



**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Wednesday 20th September, 2017**

Executive LAG Members:

Ross Lowrie – Chair
Alex Wallace – Vice Chair
Iain Robson
Jean Orr
Ian Moyes
Carron Craighead
Simon Cox
Angus Collingwood-Cameron
Philip Angier
Richard Waters

LAG Members:

Carole Moyes

LEADER Staff:

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

Advisory Group:

David Baird - External Funding Appraisal Manage, Northumberland County Council

1.Welcome to LAG Meeting & Apologies:

Ross Lowrie, Chair opened the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER LAG at 18:02

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



18/10/17.

CS - Apologies received and recorded from Executive Members: Ross Weddle, Robert Brotherton, Julien Lake and Guy Renner-Thompson
Apology received and recorded from LAG Member: Brenda Fordy Scott
Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: Heather Smith

2. D.O.I

Ross Weddle (Non Attendee) - agenda item 6c The Brown Bear - Pecuniary
Iain Robson - agenda item 6a Cresswell Village Hall - Pecuniary

3. Draft LAG Minutes from 16th August, 2017:

Page 1 - Accepted

Page 2 - Accepted

Page 3 - Accepted

Page 4 - Accepted

Page 5 - Accepted

Page 6 - Accepted

Page 7 - Accepted

Page 8 - Accepted

Page 9 - Accepted

Page 10 - Accepted

Page 11 - Accepted

Page 12 - Accepted

C&L LAG Minutes recorded as a true record. Dated and signed by R. Lowrie Chair

4. Matters Arising & Actions to include Chair's update:

Actions from 16th August Minutes:

Page 4 - agenda item 5 - IH to email LAG for decision - completed

Page 11 - agenda item 9 - CS to schedule Communication Working Group meeting - completed

Page 11 - agenda item 9 - CS to email LAG members with information and deadline for their Gmail Account details by Friday 25th August - completed

Chair's Update:

NEFRAN (North East Farming & Rural Affairs Network) either Ross or Ivan will be attending this meeting scheduled for Thursday 28th September.

Informed LAG that he will be attending an event in Hexham regarding Dying, Surviving or Thriving: Time to create a new rural narrative for the Post Brexit World.

LAG do a really good job at creating jobs, supporting rural communities and growth, but many are low value jobs. In future look to try and create better jobs. Role of public funds around Social Mobility.

The perception is that leader only benefits landowners, in future we should make clear that we focus on business start-ups, and that farming and landowning is not a prerequisite. LAG have seen low paid jobs are not easy to fill. We want to create decent jobs with decent wages.

Local decision making should continue, focus on groups and communities capacity to deliver. Local Authorities may not have the capacity to deliver

SC - Through the C&L LAG Project Evaluation process we have seen better high skill jobs coming through, a better balance

JO - LAG could look to contacting businesses to support start-set up skills

AW - Look at Northumberland College, training skills that remain in Northumberland, benefit to all communities

5. Programme Officers Report:

IH - Informed LAG members that Alnwick Town Football Club have issued a letter of intent to appeal the LAG's decision from LAG meeting 16th August. Will inform applicant that LAG have been informed of this letter and direct applicant to signed LAG minutes on website for reference.

IH - Gave Programme Officers Report and informed LAG of current project budget commitments and spend. Asked that LAG agree to consider project applications on the basis of those figures

As of September 2017 LAG has committed **£643,784.41** with a balance of **£983,751.57** remaining to commit.

Note - LAG approved and agreed Budget profile

RL - Queried level for LAG to over commit allocation by 30%?

DB - Up to a maximum of 30%, the level of commitment needs to be managed

RL - Can we do this through a sub meeting?

