

14/05/17.



**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Wednesday 19th April 2017**

Executive LAG Members:

Ross Lowrie – Chair
Alex Wallace – Vice Chair
Ross Weddle
Jean Orr
Simon Cox
Chris Rushton
Steve Peart
Robert Brotherton
Julien Lake
Iain Robson
Angus Collingwood-Cameron

LAG Members:

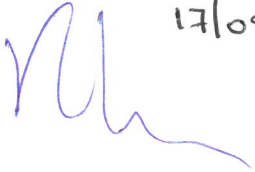
Iain Moyes
Carole Moyes
Carron Craighead

LEADER Staff:

Ivan Hewitt – Northumberland Coast and Lowlands Programme Officer
Christine Stevenson – LEADER Administration

Advisory Group:

Heather Smith – Corporate Programmes & External Funding Manager -
Northumberland County Council

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1. Welcome to LAG Meeting & Apologies:

Ross Lowrie, Chair opened the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER LAG meeting at 17:09

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

CS - Apologies received and recorded from Executive Member: Philip Angier
Apologies received and recorded from LAG Member: Nic Best, Brenda Fordy Scott and Louis Fell

Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: David Baird

2. D.O.I. relating to OA's received by Executive:

None

3. Presentations and Considerations of OA's received by Executive:

a. Fenwick Gallery

DORA Ref: 105224

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Micro Enterprise

Total Project Cost - £231,683.00

LEADER Grant Request - £92,673.20

Summary - The project will expand the offer of the existing Fenwick Gallery as it moves to a bigger location. The grant funding is requested to renovate and fit out the new (listed) building to expand exhibition/retail space and to purchase equipment that will allow the Gallery to bring the framing service in-house.

Scored 16 out of 24. The Appraiser states the project is eligible and recommends approval to Full Application

RL – Chair welcomed Ian and Nicole Fenwick on behalf of Fenwick Gallery who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

JO - Where is current business location?

IF - Bridge Street, Warkworth next to Bertrams

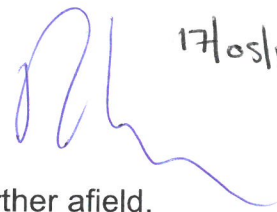
CM - What will happen to the original building?

IF - Will stay the same

RW - What, if any other funding have you applied for?

IF - None, we have not approached any other funders

SP - You state a new range of products?

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IF - We have only used UK made products in the past, now looking further afield.

Looking at high standard

SP - Encouraged by smaller scale of stock

NF, Yes, we have done test beds with new products, identified demand. need to employ more staff as expanding

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

RW - Asking for a lot of grant, why have they not tried other funders like the Heritage Enterprise Fund?

CR - Concerned that they bought the building but now need LEADER grant?

RL - Agrees with CR

CC - Jobs creation seems ambitious, a big jump

RL - 4 jobs created, plus 4 jobs safeguarded, broadly fits FTE's

RL - Proposals for LAG Executive to vote on:

a. Progress to FA as applied for

or

b. Progress to FA at 50% of offer for the same Outputs

LAG Decision:

a. 0 Vote - Yes

b. 6 Vote - Yes, 1 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

Process – Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

b. Acton Chase Camping

DORA Ref: 105350

LEADER Priority Theme 3 - Rural Tourism

Total Project Cost - £98,525.00

LEADER Grant Request - £39,410.00

Summary - The grant applicant, an existing micro enterprise situated at Old Felton Farm (NE65 9NT), wishes to diversify current farm activities to expand their provision of 1 caravan hardstanding by adding a further 9, to introduce camping and glamping pods

Scored 19 out of 24. Appraiser recommends approval of OA to FA with conditions

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RL – Chair welcomed Jill and Neil Campbell on behalf of Acton Chase Camping who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

SC - What size to accommodate?

JC - Up to a family of 4 or 5 people, we initially put in for 3 units but would increase to 9

SC - In the longer term any more than 9?

JC - No, stay within 10

CC - What is the shelf life of a pod?

JC - Some can go up to 20 years, looking at wooden pods

RL - Queried occupancy rates?

