



**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER  
LOCAL ACTION GROUP - Application Sub Group Meeting  
Wednesday 25th July, 2017**

**Executive LAG Members:**

Ross Lowrie – Chair  
Alex Wallace – Vice Chair  
Philip Angier  
Iain Robson  
Jean Orr  
Robert Brotherton  
Simon Cox  
Angus Collingwood-Cameron  
Ian Moyes  
Louis Fell

**LAG Members:**

Carole Moyes

**LEADER Staff:**

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

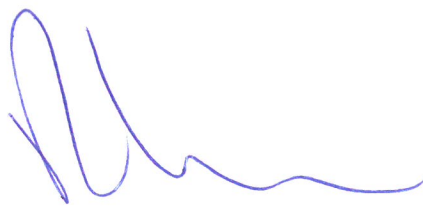
**Advisory Group:**

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

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

Ross Lowrie, Chair opened the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER LAG  
Application Sub Group at 18:00

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



16/08/2017

CS - Apologies received and recorded from Executive Members: Carron Craighead, Julien Lake, Richard Waters and Ross Weddle

Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: David Baird

## **2. D.O.I**

Louis Fell LAG Executive - agenda item 4a - Alnwick Rugby Club - Pecuniary

## **3. Confirmation of C&L LAG Budget:**

IH - Confirmed that the project budget was still available for allocation against all priority themes.

LAG approved consideration of applications on agenda on basis of budget being available.

## **4. Presentations of EOIs received by Executive:**

### **a. Alnwick Rugby Club**

**DORA Ref:106491**

**LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services**

**Total Project Cost - £59,060.59**

**LEADER Grant Request- £47,248.47**

Summary - The project splits into two activities. The first involves extending the car parking space to allow more caravan pitches and the second involves the installation of a commercial kitchen which can be used by the existing club, the local school and opens up more facilities to cater for visitors/tourists. In combination the effect will be to increase annual turnover but also in terms of social capital as the club will become a hub for community use

RL – Chair welcomed Dennis Hetherington on behalf of Alnwick Rugby Club who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

JO - Are they touring caravans and how long is duration of stay?

DH - Out of season may stay for a week/fortnight, plus looking at shorter stays of 1,2,3 nights

JO - Will this create the need for extra staff?

DH - Catering is outsourced

ACC - How many new additional caravan pitches?

DH - Looking at 20 extra

SC - Looking at the financials can you breakdown your increase in annual turnover



16/08/2017

DH - 15 x per caravan, plus tents and catering. We don't charge for use of pitch

RL - Looking at the commercial/social side this is the 3rd application in same geographical area for kids, over supply of buildings and space, seems a lot of provision?

DH - We support Rugby and want to support more children into sport. Not aware of other projects

AW - See football clubs working in partnerships. Understands working with school but how long with caravaning?

DH - From hookups, about 10 years

JO - Are there any issues with Rugby Health & safety issues, recent media attention

DH - Employ a Safety officer and follow RFU Guidelines

PA - Catering sub contracting revenue generating, how does Rugby Club benefit?

DH - Rugby Club take 20% from all outside businesses, financial benefits

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

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

PA - Not a good business plan, need to ask for clarity. Would support

HS - Theme developing in LAG as at EOI stage applicants are only asked for basic information as the FA will focus in on more detail

PA - Agrees but still feels it was a poor EOI

AW - Rugby Club is helping 200-300 kids, good to support

IR - Not for profit, where does LAG stand with running the commercial wing?

RB - Alnwick Rugby Club Centre, caravans have been going a long time, good social hub. Feels right

SC - Observations, well performing Rugby Club, important to be sustainable.

Encouraged by the RFU to diversify to assist all groups. Will add jobs

RL - As an 80% intervention rate where does it stand as this is a Not for Profit organisation that fits at a 40% intervention rate?

IH - David Baird (AB) has raised this with the RPA

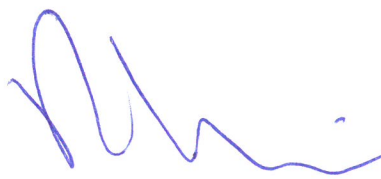
LAG Decision after agenda item 7 A.O.B due to Louis Fell's D.O.I.

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

LAG Scored - 3 on strategic fit



16/08/2017

LAG Advice:

Talk to Football Club

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

**b. White House Farm Centre**

**DORA Ref:106444**

**LEADER Priority Theme 3 - Rural Tourism**

**Total Project Cost - £155,126.00**

**LEADER Grant Request- £62,050.00**

Summary - This project will be upgrade the H.V Electrical capability to 'The Whitehouse Centre Ltd', to enable this business to continue to grow, by means of enhancing our offer to a wider Visitor audience within the region

RL – Chair welcomed Fiona Teasdale and Dennis Laverty on behalf of White House Farm Centre who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

LF - What is your current electricity supply?