IH - Yes but it needs to be done this week

SC - Large grant requests for EOIs tonight, need to wait for later in meeting

RL - LAG not moving through before applicants

IH - LAG have agreed budget to discuss all EOIs and FAs on agenda

DB - We need to submit a revised Delivery Plan (DP) to the RPA

6. Presentations of EOIs received by Executive:

a Cresswell Village Hall

DORA Ref:107132

LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services

Total Project Cost - £70,848.00

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RL

LEADER Grant Request- £56,678.40

Summary - This project will upgrade the Village Hall building and facilities so that it can become the hub of the ongoing HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) funded archaeological and Pele Tower project in Cresswell. The upgraded facility can be used by local schools and community groups and the heritage information displayed will also be of interest to visitors.

RL – Chair welcomed Barry Mead, Michael Wright and Mavis Dance on behalf of Cresswell Village Hall who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

JO - Archaeology activities, who leads?

BM - I am an archaeologist. We brought in a professional company and have worked with local schools, written up articles and published. Developed with grants from lottery, we have asked for more grants to assist with community engagement

PA - Questions about budgets - seems high spec, what are you getting for it?

BM - initial quotes for EOI, not detailed

MW - Getting quotes is not easy

AW - Happy to support South East Northumberland, question - have you contacted C.A.N. for support

MD - Yes, they visit us regularly

SC - Accessibility to the Peel Tower and Village Hall, what are the hours and how will they work together?

BM - Held an open day in February, about 500 visitors. Guided tours of Peel Tower then used Village Hall for breaks, working in tandem

SC - Is there any of the HLF grant going towards the Village Hall?

BM - Yes

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

LAG Discussions:

AW - A run down Village Hall, will bring rewards around Northumberland

PA - Supportive, but feels not thought through for what they actually need. LAG need to ask for clarification

SC - Agrees with PA's comments. Massive interest in archaeology. Would like to know how much HLF grant dropping in to the Village Hall, would take less from LAG allocation

RL - What extent does each claim on each other?

SC - Cresswell is start for Coastal Path, opening up more appeal

DB - Issue impacts - RPA have changed guidance on State Aid. Work around 80%

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LAG need to be cautious

RL - LAG to consider application as it is, if progressed to FA will take DB's points

JO - Other funding routes available in area

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

Note - Iain Robson - D.O.I

Strategic Fit - 2

LAG Executive Decision – Expression of Interest progressed to Full Application

Special Conditions:

Procurement - specific to the project

b. Armstrong House Development

DORA Ref:107279

LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services

Total Project Cost - £284,760.00

LEADER Grant Request- £219,265.20

Summary - Armstrong House is a residential home in Bamburgh with 12 rooms available. The project intends to increase the number of rooms to increase the potential number of residents, develop a new lounge area, resit the kitchen and dining room, install a lift to the first floor and provide a new consulting room for the use of the community as well as residents.

RL – Chair welcomed Dave Miller and Alison Brett on behalf of Armstrong House Development who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

SC - In the Technical Appraisal, suggesting occupancy of 7-8?

DM - Dealing with unknown, we have a steady supply of residents. Respite stays are higher

SC - How confident to get 16?

DM - With better access and facilities

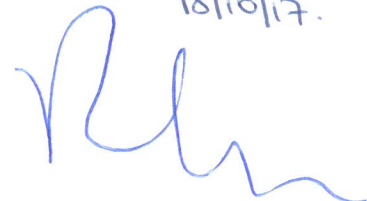
RL - Flow of money- charity status, competing against companies. Who makes the money?

DM - Monies go back in to Armstrong House, we are not in competition. Provide independent living with support, we don't provide nursing care

JO - Is it women or men who leave early?

DM - Equal numbers for both

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AB - We have excellent staff. Bamburgh is becoming more popular and elderly numbers are increasing. Nice to stay in local community for end of life care

ACC - What levels of reserves does the Trust carry?

DM - About £80,000 for maintenance/repairs and to close down if necessary

ACC - Turnover?

DM - Not sure of figures

SC - Technical Appraisal states £175,000

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

LAG Discussions:

SC - A huge grant amount. Queries about occupancy and concerns about value for money. Time factors are an issue with listed building. LAG have a completion date to adhere too

DB - End date of December 2018, the RPA might extend the whole programme

PA - Agrees with SC's comments. Pinch point at the wrong end of the market

ACC - Wondering how have they been operating without a lift?

