



**NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)**

Thursday 12th April 2018

Humshaugh Village Hall

5.30pm - 9.00pm

Present: Terry Carroll, Steve Jopling, Mike Murray, Andrew Poad, Alan Sharp, Louise Kirkwood, Jeremy Phillipson, Heather Smith (NCC), Gillian Cowell (Programme Officer), Louise McCreery (Admin Officer)

1. **Apologies:** Anthony Murray, Tom Johnston, Alistair Cochrane, Barbara Sexon, Nicola Bell, Ruth Dickinson (NNPA)
2. **Declaration of Interest**
AS declared an interest in Haltwhistle Film Project, and agreed to leave during the discussion
3. **Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 8 March 2018**
TC noted that the wrong intervention rate has been minuted for S Henderson project. Rate should be 40% not 80%. Minutes agreed as a true and accurate record once change has been actioned.
4. **Matters Arising & Actions**
 - Young & Sweet
Young & Sweet are having their grand opening on 29th May. GC will circulate the invitation to the LAG for any who wish to attend. GC also advised that she invited Ayesha Banks to join the LAG. Ayesha regrettfully declined due to other commitments.
 - Kielder Observatory
Kielder Observatory are having their grand opening on 26th April. Due to space constraints only the chair and vice chair have been invited. TC has agreed to attend but SJ has declined due to work commitments.
 - Halls of Heddon
The applicants have written to inform the LAG that they are withdrawing their application for budgetary reasons.

NULAG Event

TC advised that he has drafted a programme for the event which includes an introduction and talks from projects as well as academic, policy and political speakers. The LAG also discussed the idea of a 'marketplace' style area where projects could take a table or stall to promote their organisation.

The initial idea was to hold the event in the Coquetdale Hotel in Rothbury but upon discussion the LAG expressed a preference for using a community building. GC will look into options for this.

The date was discussed. There was a proposal that the event should be pushed back to Spring 19 to coincide with the end of the programme but the LAG felt that September 18 would be the optimum time.

Hay Farm Heavies

GC has spoken with the applicant and she would like to proceed but she has already bought the items listed in the EOI. The applicant would like to change her application so that the business can upgrade the cafe and workshop area. The applicant has also requested a deadline extension until 31/05/18. The LAG discussed the proposal and agreed that the changes are acceptable and that the deadline can be extended one final time to 31/05/18.

5. **Programme Officer's Update**

GC went through the programme officer's report. By the end of the previous meeting the LAG had an undercommitment at EOI stage of £37,332. If all the projects to be considered at this meeting are approved in full this will become an overcommitment of £155,860 which is acceptable considering the current attrition rate.

Most contracted projects are progressing well. Doddington Dairy has now submitted their first claim.

Update on Projects in Development

Ingram Venison - in appraisal

Bays Leap Dairy - application will be submitted by 20/4/18

Ciunam - FA received - appraisal on hold as planning has been withheld until a bat survey has been carried out

West Moneylaws Workshop - FA due 13/4/18

Redesdale Equestrian - FA is in development

Hay Farm Heavies - discussed under item 4

Turn About Pegasus - FA in appraisal

GoGilsland - FA received - waiting for confirmation of match funding

Elsdon Village Hall - FA received - waiting for additional procurement info

Arcusin Bale Packer - FA received

Henderson Zero Tillage - FA due June 2018

JRG Johnson Zero Tillage - FA due June 2018

Shieling Meats - FA due June 2018

Jack's Fast Track Gym - FA due May 2018

Nightfold Retreat - FA due May 2018

Churnsike Lodge - FA due June 2018

Reserve List

The LAG reviewed the current reserve list and agreed to bring forward Ant Robinson, Kevin Wharf and Christopher Green. The LAG agreed that the Powburn Village Hall project should be removed from the reserve list as the activity is ineligible.

The LAG deferred the decision on the NNP Mountain Rescue project until more information is available.

6. Review and Decide on Outline Applications

Haltwhistle Film Project

Haltwhistle Film Project was established twenty years ago and works in a diverse range of sectors. They run training course, operate a mobile cinema and take commissions from organisations such as RSPB and the Home Office. The organisation is run by freelancers with additional staff being brought in when necessary.

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee with charitable objects.

The applicant is looking for funding towards new camera equipment and would also like funding towards setting up an events schedule which will expand the business.

The equipment will improve the quality of the work they are able to do, especially with regard to art based commissions. Without the funding they would need to hire the equipment which is not cost effective.

