



**NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Thursday 11th January 2018
Longframlington Memorial Hall
5.30pm - 9.00pm**

Present: Terry Carroll, Steve Jopling, Mike Murray, Barbara Sexon, Alan Sharp, Tom Johnston, Louise Kirkwood, Nicola Bell, Liz Brooks (observer), David Baird (NCC), Gillian Cowell (Programme Officer), Louise McCreery (Admin Officer)

1. **Apologies:** Andrew Poad, Anthony Murray, Alistair Cochrane, Sally Shortall, Ruth Dickinson (NNPA)

2. **Declaration of Interest**

SJ declared an interest in Jack's Mobile Fitness, a project on the reserve list
AS declared an interest in Haltwhistle Swimming & Leisure and agreed to leave the meeting during discussion of this application

3. **Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 6 December 2017**

TC reminded the LAG about the Girsonfield publicity event to be held at 12pm on Friday 12th January. TC, MM, BS and AM will be attending, as will Guy Opperman MP

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record

4. **Matters Arising & Actions**

ReLocal Study

Interviews with LAG members are now complete and copies will be sent out next week for them to proof read. LB adv she would like to meet with DB, Guy Opperman MP, Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP and Andy Tordoff (RPA). The case study will be presented at a conference in mid February

The Hemmell

GC advised the LAG that the applicants still have not made a decision whether they will go accept the reduced grant offer that the LAG approved at the last meeting. The initial deadline was 22/12/17 and this was then extended until 03/01/18 and there has been no response.

The LAG discussed the situation and the chair proposed that funding be withdrawn. This suggestion was unanimously approved.

Doddington Cheese

The applicant has now submitted revised quotes and claim schedule. At the last meeting the LAG set a deadline of 31/05/18 for submission of the final claim but the applicant has asked for this to be extended to 30/06/18 due to the lead times of some equipment. This request was approved on majority vote with the condition that no further extensions would be granted

Vote:

7 for

1 against

5. **Programme Officer's Update**

GC updated the LAG on funds committed to date. Taking into account the project to be reviewed tonight and those likely to withdraw the LAG are currently undercommitted by approximately £100,000.

There is no further update on programme extensions or future arrangements

The LAG have currently created 24 jobs against a target of 68. There are a further 49 jobs within the current project pipeline.

Update on Projects in Development

Halls of Heddon - submission deadline extended to 31/03/18

C White Tree Surgery - the deadline for responding to appraisal queries was today and nothing has been heard from the applicant

Coalburn Cottage - deadline for the submission of the full application was 31/08/17. This was extended to 30/11/18 but there has been no recent contact

Hay Farm Heavies - deadline has passed but the applicant has advised this was due to illness and they are still intending to submit

Turn About Pegasus - looking to submit their full application next week

Wooler Gateways - TJ confirmed that this project should be withdrawn.

The LAG decided that the approval for Coalburn Cottage should be withdrawn. C White should receive a final request for appraisal information and should be withdrawn if no response is received.

GC confirmed that High Staward are considering resubmitting their full application if their new planning application is approved.

Reserve List

GC advised that three new EOIs have been added to the reserve list: Jack's Fast Track Fitness, Chris Armstrong - Bale packaging and Gateway into the Community.

The LAG discussed these projects and agreed that all three should be presented at the next LAG meeting along with Nightfold Retreat Ecopods.

DB advised the LAG that future EOIs need to be considered on the basis of whether they can complete the application process and project before the programme end date.

6. Review and Decide on Outline Applications

Bays Leap Dairy

The business is a progressive dairy farm which has grown from 200 to 800 cows. The farm is currently in last stages of conversion to an organic farm to try and make the business more sustainable. The applicant is looking for funding for a number of animal welfare and processing enhancements such as concrete grooving for the roundhouse, rainwater collection, foot trimming equipment and a milk cooling system. The applicant hopes to expand their product range in the future if the venture is successful. They currently have a contract with Arla for organic milk production. The additional jobs will be to help with calving, suckling and milking. The applicant advised there will be a three month lead time on some equipment as this will have to be built to order

Looking to create 1.5 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £37,600 (40% of costs)

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval for eligible items

West Moneylaws Workshop

The applicant is a domestic and commercial joinery company with experience in contracting and project management. They are looking to build a workshop which will increase storage capacity and allow the business to construct bespoke items on site. This will lead to better time management of staff, increased efficiency and less chance of delayed work due to stock lead times. The applicant currently employs two apprentices. If the funding is secured these would become permanent members of staff on completion of their qualifications. The applicant would also hire a labourer and a further apprentice.

An upgrade to the electricity supply will be needed. The applicant is aware of the long lead times for installation and has already been in discussions with the supplier.

Looking to create 3 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £58,400 (40% of costs)

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Redesdale Equestrian

This project will help develop facilities to better reflect the centre's commitment to horse and rider welfare and customer care. In doing so we hope to better fulfil current demand for the riding school and trekking centre, extend service hours throughout the winter and increase livery take-up enabling business growth and rural employment. The main elements of the project involve upgrading the riding arena, providing dedicated hospitality and welfare facilities and installing a horse walker.

