


15/11/17  




**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER  
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)  
Wednesday 18th October, 2017**

**Executive LAG Members:**

Ross Lowrie – Chair  
Alex Wallace – Vice Chair  
Iain Robson  
Jean Orr  
Ian Moyes  
Carron Craighead  
Simon Cox  
Julien Lake  
Robert Brotherton

**LAG Members:**

Carole Moyes

**LEADER Staff:**

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

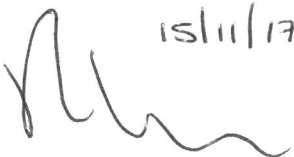
**Advisory Group:**

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 18:05

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

15/11/17  


CS - Apologies received and recorded from Executive Members: Philip Angier, Louis Fell, Angus Collingwood-Cameron and Richard Waters  
Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: Heather Smith

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

None

## **3. Draft LAG Minutes from 20th September, 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


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:**

Page 1 - Carole Moyes - attended LAG meeting  
Page 9 - David Baird - project claims date is end of December 2018, not end of programme as minuted. Programme end date - March 2019  
No Actions from 20th September minutes  
JO - Informed the LAG that INFINIS Funding will be available soon. The Community Foundation are asking for members

### **Chair's Update:**

Amble Dementia Friendly Arts Centre have contacted Programme Officer to indicate they are unhappy with the LAG's decision to reject their LEADER Grant application  
IH - Potentially they are not going to appeal but would like to meet up with LAG Chair  
RL - As Chair of LAG, happy to meet up. As a grant decision making group the LAG do take time to consider applications. LAG are conscious of applicants time  
AW - Their Business Plan will be a useful aid for future funding  
IH - Alnwick Football Club who indicated that they would appeal LAG's decision have not processed an appeal, so far  
RL - LAG members and LEADER Programme Officer have limited resources

15/11/17  


DB - Applicant Handbook sets out appeals process, it's up to applicant to progress

CM - Is there a time limit for applicants for appeals process?

IH - Guidance is given on how to appeal for applicants, and timescales

RL - Thanked SC for assistance with budget allocation review, also thanks to accountable body staff. Budget allocation has been reallocated

#### **5. Programme Officers Report to include Project Expenditure to Date:**

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 October 2017 LAG has committed **£661,067.60** with a balance of **£966,468.40** remaining to commit.

#### **Note - LAG approved and agreed Budget profile**

DB - Informed LAG that the RPA may consider redistributing national underspend to LAG's with a 90% commitment, both C&L and Uplands LAG's are far off from that.

Need to be aware RPA could take back any underspend

AW - is this the same for all the LAG's in the UK?

DB - RPA looking at under performing LAG's across UK, could take back underspends

SC - Is it better to keep projects in pipeline or decommit them?

DB - Back loading is also a risk

RL - LAG not in a position for potential underspend at present, would not be happy for LAG's funding to be reclaimed by the RPA

DB - All LAG's conditions differ, some have more capacity. This 90% is not definite news from RPA yet

IH - Informed LAG that application Shoreside Shepherd Huts have resolved their project issues and have arranged to meet up with Programme Officer to discuss moving forward

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

##### **a.Children's Play Area**


**DORA Ref:106337**

**LEADER Priority Theme 3 - Rural Tourism**

**Total Project Cost - £39,177.75**

**LEADER Grant Request- £15,671.10**

Summary - In 2009 the animal park (Eshottheugh Animal Park) was established on site which gained a full zoo license (required for non-domestic animals) in 2015. The name of the animal park was recently changed to Northumberland County Zoo to show the ambition of the applicant and the business also operates a cafe as well as

15/11/17  


the animal park/zoo

LAG Discussions:

IM - Visited with family, lack of staffing, was not impressed

CM - Felt that the play area was small but children did seem happy in it

JO - How long did you visit for?

CM - One and a half hours

IH - Project application is to expand business, enhance visitor experience

RL - LAG members find it useful to share experiences

IR - Job creation is indirect, what is risk to business if they spend on play area but dwell time decreases?