The applicant confirmed that the six jobs listed on the EOI will also be freelancers

Looking to create 6 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £20,482.20 (90% of costs)

The LAG felt that both the application and presentation were unclear on what the funding was for and how it would benefit the business and wider community. The project also offers poor value for money because the jobs listed in the application form will be self employed freelancers

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous rejection

Gateway into the Community

The organisation works with people who have learning difficulties. They provide day services, group sessions and special interest groups. They have recently moved into new premises that were previously owned by Newcastle College. The building is fully DDA compliant but doesn't have a kitchen. The applicants want to be able to teach their clients to cook to build independence and life skills. They also want funding towards installing a shower room to improve personal hygiene.

The organisation does receive grant funding towards some of its activities. The day service is chargeable support which is paid by the County Council.

There is a 10 year lease on the building.

The organisation caters for approx 120 different people every week, some of whom will attend more than once a week.

The applicants advised they have received some additional match funding towards the project - £3,000 from Sylvia Wardlaw Foundation and £2,000 from Community Chest.

Looking to create 0 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £31,810 (100% of costs)

The LAG was very supportive of the application but agreed that the funding should be reduced to take into account the recent awards from other funders. It was proposed that the offer was reduced to £25,000

Vote - unanimous approval

The strategic fit score was agreed

The LAG advised that the full application should provide more information on the wider economic benefits the organisation provides

Ian Howson - Hen House Upgrade

The applicant started free range egg production at Ingoe nineteen years ago. The business currently uses a flat deck system which is where all the stock is on one level and the waste is caught below. This system can stress the birds as the temperature is not consistent, there can be a build up of ammonia and parasites from the waste and there is not always a lot of space for the birds to move around in. Stress can lead to increased pathogens and fatalities and reduced yield.

The applicant is now looking to move to a multi-tiered system which will mean that the birds have more space to move and more can be kept in each shed. One shed has already been converted to this system and the applicant has seen an improvement in infection and fatality rates. The new system includes a conveyor belt system to make clearing the muck much more efficient and reduces flies. The system also reduces the impact on surrounding wildlife and environment.

Conversion of a shed costs approx £100,000 and the applicant would like funding to convert two. This should create 2 FTE jobs. The long term plan is to use the increased profitability to renovate the remaining three sheds.

The applicant is very confident that the market is strong enough to support the expansion in operations. There has been a sustained yearly growth in egg consumption of 3% and the big supermarkets have committed to selling solely free range eggs by 2025.

Looking to create 3 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £137,600 (40% of costs)

The LAG discussed the project and were supportive of the ideas behind it. It was agreed that, due to budget concerns, the group was not prepared to fund both sheds. It was proposed to approve based on 40% of converting shed 6 (£57,000)

Vote - unanimous approval

The strategic fit score was agreed

I Atkinson - Machine Upgrade

The project will help the purchase of a new machine - a post knocker - that will help to develop an existing fencing contractor business in Wooler.

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £3,200 (40% of costs)

The LAG were broadly supportive of the project but felt more information was needed. It was proposed that the LAG approve the project on condition that GC meets with the applicant and is satisfied with the information provided by him

Vote - unanimous approval

The strategic fit score was agreed

7. Full Applications

Woodland Thinnings

This project will fund the purchase of a tracked excavator, forestry guarding and harvesting head. This will be used to carry out woodland thinning and contract forestry operations.

The business aims to do this by acquiring the following equipment:

- tracked excavator as a base on which to mount -
- forestry guarding (for the machine)
- harvesting head

Purchase of this system will allow the business to become more productive and efficient. This will be by giving the business the opportunity to take on bigger contracts and increase output allowing improvements to business efficiency and productivity and allowing woodland thinning services to be offered to a wider range of customers.

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £21,000 (40% of costs)

Vote - unanimous approval

The Black Bull at Etal

The aim of the project is to support the reopening of the Black Bull Public House at Etal which has been closed for two years.

Grant is sought to purchase kitchen equipment, a new bar, flooring, stoves and EPOS tills. Wider refurbishment of the building is being funded by the landlord (Ford and Etal Estate). The project will enable jobs to be created with an associated wage bill, new day visitors and help the establishment of a new business.

Looking to create 6 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £11,618.33 (40% of costs)

Vote - unanimous approval

8. AOB

none arising

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday 9th May. Venue to be Longframlington or Rothbury