

Alex Wallace  
20/2/19



**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER  
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)  
Wednesday 23rd January 2019**

**Executive LAG Members:**

Ross Lowrie - Chair  
Alex Wallace - Vice Chair  
Jean Orr  
Iain Robson  
Simon Cox  
Richard Waters  
Robert Brotherton  
Carron Craighead  
Angus Collingwood-Cameron

**LEADER Staff:**

Ivan Hewitt – Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER Programme Officer  
Jane Mackenzie – Northumberland LEADER Admin Support

**Advisory Group:**

David Baird - External Funding Appraisal Manager, Northumberland County Council

**1. Welcome to LAG Meeting & Apologies:**

Ross Lowrie, Chair opened the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER meeting at 18:00

IH – Confirmed that meeting was quorate by Voting Members attending and by Theme

Apologies received and recorded from LAG Members: Ross Weddle, Philip Angier, Julien Lake, Ian Moyes, Louis Fell, Guy Renner-Thompson, Carol Moyes, Nic Best and Brenda Fordy Scott.

IH presented apology from Christine Stevenson due to illness.

Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: Heather Smith

Members were advised that Carol Moyes has had a serious fall at Christmas but was making a good recovery. RB asked if a card could be sent to let her know everyone was thinking about her. RL agreed to organise that and wished her a speedy recovery on behalf of all in attendance.

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**1(a). D.O.I.**

Carron Craighead for item 6a - FAs for consideration - The Joy of Care - Pecuniary.

**1(b). AOB to be added to Agenda**

SC and RB asked that items 7 and 8 be moved up the agenda should time become pressing at the end of the evening. RL agreed to reverse the agenda in light of this.

**2. Draft Minutes from 12 December, 2018:**

AW led on this item as Chaired LAG meeting on 12th December, 2018

Page 1 - Accepted

Page 2 - Accepted

Page 3 - Accepted

Page 4 - Accepted

Page 5 - Accepted

Page 6 - Accepted

Page 7 - Accepted

The minutes were agreed as a true record, dated and signed by Alex Wallace, Vice Chair.

**3. Matters Arising & Actions to include Chair's Update:**

DB - wondered about the progress of the variation for Apex Gym. RL was able to confirm that this had already been discussed previously and agreed upon and the paperwork had been signed off.

**Chair's Update:**

RL - reported that the C&L LEADER event had been delayed as tonight was the original date but other factors had meant that it was inevitable that the event would need rescheduling. RL felt that with the uncertainty surrounding the Shared Prosperity Fund consultation dates and participation would prove challenging and would therefore discuss it again at a later stage.

A general discussion took place including IH appraising the committee on the LEADER Exchange Group meeting in London on 17 December 2018.

RL added that the LEP is getting together with DEFRA and feels that this was a missed opportunity for the LAG but because they had no knowledge of this meeting taking place there was very little that could have been done. This will be discussed later on in the agenda in conjunction with the event.

RL - noted that CS was still absent from meetings and he wished her a speedy recovery on behalf of the LAG. He also thanked NCC for providing continued admin support.

IH - was able to update everyone on her progress. He has been in touch and CS may be returning to work in the near future.



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#### **4. RPA & Leader Update:**

DB - reported on the regional LEP Chairs and DEFRA meeting - in the October meeting NELEP was not represented but the LAG may be asked to make contributions towards a meeting to be held on 29 January 2019. There were feelings that the rural message needed to be promoted to DEFRA not just in terms of LEADER but because industrial strategies need to be taken into account. DB is concerned about how these things are tied up.

RL - is considering sending a communication to Gordon Jones at DEFRA before 29 January to outline the LAG's strategy.

#### **ACTION: RL to email Gordon Jones and LEP**

DB - added that following an Operational Group meeting on 21 January the RPA has confirmed that monies cannot now be recycled.

The recovery from the Hauxley Wildlife Nature Reserve project will be actioned by the RPA who are currently negotiating the figure to be recovered.

A discussion round the table followed about the Hauxley project and why the monies are being clawed back.

**ACTION: Letter to be sent to the RPA to enquire what the reclaimed money is to be used for.**

#### **5. Programme Officers Report to include RC&A Update:**

IH - Gave Programme Officers report and informed LAG of current project budget commitments .

SC asked for a figure to be altered in the spend section to bring everything in line and this was accepted as being correct.

