

Press Article from Northumberland Gazette - Saturday 14th October, 2017

Make the most of funding available in Northumberland ahead of Brexit – that’s the message from organisers of one of the schemes. Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) is keen to make sure communities, farmers, foresters and small businesses make full use of the grants on offer before we leave the EU. A map showing the Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER area.

Ross Lowrie, LAG chairman, said: “LEADER’s strength is in our local community volunteers. They give their time and experience to guide the fund, creating new jobs and supporting rural services in coastal Northumberland. “We’re particularly keen to hear about new project ideas that support and enrich the lives of rural communities, but we’re running out of time.” Since the start of the current programme in October 2015, the LAG has committed £650,000 of its £1.9million budget and has several exciting projects in the pipeline. Funding is available to improve the productivity of farming, help small businesses, support tourism, culture and heritage as well as provide rural services. Ross added : “The Group is particularly keen to consider expressions of interest in projects that address the provision of rural services. “In addition to spending our current fund, we’re working hard to ensure politicians understand that in a post-Brexit future Northumberland needs financial support to grow the rural economy, create good jobs and support rural communities. Our LEADER group has shown that to make the best of funding you need to harness local knowledge and expertise.” The work of the LAG is supported by Northumberland County Council.

Coun Guy Renner-Thompson, a LAG member, said: “Bringing a local perspective to the wide range of activities that can be funded is what LEADER is all about. “Northumberland County Council is pleased to provide its support and I would like to thank our LEADER support team for all their hard work and enthusiasm.”

Contact the LEADER team on 01670 623878, 01670 623927, 07920 184617 or ivan.hewitt@northumberland.gov.uk

The Group would like to thank all those applicants who have taken the time to consider LEADER funding and hope that this important investment in rural Northumberland will continue to deliver returns in future years. It is vitally important funding is available to unlock the potential of rural areas after we leave the EU. For more information, visit the programme’s website.

How can it make a difference? Many of the projects funded have already started to deliver jobs and diversify the traditional rural economy. Peter Howie, of Acklington

Park Farm, near Guyzance, has been able to convert his former milking parlour into a micro brewery. Rigg and Furrow Brewery is already producing a range of craft beers. Pip Robson, of Chathill, is producing straw pellets from his own and locally-sourced straw. The market for the end product is developing from biomass heating to animal bedding. Anthony and Lucy Carroll, of Tiptoe Farm, have been able to build on the success of their Heritage Potatoes enterprise with LEADER support to increase their already significant rural workforce. Turnbull's, the well-known Alnwick butcher, is setting up a meat-processing facility that will not only increase their workforce and provide apprenticeship opportunities, but will also provide local farmers with a local market for quality beef. The new Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre has also been able to finish its access road and car parking with LEADER support.

Read more at:

<http://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/time-s-running-out-for-funding-to-be-used-prior-to-leaving-eu-1-8801268>