



**NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Thursday 6th July 2017
Newton & Bywell Community Hall
5.30pm - 8.00pm**

Present: Terry Carroll, Steve Jopling, Mike Murray, Alan Sharp, Andrew Poad, Nicola Bell, Tom Johnston, David Baird (NCC), Gillian Cowell (Programme Officer), Louise McCreery (Admin Officer)

1. Welcome and Apologies

TC welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was confirmed to be numerically and thematically quorate.

Apologies: Barbara Sexon, Louise Kirkwood, Alistair Cochrane, Sally Shortall, Ruth Dickinson (NNPA)

2. Declaration of Interest

SJ and MM declared an interest in Falstone Play Park and agreed to leave the meeting during the discussion of this project

3. Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 3 April 2017

TJ confirmed he had visited Doddington Dairy who have submitted a draft of their first claim

The LAG decided that they would like to see Staward Barns presented at Full Application stage as no presentation was given for the EOI. GC agreed to arrange for AS to visit the project.

TC extended thanks to SJ for chairing the last meeting.

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising & Actions

- Update on live projects

GC updated the group on the progress of all live projects:

- A formal letter is to be written to S Brodie advising of the possibility that the grant offer may be withdrawn if he does not submit a claim

- Hadrian Holiday pods are in place
- Westfield Shepherd Huts have a supplier issue which is currently being discussed with GC
- Kielder are currently going through a variation process to change their suppliers
- The lease for Young & Sweet has now been signed and the project as a proposed finish of September 2017
- Babyled Foods have withdrawn their application as they have decided to buy equipment on HP

5. Programme Officer's Update

GC presented a summary of the funds committed and actual spend to date. There is still a large underspend in the Culture & Heritage priority

DB reiterated the timescale for allocating commitments and confirmed that there is a possibility any underspend will be taken back by the RPA for reallocation

6. Review and Decide on Outline Applications

The LAG agreed that, in order to keep to time, they would see all the presentations first and vote afterwards

Ciunam

Presented by Mr & Mrs Murray

The applicants currently run a small farm and are looking to diversify to create a sustainable business. Want to offer a service to locals and tourists. They are trained in crystal and bower healing techniques. Currently they can only offer this service at evenings/weekend and by appointment as it is run out of their house. If funding to renovate the old farm sheds was received they would also be able to run workshops and meditation courses

The applicants advised that planning permission is underway.

The LAG questioned the inclusion of the labyrinth. This is to be designed in a small field to the west of the sheds. It will have a two tonne crystal in the centre and is intended as a place for contemplation and reflection.

The applicants stated that the project would give full time employment to Mrs Murray and hopefully later other opportunities for gardeners, cleaners and similar. There is no competition in a 30 miles radius.

The LAG discussed the project and highlighted the need for a business advisor. It was agreed to recommend the applicants seek advice from Newcastle University Business Clinic.

The appraiser's score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Hall of Heddon

Presented by Robin Branks

Halls of Heddon is a garden centre. It has had no major improvements in the last few years and is looking increase its offering by setting up a cafe. The project is to renovate an old feature fire wall and lean-to sheds. Customer surveys have shown a definite demand for the facility.

The key market is mostly existing customers. The centre currently have a majority of older customers who would appreciate a break in their visit. The closest cafe is in Haddon and has a different target market.

The business has a financial advisor who will help with the forecasting process for the full application.

Pre-planning has been submitted and is expected back imminently.

It was proposed that a LAG member visit the Centre to see the proposed cafe site. The appraiser's score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Falstone Play Park

Presented by Johnny Carse & Jill Swale

Falstone play park was built in 2012 and the applicants would like to add outdoor gym equipment to make it a useable space for all residents. The equipment was requested and chosen by local children/teenagers. It will be free and accessible at all times. The village hall committee will be responsible for maintenance etc. There has never been any issue with vandalism of existing facilities

The appraiser's score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Corbridge Business Park

Presented by Nathan Derby

This project is looking to redevelop a building owned by the family trust to create a design hub with office space for the applicant's business. The plan is to create a workshop on the ground floor and separate offices upstairs. He has an agreement with his current employer and another architect to rent out space.

The project is in pre-planning at the moment. The original workshop garage space will be retained as this is a planning requirement

The applicant advised both firms will need at least 2 FTE posts.

GC advised the LAG that the project will create no direct jobs. The LAG felt that the indirect jobs were still a benefit.

The appraiser's score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Black Sheep Farm Health

Presented by Jenny Hull

The applicant currently works for a veterinary practice in Rothbury and is looking to set up her own firm with 2 partners. Wants this to be a local, farm only practice and believes that this could really benefit the local farming industry. The applicant is hoping to carry over the majority of her clients. The biggest outlays are the buildings/renovations and vehicles. The applicant has applied for a Virgin start up grant to help with the initial start up costs.

Employment will include graduate internships as it is important to encourage students into the industry even though they are more of a cost than a benefit during the first year.

The LAG questioned whether there was a plan to finance replacement vehicles when the time comes and if lease options had been considered. Lease was not an option due to the wear and tear the vehicles will go through.

The LAG were very supportive of the project but felt that the applicant needed to show that there was enough market demand to offset any displacement issues
The appraiser's score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

7. **AOB**

GC advised that there are several EOIs which will be ready soon and asked whether the LAG would be willing to hold an August meeting to ensure there wasn't a large backlog in September. This was agreed provided a date could be arranged that enough members could attend.

It was agreed the the date of the September meeting will also be changed as this may not be quorate.

Action - GC to email the LAG with possible dates for the next two meetings

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

TBC - venue likely to be Wooler