RL - Is this a good idea, what do LAG think?

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

- 0 Vote - Yes
- 8 Vote - No
- 1 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Expression of Interest Not Progressed

LAG Noted:

- Issues around delivery timescale
- Cash Flow
- Poor value for money around FTE's
- Job Ratio

c. The Brown Bear


DORA Ref:107283

LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services

Total Project Cost - £24,950.00

LEADER Grant Request- £19,960.00

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Summary - The project is to refurbish a public house in Berwick, to purchase fixtures, fittings and equipment and undertake works to improve facilities

RL – Chair welcomed Mark Dodds on behalf of The Brown Bear who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

PA - Are you incorporated for Not for Profit organisation or are you on a journey?

MD - Intention is to convert, buy freehold

IR - Grant request for equipment, specific

MD - Various and a Pizza Oven will double current takings

AW - Good website, knowledgeable. Good relationship with benefactor

MD - Proposition, big landlord in Berwick. He has agreed to sell freehold as see's bigger picture

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

LAG Discussions:

IR - Unsure what they want the grant for, what's actually eligible?

DB - Need to ascertain if equipment is commercial, need further information

AW - Applicant is looking to save a derelict building and restore land. Happy to support

SC - Scored this low, worries about 40-80%. Would be interested to support but lots of pubs closing down. Felt this was a poor quality application

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Expression of Interest Progressed to Full Application

Note - Ross Weddle - D.O.I.

Strategic Fit - 2

d. Wheels to Work

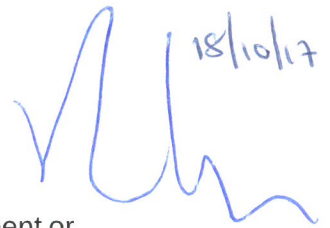
DORA Ref:107297

LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services

Total Project Cost - £167,750.00

LEADER Grant Request- £167,750.00

Summary - The project is to purchase circa 60 motor scooters, 15 electric bikes, PPE, security devices and storage sheds and other associated costs over 3 years, for

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people who do not have access to transport to enable them to access employment or training then as daily transport to work / training

RL – Chair welcomed David Traish on behalf of Wheels to Work who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

IR - Is this the same scheme as Pennine Dales?

DT - That was through ADAPT, cars and scooters

CC - Due diligence, ascertain suitable security

DT - Require ID proof with the DVLA, check address. If 6 points on a licence then look at codes and contact their insurance company

CC - What about applicant?

Dt - 16 year olds only get a 50cc. The parents/guardians have responsibility. Also check with employer. We don't support zero contracts as not viable to support

JO - Wheels to Work has been going a long time?

DT - Both previous Wheels to Work have closed. We provide safety equipment, don't recycle helmets

SC - Why don't you work with scooter businesses and look at payable schemes?

DT - We don't have enough money. 80% of clients prefer to rent as most are on low wages

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

LAG Discussions:

IH - Potential to share with Uplands and North Pennine Dales LAG's, share costs across all three

DB - Issues with eligibility

RL - Not sure of LAGs position on eligibility?

DB - Appraiser spotted application is from Northumberland County Council

RL - Northumberland County Council are Coast & Lowlands and Uplands Accountable Body and provide our technical appraisal service. LAG have decision on project desirability

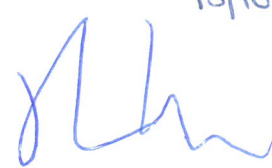
ACC - LAG had a previous Wheels to Work project?