JC - Will take time to build up as currently only got access for 6 months of year and we will require planning permission to extend period longer

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

CR - Doubts on jobs creation

SC - Local competitors, sees farm as loss making, questions how commercially driven are they?

CC - Not asking for a huge grant

IR - Feels they have misunderstood competition in their area. Fill a gap in market but which gap? Question is this high end, not convinced they understand

RL - LAG have supported similar in past, concerned with the occupancy rate

HS - There is EAFRD funding around high end glamping, OA is strong fit

IH - The minimum grant for EAFRD is £35,000.00

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote:


LAG Decision:

1 Vote - Yes, 5 Vote - No, 1 Vote - Abstain. Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Declined:

- Optimistic on occupancy
- Dubious job creation
- Alternative sources of funding

Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

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c. Hilltop Farm Animal Sanctuary

DORA Ref:105373

LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services

Total Project Cost - £218.000.00

LEADER Grant Request - £152.600.00

Summary - The project will develop old farm buildings to build an animal sanctuary including a hospital, classroom space and animal stalls. A shop providing local produce and animal feed will also be on site. Costs also include electricals and access and driveways

Scored 10 out of 24. Appraiser recommends OA rejection

RL – Chair welcomed Robin Hills on behalf of Hilltop Farm Animal Sanctuary who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

CC - Knows area but where are you actually situated, used to be a 300 acre farm?

RH - Mostly sold off now

RL - Which side of the road?

RH - West side of the road

SP - Queried income stream from Charity?

RH - Self funded from Charity Events and family

SP - How will you continue to raise funds?

RH - Local businesses and community

RB - Where do you live?

RH - Currently lives in Morpeth, my mum lives on site in a caravan

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

SC - See this as a high grant, concerned with low sustainability and jobs

JO - Feels this application is a good idea

CC - Seems to be all over the place, business or a charity?

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on OA:

LAG Decision:

0 Vote - Yes, 7 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Declined

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RL

- Lack of clear vision on financials and sustainability
- Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

d. Zecca

DORA Ref:105457

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Rural Micro and Small Business

Total Project Cost - £52,400.00

LEADER Grant Request - £20,960.00

Summary - To construct an upstairs extension to the existing Zecca Italian restaurant in Amble. The extension will form a cocktail lounge and waiting area for the main restaurant

Scored 15 out of 24. Appraiser recommends LAG approval of OA with conditions

RL – Chair welcomed Dean Marshall behalf of Zecca who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

SC - On your application you mention you work at another business, how much time does this take?

DM - Joint venture with brother, there is a decline in the Oil & Gas Industry. Zecca runs self sufficient

SC - Is Zecca a long term commitment?

DM - Family investment, so long term

CR - You are projecting a 50% increase in turnover?

DM - Turn tables over quicker to include the use of the upstairs lounge

CR - Can your licence allow a stand alone bar?

DM - Will apply for licence

AW - Any cocktails bars in Amble?

DM - Not yet, more traditional bars

ACC - Do you own the building?

DM - Yes

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting


LAG Discussions:

AW - Thinks applicant has found a market, happy to support

JO - Nice to see and hear how applicant is enthusiastic about business

IR - Good market opportunity as Amble is growing

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on OA:

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LAG Decision:

9 Vote - Yes, 0 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

Chair dated and signed OA Appraisal Form

e. Lindisfarne Hotel

DORA Ref:105375

**LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Rural Micro and Small Business
and Farm Diversity**

Total Project Cost - £160,000.00

LEADER Grant Request - £64,000.00

Summary - The project is to build staff accommodation so that staff can live onsite at the Lindisfarne Hotel on Holy Island. The business location means that it is hard to recruit staff with accommodation and the existing provision is an old caravan that is no longer adequate. With more staff the hotel will be able to run at its full potential. Scored 15 out of 24. Appraiser recommends LAG approve OA to FA

RL – Chair welcomed Sean Atkinson behalf of Lindisfarne Hotel who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

IR - Represents AONB, there are staffing issues for every business, so building staff accommodation are you confident to get staff?

SA - Yes, I have good contacts

SC - What type of accommodation?