The applicant is looking to create one FTE job which would be for care and exercise of the horses.

There is planning permission for the arena but some conditions may need to be discharged. The electricity supply is already in place.

Looking to create 1 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £37,440 (80% of costs)

The LAG believed the project should have scored 3 on strategic fit

Vote - unanimous approval

7. Full Applications

Haltwhistle Swimming and Leisure

This project will upgrade the four key components of the pool plant which will have the most impact on energy saving and staff time.

The boilers and heat exchange control water temperature and their replacement will result in an estimated 33% saving in gas pa

The filters control the cleanliness of the water and cleaner water will result in less chlorine required creating saving on chemicals.

In total we estimate £16,000 saving pa on energy, water and chemicals. This will also make us more environmentally friendly.

In 2016 £17,643 was spent on consumables and repairs, the pool plant running costs and eradicating the need for this along with estimated £16,000 pa on energy, water and chemicals will improve the centre's financial sustainability.

An increasing amount of staff time is spent in preparing the pools for opening and keeping them running at safety compliant levels. New plant will improve staff conditions.

Ultimately the new plant will sustain the existence of the swimming pools at the centre.

Without this upgrade it is inevitable that the prohibitively high running/energy costs will mean the pool will close in the next few years. By increasing consistency in water quality the centre will be confident to run more activity in the pool and therefore create additional

lifeguard and café staffing requirements, therefore securing existing jobs and creating new employment.

Looking to create 2 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £82,731.92 (80% of costs)

Vote - unanimous approval

Ravenscleugh Holiday Accommodation

Ravenscleugh is a sheep and cattle farm who operate a small B&B. The aim of the project is to expand the tourism offer of the business to enable the farm to be sustainable in the future.

Grant is sought to increase the capacity of the B&B by adding en suite bathrooms; cycle storage; improve access to the farm to facilitate caravans, motor homes using the farm for camping and encourage equestrian tourists with horse boxes; and provide a website including a booking facility for the B&B and camping.

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £17,084 (40% of costs)

Vote:

4 - approve

1 - abstain

Approved on majority vote

Langley Dam Glamping

The applicant business Langley Dam Glamping Ltd is a new start-up business located at Castle Farm Cottage, Langley on Tyne in Northumberland

The project itself will be located adjacent to Langley Dam Fishery.

The aim of the project proposed for LEADER funding is to establish a tourist accommodation business based on installation of 4 high quality en-suite glamping cabins on individual sites around Langley Dam Fishing Lake.

The proposed new accommodation will be targeted at visitors accessing the fishing lake, families, walkers and cyclists.

Looking to create 2.31 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £54,651.82 (40% of costs)

Vote -
7 - approve
1 - abstain

Approved on majority vote

Glampods Northumberland

Troughend West Tofts is a rural hill farm based at Otterburn in the Northumberland National Park. Our business proposal is for three Chalet Pods with en-suite facilities and a BBQ Hut for cooking and socialising.

We hope to achieve a welcoming, relaxing place which, whilst giving a nod to camping will attract visitors who like the glamorous side of Glamping with a bathroom, kitchen and BBQ hut as well as being a safe and fun environment for families. We hope to create 3 part-time positions by the middle of the 2018 season and to achieve 2 FTE by the summer of 2019.

We also hope to add a few different quirks to a pod, an example being a cocktail bar which will be a bit more special for wedding guests.

We will have BBQ packs supplied by a local butcher on offer, a Welcome Pack assembled on site and with products purchased from local businesses. (see letter attached Appendix 2)

We believe that there is so much to offer in this area that the pods will be occupied for most of the year and therefore not just "seasonal" (although we are being more cautious in our budgeting.)

Although the family farm and the glamping business are under completely separate legal and practical ownership, the two enterprises taken together make each other mutually more sustainable.

Looking to create 1.4 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £45,863.47 (40% of costs)

Vote -
7 - approve
1 - abstain

Approved on majority vote

J Goodfellow - Mobile Sheep Farming

This project will fund the purchase of a mobile sheep handling system for use on the 2,500 ewe flock. This will be used to handle sheep in the fields they are residing in, rather than having to transport them, or 'drive' them back to a static sheep handling system. This should reduce the stress of the whole process of the animal and also make the job more efficient when processing them. This adds to the fact that the mobile sheep handling system will increase animal welfare as the time allocated for the handling of the sheep and the jobs should be greatly reduced.

The increase in sheep numbers from 1,800 to 2,500 ewes has supported the employment of a young farmer in the area given the extra workload. The increase in output will also help expand the business and increase its sustainability. It will also allow for further opportunities to take on additional grazing land to support the growth of the enterprise.

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £3,643.20 (40% of costs)

Vote - unanimous approval

8. AOB

MM advised the LAG that Northumberland Mead will have a stall at the next Kelso Farmers Market

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting has been changed to Thursday 8th Feb. To be held at Hexham Golf Club