JO - Yes, in last programme 2007-2013

IR - Suggests this is unsustainable, doesn't fit with timescales. When funding is withdrawn, collapses again

SC - Agrees with IR's comments. What happens in three years time. Feels poor value for money at £80,000 per FTE

DB - Changes from RPA to FTEs as can't count apprenticeships now



JO - Concerns with size of project to cover across three LAG area's

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Expression of Interest Not Progressed

LAG Note:

- Time factors
- Poor value for money
- Lack of sustainability

7. Consideration of EOLs received:

Note - CS minuted under 6a,b,c and d

8. FA's for consideration by Executive:

a. Amble Dementia Friendly Arts Centre

DORA Ref:105202

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Micro Enterprise

Total Project Cost - £184,903.00

LEADER Grant Request- £134,979.19

Summary - The aim of the project is to carry out structural and refurbishment works to a building in Amble from which a dementia friendly art centre will operate. It has been clearly defined by the applicant and it is easy to understand what is being proposed. The Full Application was detailed regarding the range of services that the centre will offer. The project will enable the business to become more sustainable and less reliant on grant funding. The applicant is applying for LEADER grant under the Local Services priority at 73% intervention rate.

LAG Discussions:

SC - This application was deferred at the last meeting 16th August?

IH - Yes, LAG made decision at last meeting, now eligible for LAG consideration

JO - Not convinced applicant understand client groups, feels very little information on project core plan or clients. Not happy to support

CM - Has this application changed from the last meeting?

IH - No, same as

CM - Queries statement in FA, concerned for need for project as Amble is a dementia friendly town

IH - LAG can only review what's on the FA

18/10/17.
Nh

SC - High grant request. The technical appraisal states reject. Feels its a nice idea and offers some benefits. Lack of commercial experience, has issues around solvency, risk for LAG

AW - LAG should give credit to the Technical Appraiser

PA - Applicant put a lot of effort into their Business Plan

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Rejected

LAG Note:

- High grant request
- Lack of confidence to deliver sustainability
- Lack of confidence will deliver specific services to clients

Note - LAG agreed with technical appraisal key weaknesses

b. Robotic Flail

DORA Ref:106010

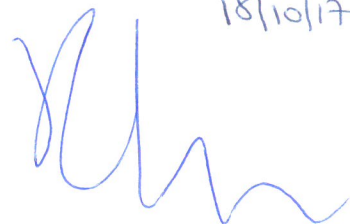
LEADER Priority Theme 1 - Farm Productivity

Total Project Cost - £42,000.00

LEADER Grant Request- £16,800.00

Summary - The applicant has a mostly arable farming business, but part of the farm involves sheep grazing steep river banks. These have become overgrown over 50 years and now causing animal welfare problems and are difficult to shepherd. Some banks are accessible by tractor but others are too steep so the only alternative is to spray by hand which damages native grasses and runs the risk of getting into nearby watercourses. The applicant feels he has found the solution in the Robotic Flail which can safely work on steep banks and pulverise hawthorn, bracken, gorse and sapling regrowth. As a result the flailed grassland would become more productive and allow indigenous herb species to flourish and improve animal welfare by preventing, for example, sheep getting stuck under gorse bushes. The local research undertaken by the applicant has identified that no similar machines are available for hire in the area so this would also present an opportunity for offering contract services to other farms/landowners.

18/10/17



LAG Discussions:

SC - A good piece of kit, good to see a waiting list for it. Applicant took on LAG's feedback with significant improvement to ratio and sustainability

IR - Agrees with SC's comments

CC - Issues with travelling. Not used for twelve months of year

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

- 8 Vote - Yes
- 1 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved

Note - Angus Collingwood-Cameron left meeting at 20:20

9. A.O.B:

RL - Project vireing, asked SC to assist with review

SC - Agreed

- a. RC&A Budget - not discussed
- b. Evaluation Group:

SC - Informed meeting that 6 projects have been visited as part of the LAG's Evaluation process, all satisfactory, more in pipeline

- c. Communication Group:

IR - LAG should do celebration publicity of projects and programme

IH - Held meeting 11th August to discuss press release - ongoing

CS - Informed LAG members of updated case studies and promotional news on website

- d. Going for Growth Event:

IH - A half day event for local businesses and decision makers in the North East to reflect on EU support for jobs and growth and to discuss type of support in a Post Brexit Britain - 6th October, 2017

Date & Time of the next C&L LAG meeting - Wednesday 18th October, venue tbc

Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting at 20:30