RL - During the Ops Group meeting questions were asked about how the spend would go moving forward and it was agreed that the LAG will discuss Applications that come to the January and February meetings. In March the situation will be assessed to see where the project budget stands in terms of how exactly the remaining funds are to be distributed - either a scoring system or perhaps a first come first served basis?

#### **6. FAs for consideration by Executive:**

##### **6a. The Joy of Care (Rural Services):**

**Grant request - £42,688.80**

Carron Craighead left the meeting.

Summary - The aim of the project is to convert a redundant two-story farm building into a care farming day centre. This will enable the farm partnership to diversify. Grant is sought to undertake the capital works, provide and install a stair lift and to create a new highway access to A696 that will enable 2 FTE to be created and turnover of the farm to grow.

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**LAG Discussions:**

The LAG considered and discussed the Full Application and Technical Appraisal Application

**RL - Propose LAG vote:**

- In Favour - 7
- Against - 0
- Abstain - 0 Chair did not vote

**LAG Decision:**

Full Application Approved. Technical Appraisal dated and signed by Chair, Ross Lowrie.

Carron Craighead rejoined the meeting at this point.

**6b. Education Centre for Displays (Rural Tourism):**

**Grant request - £20,950.00**

Summary - The aim of the project is to construct a building to provide indoor space for educational visits and animal displays at a family run animal park operating in Northumberland. Grant is sought to purchase and construct a steel framed building with tiered seating allowing the business to provide indoor visitor facilities for school visits and animal displays during inclement weather enabling 3 new jobs to be created, an increased wage bill and 105 additional day visitors.

**LAG Discussion:**

The LAG considered and discussed the Full Application and Technical Appraisal Application

DB - Queried the number of jobs to be created as still have jobs to create in the first project. There was a discussion around how a job created would be evidenced to show differentiation and it was agreed that a job description would define the separate jobs created.

**RL - Propose LAG vote:**

- In Favour - 8
- Against - 0
- Abstain - 0 Chair did not vote

**LAG Decision:**

Full Application Approved. Technical Appraisal dated and signed by Chair, Ross Lowrie.

**9. Evaluation Working Group:**

SC - provided his report and opened by congratulating the LAG on paying out over £1m worth of LEADER grant. He went on to confirm the following projects are to have evaluations carried out in February:

- Precision Beef Farming
- Outfield Renovation
- Smales Secure Storage

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**ACTION: IH to liaise with projects to arrange the visits.**

#### **8. Communications Working Group:**

RB would like this item to be titled "Communications".

There was a discussion around what needed to be pulled together for the event to promote the success of the projects without any political agenda.

SC suggested South Berrington Huts

Cresswell Village Hall and Whitehouse Farm Nursery were also suggested.

There followed a discussion about a selection of projects from the different priorities which will celebrate the £1m plus awarded to date.

The evaluation reports need to be distilled down into pictures, reports and quotes.

**ACTION: IH to organise.**

When the LAG is satisfied with its content it will then be forwarded to NCC Comms.

The above items will form part of a promotional brochure on behalf of the C&L LAG.

IH is to share his own evaluation to date with the LAG and will continue to bring to future meetings to use as a basis to develop the brochure.

LAG to review all completed projects to date in order to make a decision on which should be put forward as nominated items to go into the brochure.

AW - Feels this should go out electronically for members to make an informed choice at their leisure in their home environment and then to come to a meeting just to ratify.

RL - Wants the group to think of up to two projects per theme and discuss them at the next meeting as an agenda item.

#### **7. LAG Event - Update and Planning:**

The event has been postponed and a new date has yet to be agreed although the timeframe needs to be given some thought.

RL - Suggested the end of May/beginning of June.

LAG in agreement.

An invitee list to be drawn up and Carnaby's has been suggested as a venue for the event.

A sub group consisting of IR, RB, JO and CC will meet to discuss before the February meeting.

A discussion took place re-the need for both LAGs to work together with Peter Jackson.

AW - Wondered if there was a possibility in contacting the North Northumberland Local Area Council Chair Gordon Castle or the vice chair Steven Bridgett to promote the LAGs.

**ACTION: RL and IH to contact them.**

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Next meeting: Wednesday 20 February 2019 - venue Storey Park, Morpeth

**Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER LAG meeting at 8.00 pm.**