reordered after other funding offers were received. We all note this is a small amount, but it has been shown that small sums can made huge changes to communities.

NH advised that during the year, many final claims will be received over the coming months and proposed how can they be best managed.

The group were asked if they would approve action by the LEADER team to be taken to make the amendments following Scottish Government Guidance received to this effect. Adjust the underspend before claim is made, reduce the project costs accordingly, may result in a change to the intervention rate, potentially over 50%. Otherwise a letter or email of approval will be required each time a change is to be made.

The decision was required to be minuted for approval to be given on a case by case basis. HH asked the group for a show of hands – 12 approved, 0 rejected.

PR confirmed the staff have the full backing and group support. HH said we need to remember all the positive we have delivered over the course of the Fund.

### **3. Budget**

NH confirmed we are where we would expect to be at this time. It was always going to be a slow steady start and then a spike. Claims we would have hoped to have finalised are still in the system. Would have liked more spent than we have.

AD asked what the future holds? PR advised that the Chairs meeting has raised the issue with Scottish Government Ministers but no guidance has been received so far.

SG – Consultation on Structural Funds and the benefits to Dumfries and Galloway, a lot of uncertainty, continued to affirm how much the region is losing. Do not lose sight of what we will lose. A strong message should be delivered to the Executive from Structural Funds.



Kirkbank House, English Street, DUMFRIES  
 Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS  
 Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

PR the emphasis on the value to Scotland of LEADER, write to the Secretary of State for Scotland. GD wanted to go further, the responsibility lies with Westminster, we should target the Government, write to Alistair Jack MP.

JW – reiterated a discussion she had with Alistair Jack in a local Surgery about 18 months ago – she asked then what was the plan for the future, what would replace LEADER – there was no response.

**Action** – Write to the Secretary of State PR

#### **4 Programme Closure/Evaluation**

The Accountable Body is responsible. They are aware of the situation and have been furnished with a risk assessment (see attached). NH proceeded to talk the LAG members through all the paperwork which had been prepared for the meeting (all copies attached).

HH, we need to stay positive. What was the situation with regard to the staff contracts. They are staggered but finish from September 2020 to March 2021. LEADER to meet with the AB to put plans into place, for the FLAG too.

AD advised he had a meeting with Lorna Meahan, Director Economy & Resources. GD – we should write/email the Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Council Committee. SG, we should be asking what support is in place for staff.

We are obliged to undertake a Programme Evaluation which would normally inform the “next programme”. A draft brief has been drawn up with an allocated budget of £10k, to be assigned to an external consultant. There are various approaches being taken throughout the country. Action – circulate the draft brief and hand over responsibility to take this piece of work forward to the Future Group.

Range of Evaluations is £3,000 to £25,000. Amount comes out of admin costs. It’s up to each LAG to decide on the depth of evaluation, we can reprofile the brief as required.

AD – we need a worthwhile document for the future, easily understood quickly. GD – yes we need external evaluation. It has to be externally carried out or it will be another burden on staff. We should not be afraid to spend money to get a sustainable report. All agreed that the course of action was to delegate to the Futures Group to oversee.

#### **5 Staff Report**

Comments were asked for on Staff Report. Positive praise and support to staff. Credit too to the Projects e.g. Amaze Me Leader.



Kirkbank House, English Street, DUMFRIES  
 Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS  
 Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

## 6 Futures Group



Future Group -  
 Paper.docx

The Future Group has a meeting set with Professor Russel Griggs on 29/4/2020. This is a critical time to influence new agencies, they can benefit from our processes. We need to retain and enhance the identity of community and space.

CM pointed out that SOSE (and Borderlands) funding focusses very much on infrastructure projects which made it difficult for a lot of organisations to apply to so need to look at ways to tap into other funds. The interim Chief Exec, Nick Halfhide will also attend the meeting with Karen Jackson – seconded from Scottish Government.

**7 Insitu Visits** – NH will circulate the proposed dates for the insitu visits and asked for any members interested in attend to advise.

## 8 AOCB

Dumfries & Galloway are to be hosts of the Royal Highland Show at Ingleston from 18-20 June 2020. AD suggested there may be an opportunity for LEADER to showcase. The Rural Awards commissioned artwork is to be used on a tunnel entering the show. Contact is Cathy Agnew. JC will forward others contact details to NH.

National Planning Framework 4 – keep in touch- PR  
 Please use the following for more information and other resources  
[www.transformingplanning.scot](http://www.transformingplanning.scot)  
<https://blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture>  
 twitter - @ScotGovPlanning  
 email – [scotplan@gov.scot](mailto:scotplan@gov.scot)

Meeting came to an end at 12.20pm



Risk Register.xlsx



Work Plan -  
 2020-2021.xlsx



Spend levels 27th  
 Feb 2020.xlsx

**Date of next meeting is 10 June 2020, at 10.00am Dalkeith Meeting Room, The Buccleuch Centre, Langholm.**