SA - Large hut barn style, 20ft x 16ft keeps staff out of hotel. Has always been in hospitality business

SP - Are new jobs seasonal or all year round?

SA - Would look to keep staff on, bank hours during summer, pay wages in winter.

Looking to expand season

HS - Accommodation restricts you to either one person or a couple?

SA - I can extend further if required

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

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LAG Discussions:

RW - Design works but a lot of money for 2 staff members, querier planning permission on Holy Island?

IR - Value for money concerns

JO - Would Holy Island not attract staff?

IR - No, there is a problem with shortage of staffing

JL - Thinks as Holy Island an opportunity to attract staff but asking a lot of money for the 2 jobs

SC - A lot of reservations, scored it 12. Concerns with value for money and the lack of detail on building costs

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on OA:

LAG Decision:

0 Vote - Yes, 7 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Declined

- Lack of case and clarity for future plans
- Value for money

Chair dated and signed OA Appraisal Form

f. Helen Grierson Glass Studio

DORA Ref:105485

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Rural Micro and Small Business

Total Project Cost - £24,241.30

LEADER Grant Request - £9,012.00

Summary - The project is to relocate the existing art glass business into the former miners' bath house in Broomhill, to refurbish flooring areas and the purchase of capital equipment for the production of glass and pottery ware.

Scored 15 out of 24. Appraiser recommends LAG approve OA to FA

RL – Chair welcomed Helen Grierson behalf of Helen Grierson Glass Studio who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

JO - Where are you currently based?

HG - Up and coming area, linking it all up

RL - C&L LAG have funded same type of project, questions is there any displacement?

HG - None

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CR - Is one of the jobs an apprenticeship?
HG - Further down the line will need a technician
RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation
Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

JL - Feels this is a good application
RB - The Rural Coalfields area has suffered for years
RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on OA:

LAG Decision:

9 Vote - Yes, 0 Vote - No, Chair did not vote
LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application
LAG NOTE - Applicant to make clear in FA has understood Apprenticeship, Job creation and Business model
Chair dated and signed OA Appraisal Form

g. The Cookie Jar

DORA Ref:105614

LEADER Priority Theme 3 - Support for Rural Tourism

Total Project Cost - £383,575.00

LEADER Grant Request - £61,740.00


Summary - The project is to renovate the Convent of Mercy building on Bailiffgate in Alnwick into 5* accommodation with 11 en-suite rooms, catering facilities, reception, kennels, a gun safe and laundry facilities. Up to 9 FTE jobs will be created in the first three years of operating

Scored 15 out of 24. Appraiser recommends LAG approve OA to FA

RL – Chair welcomed Deborah Cook of The Cookie Jar who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

IR - Represents AONB, what market research have you done?
DC - Husband shoots, knows setup
SP - Any accreditations, good tool to have
DC - Yes, ideally want to be up there special
RL - Will the project go ahead without the LEADER grant?

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DC - Will proceed but will be limited. Found the Plumbing and Electricals much more expensive

HS - How firm are costs in application?

DC - Kitchen is basic, to progress upto planed stage 3, would need more improvement

RL - Have you looked at renewable heating systems?

DC - No as building is very old, no mention from the architect

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

CC - On application have seen that applied for EAFRD 50% and also LEADER, feels unsettled

IH - If project is progressed to FA, will raise with applicant and confirm EAFRD application status. Will report back to LAG

IR - Hotel backgrounds, during tourist season cars, car parking will cause issues

CR - Gap for a Boutique Hotel

IR - Yes, gap for a high end

AW - Car parking issues will come out in planning application. Alnwick is up and coming, tourist industry growing. FA needs more detail

RL - Won't go ahead without LEADER grant

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on OA:

LAG Decision:

9 Vote - Yes, 0 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

LAG ACTION - IH to check out the EAFRD condition

Chair dated and signed OA Appraisal Form

4. D.O.I. relating to FAs received by Executive:

None

5. Draft LAG Minutes from 15th March, 2017:

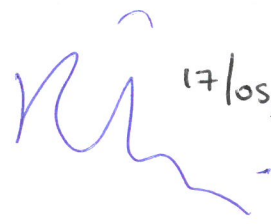
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Page 6 – Accepted

Page 7 – Accepted

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Page 9 - Accepted

Page 10 - Accepted

Page 11 - Accepted

Page 12 - Accepted

Minutes from Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting of 15th March 2017 agreed as a true record. Dated and signed by Ross Lowrie, Chair

6. Matters Arising & Actions to include Chairs Update:

Chair's Update:

Attended an RPA (Rural Programmes Agency) meeting at York with IH. We looked at what's working well and new process forms.