FT - 330 upper pole the new capacity will be 1000

LF - Why not upgrade transformer?

FT - Advised best way forward

LF - What they say and what's necessary are not always the same

IR - Have you funding for growth plans?

DL - Yes we have a 3 year funding plan of 1.5 million

AW - Informed as from a planning background asking if your looking at different forms of electricity?

FT - Yes we have investigated but it has not proved successful for Solar Panels buildings facing wrong way round and also not windy enough for wind turbine

SC - What will the extra funding do?

DH - Develop accommodation as over 100,000 visitors are envisaged with more increases over 3 years. Increase will generate need for staff

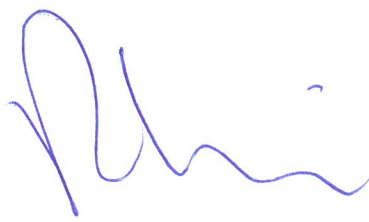
SC - What type of caravans?

DH - Luxury type

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

Applicant left LAG meeting





14/08/2017

LAG Discussions:

ACC - Application muddled with other businesses, is it eligible and are there no costings for the transformer

LF - Suspect it is a full quote from Northern Power Grid

IH - Application is eligible, jobs will be created

RL - How does having a different power source create 6 jobs?

IH - If they expand business, will require extra staff

RL - Extra power supply can't change the visitor experience

IR - Nobody looking at power supply. The 1:5 million investment relies on the new electricity supply. Is this electricity supply also going to supply the hospital site or main site. LAG need clarity?

LF - Getting site rewired by Northern Power Grid. An upgrade transfer will cost about £30,000 and if all 10-12 businesses get electricity should be cheaper cost. Don't think they have sourced properly

RL - Decision around £62,000 for connection

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Rejected

LAG Scored - 0 on strategic fit

LAG Notes:

Realism around job creation

Not value for money

Direct outputs

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

**c. Zero Tillage**

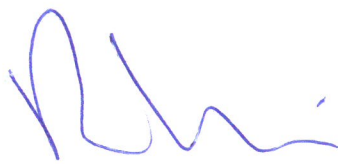
**DORA Ref:106448**

**LEADER Priority Theme 1 - Support for - Farm Productivity**

**Total Project Cost - £167,824.36**

**LEADER Grant Request- £67,129.74**

Summary - This project will purchase a 4m Cross-slot direct drill for establishing crops at Ross Farm. The tractor to pull the drill will require GPS guidance, the tractor is not eligible for grant



16/08/2017

RL – Chair welcomed Christopher Sutherland on behalf of Zero Tillage who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

LF - Will it increase Black Grass seed problems?

CS - No, I think it will reduce problem

RL - More benign way of working the land, lack of damage. How long does it take land to recover?

CS - Within 5 years, soil is working for you

IR - Overall change

CS - Don't have to bring live stock in, see's as a benefit

IR - Does this increase organic matter?

CS - Improves soil health

SC - Question with funding for tractor- bank loan, do you have the funds?

CS - Have had conversation with the bank. Will be trading in machinery to offset total cost as there are different deals available

SC - Have bank indicated their support, is the finance in place?

CS - Yes, in place

JO - Do you need to add extra nutrients while still doing zero tillage, or can you buy them?

CS - Use cattle on land

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

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

LF - Have applied for same drill in past, was not eligible but now it is. Not convinced and there's no mention of contracting out

ACC - Was in application

LF - There are a few zero drills around, asking for a large grant

IH - Drill is eligible, tractor is not. LAG can ask for more detail

LF - If LAG approve will open the door for more of the same applications

SC - From a finance point of view, there's no jobs and reducing contract labour

RL - Increase farm productivity decreases jobs that's a reality for the LAG, difficult

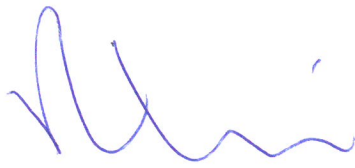
RB - Do the LAG let the market sort it out?

SC - With gain, commercially good. Questions why they need a grant?

HS - LEADER Programme developed. In LAG LDS important to support farming.

LAG can approve if they see value

LF - Yields will go down



16/08/2017

IR - Value to soil health is unproven

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote on EOI as submitted:

- 0 Vote - Yes
- 6 Vote - No
- 3 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote

AW - Proposed LAG to support application at 20% of grant request

General discussion among LAG members on the merit and value of progressing this EOI to FA with structured advice

RL - LAG could consider at lower grant rate and with sustainability of employment

SC - Feels not supportable

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote on AW's proposal:

- 6 Vote - Yes
- 3 Vote No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision - Expression of Interest Application - Progressed to FA with specific LAG advice to applicant:

Reduce costs to LEADER

Applicant look at contract work

Preserve jobs

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

LAG Scored - 2 on strategic fit

**d. Maden Eco**

**DORA Ref:106510**

**LEADER Priority Theme 6 - Support for Forestry**

**Total Project Cost - £126,500.00**


**LEADER Grant Request- £50,600.00**

Summary - his project will be processing timber into logs for re-sale and want to purchase a JCB and Manitou Handler to enable the movement of timber products in a more effective way

RL – Chair welcomed Simon Maden on behalf of Maden Eco who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

IR - Have you a guaranteed source of Hard Wood?



16/08/2017

SM - Yes, have a lot of contracts, we like to use local

RL - Is your fuel RHI?

SM - No its FSC, an increasing market

PA - Turnover in year 1 with kit and capacity?

SM - Upto £98,000.00, building up a stock reserve. Upto year 3 £140,000.00, self react. Look a further job creation

LF - What is equipment for?

SM - Fork lift truck is broken and business needs a JCB

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

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

LF - JCB, confused why he needs this, why not 1 piece of equipment?

IH - Both are eligible

LF - Handbook states standard equipment is not eligible

RL - Good challenge, it's for the accountable body to say what is eligible

RB - Requires equipment for business

IR - Artic has grabber, doesn't need a JCB

LF - Why doesn't he buy specific bits of equipment, only needs 1, generating 0.5 jobs?

IH - Can't count apprenticeships

HS - Yes he can

AW - Year 3 for apprenticeships

PA - Clarify apprenticeships in construction side of business

IH - 2 in forestry, 5-10 in construction over 5 years. Issue for LAG around value for money

SC - Market has arisen due to Euro/Sterling exchange, could be affected in future

LF - Logs are cheaper now as more need and usage

LAG Decision:

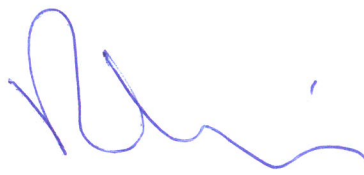
RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote on OA as submitted:

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

Angus Collingwood-Cameron - left meeting at 19:47

General discussion among LAG members on the merit and value of progressing this OA to FA with structured advice





16/08/2017

SC - Asked for clarification on changing applications when LAG Executive members have voted to reject

HS - LAG members are considering the OA not the presentation from the applicant as presentations are only to elaborate

LF - Proposed that the LAG consider approving OA to FA for 1 piece of equipment

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote on LF's proposal:

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

LAG Executive Decision - Outline Application - Progressed to FA with specific LAG advice to applicant

LAG Advised:

Seek 1 piece of equipment required for the forestry operation

Clear separation between the forestry side of the business and the wider construction business

Evidence for separation of any LEADER funded equipment solely for the forestry operation

Provide clear evidence of jobs created will be through the forestry business

Process – Chair signed and dated Outline Application Appraisal Form

LAG Scored - 2 on strategic fit

#### **5. Consideration of EO/OA's received:**

Note - CS minuted under 4a,b,c,d

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

##### **a. Silvermoor Swingers**

**DORA Ref: 105598**

**LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Micro Business**

**Total Project Cost - £190,352.00**

**LEADER Grant Request- £76,140.80**

Summary - The Equestrian Products Buyer for Countryside Farmers plc approached the applicant business and requested them to develop a healthy snack for horses that would hang in the stable. Currently there are sugar or salt based blocks that can hang in stables but these have health issues if eaten too regularly. There are also grass and straw forage blocks which can go in the manger or on the ground but these are eaten very quickly. The Buyer wanted a healthy snack that could help with boredom for stabled horses and encourage the horse to graze/nibble the snack little and often (which is beneficial to the horse). The applicant has undertaken some preliminary research into the new product including trialing recipes, product shapes



16/08/2017

and patenting the idea. Future plans include exporting the product and diversifying the product for use with other animals

LAG Discussions:

LF - Good project/application, something different. generating jobs

SC - Agrees with LF, scored well has export potential

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision - Full Application - Approved

Process – Chair signed and dated Full Application Appraisal Form

#### **7. A.O.B:**

SC - Where are we with LAG Evaluation visits?

IH - Currently have 2 more projects available to visit

CS - Bertrams and Straw pelleting Plant ready for visits

IH - 2 FA's Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, The Cookie Jar are currently in appraisal but have time pressures on their delivery

IH - Asked LAG if they would consider the FA's by written deposition when the appraisals are complete if they are available before the next LAG meeting (16th August)

PA - Would like to see all FA's done by email

NOTE - LAG agreed to consider the FA's by written deposition

**ACTION: - CS to set up LAG Evaluation visits and inform evaluation members**

Louis Fell - left meeting before the LAG decision on agenda item 4a Alnwick Rugby Club as had declared an interest

Note to LAG - there are no further LAG Application Sub Group meetings scheduled, arranged when required

**Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LAG Application Sub Group at 20:11**