Discussions around Value for Money - 30% project with added job, reflected its a bit tricky. No firm message on programme underspend and queries around LDS relevance.

Feedback to RPA on whole LEADER process.

NOTE - Feedback in 1 week

Individual LAG's lobbying, RPA will not. LAG's to have their own voice.

Relationship between LEP's (Local Enterprise partnerships) and LAG's

IH - The new process forms will be operational from 18th April 2017

ACTION - IH to circulate new forms for LAG members

7. Programme Officers Report to include Project Expenditure to Date:

IH - Gave overview of project pipeline going forward, and funds committed to date.

RW - How will the Purdah period effect programme process?

RL - Not to stop doing everything, not clear if restrictions would affect open calls?

HS - Programme open, will continue to go through process but can't inform LAG decisions

NOTE - LAG approved and agreed Budget Profile

8. Consideration of Full Applications received by Executive:

a. Northern Edge Coffee

DORA Ref:104652

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Rural Micro and Small Business

Total Project Cost - £23,845.73

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LEADER Grant Request - £9,538.29

Summary - The aim of the project is to purchase a larger coffee roaster for a coffee roasting business based in Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed. This will enable the applicant to increase capacity in roasting coffee and improve product consistency and quality. This will enable the business to expand by supplying more coffee to existing trade customers (including local tea shops and hotels) and attracting new customers.

Scored 39 out of 68. Appraiser recommends LAG approve FA

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on FA:

LAG Decision:

9 Vote - Yes, 0 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved

Chair dated and signed FA Appraisal Form

b. Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre

DORA Ref:104572

LEADER Priority Theme 5 - Support for Culture & Heritage

Total Project Cost - £26,324.40

LEADER Grant Request - £22,638.98

Summary - The applicant at Hauxley Nature Reserve (NE65 0JR) has embarked on a Heritage Lottery funded development of a Wildlife Discover Centre at Hauxley Nature Reserve and successfully applied to a range of other funders for additional facilities. Their application to LEADER is to cover the cost of improving the access road, enlarging and resurfacing the car park and improving the key walking route. This forms part of the Wildlife Trust's overall plan to make the new facility accessible and able to accommodate a wide range of audiences and increase visitor numbers, with the aim of making the centre financially sustainable.

Scored 38 out of 68. Appraiser recommends LAG approval

LAG Discussions:

JO - A lot of sea water seepage. What effect on other facility?

IH - Hauxley visitor centre has co-existed with all other facilities

SC - Voted against OA, have read through FA and am happy with revised costs

IR - Final piece in jigsaw, vital for project

AW - Signage all blanked out, will it be changed once centre re-opens

ACC - How does it relate to jobs?

RL - 30% of jobs indirect

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote on FA:

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LAG Decision:

9 Vote - Yes, 0 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved

- Require applicant to supply signage similar to previous LEADER Programme

Chair dated and signed FA Appraisal Form

9. A.O.B:

a. Website Shared Area

IH - Google access to project documents, can make comments and register a vote.

LAG members need to have a Gmail Account

AW - Local Councillors attending training

ACTIONS

- **IH to bring information and guidance to next LAG meeting (May 17th)**
- **Ask if training available for LAG members**

SC - Evaluation Working Group progress, where are we?

ACTION - CS to organise project visits and diary meetings for EWG members

Date & Time of the next C&L LAG Meeting:

The next Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting will be your AGM held on Wednesday 17th May at Carnaby's, Brownieside from 18:00 – 20:00

Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting at 19:59