IH - Look to create jobs output. Grant clawback unlikely if it's a genuine reason why outputs not achieved, but RPA can clawback. Applicants are given this advice on receipt of their grant

SC - Applicant states they will look to increase jobs to 4FTE, their size of loan is relatively small. The applicant is taking a risk with their own money

RB - LAG looks at overall project

AW - An animal park would have been inspected and certified. The play area will bring in families

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved

Process - Chair signed and dated Technical Appraisal Form

LAG Note:

IH to check that all licences are in place

#### **b. Craster Tourist Trail**

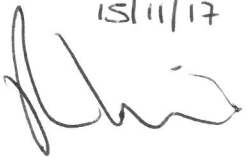
**DORA Ref:105671**

**LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services**

**Total Project Cost - £9,323.00**

**LEADER Grant Request- £7,458.40**

Summary - The aim of the project is to create a safe footpath between Craster and Dunstan villages as the main route currently includes walking on the road. Craster is a popular visitor attraction in the summer months (although no figures were provided to show how busy the village is), the public car park is regularly full and the eating

15/11/17  


places within the village all have long waiting times. The new path would potentially ease this situation by encouraging tourists to walk to Dunstan (via Dunstanburgh Castle loop) to eat there

LAG Discussions:

IH - Advice is given by the technical appraiser, but approval decision is made by LAG

SC - As the technical appraisal recommends reject, the scoring is 22 out of 44, an automatic reject. Had it scored just one more point would not have been a recommendation to reject, the factor for 22 score was no job creation. Coast & Lowlands is a popular area for tourists, and the LAG is trying to increase tourist numbers. There is an opportunity for indirect jobs. It's a small grant, assists community. Happy to support

IR - No mention in FA of Planning permission?

IH - No objections so far

IR - There's no evidence of walkers numbers in technical appraisal

CC - There's nowhere to walk with children and dogs, unsafe

AW - It's also creating an access for those who can't walk

JL - Agrees with AW's comments, see's benefit in the project

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved

Process - Chair signed and dated Technical Appraisal Form

Special Conditions:

- Planning permission, if required
- Acknowledgement of LEADER Funding
- Agrees with AONB signage style, design and location

LAG Note:


In spite of technical appraisal application LAG felt application offered good value for money and will make a difference to visitors and the rural population. Low grant amount requested

**7. Presentation of EOI received by Executive:**

**a.Trust in the North Expansion**

**DORA Ref:107460**

**LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Micro Enterprise**

15/11/17  


**Total Project Cost - £70,500.00**

**LEADER Grant Request- £49,350.00**

Summary - Trust in the North is the trading arm of Lynemouth Community Trust. It has two social enterprises - Kenspeckle Confectionery and WEAVE. The project looks to purchase equipment (including toffee cutter, sewing machine and moulding machines), fund a short term Product and Sales Development Manager, upgrade electricity to 3 phase and invest in social media developments to increase the growth of these enterprises

RL – Chair welcomed Bill Tarbit on behalf of Trust in the North who gave a short presentation of the project

LAG Questions:

CC - Do the companies pay a rent?

BT - Yes and they support overheads as Resource Centre costs a lot to run. Currently Lynemouth Community Trust with the CELL (Cresswell, Ellington, Linton and Lynemouth) Big Local partnership are looking to see if we can relocate, could share overheads and would open up opportunities

JO - Aware the CELL villages received million pound grant from the Lottery through Big Local but how much is left?

BT - May not be a full 10 year programme. Working within partnerships

SC - Asking LEADER for grant of £70,000 which is largely for salary cost, what do you hope to achieve?

BT - Report shows that we need to increase sales and way to do this is to appoint a dedicated Product Sales Manager to develop a market strategy. Currently we have a good client base, but need to broaden. We see great opportunities and have good staff. Better equipment would offer a better, bigger service

AW - Know that 400 homes are being built in Ellington, is there any community gain to Lynemouth?

BT - I'm aware of Section 106

IR - Product and Sales Manager, is this a new post?


BT - Yes, to focus on sales and marketing. Have applied for funding to appoint a consultant

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

LAG Discussions:

IH - Salaried posts are ineligible, equipment is eligible

AW - Feels they have not got the community behind them

15/11/17  


JO - Concerns with amount of grants already received. The Weave machinery is in question?

JL - The Report applicant referred to was paid for by FONDT (Federation of Northumberland Development Trusts). Lynemouth is not a Trust in a strong financial position. Kenspeckle chocolates are good and Hamleys happy with costumes made by WEAVE. Strong emphasis on Product Sales Manager requirement in report but felt case wasn't made

SC - Is role full or part time?

JL - Report advocated full time, proposing part time due to finances

IR - Good products but enterprise lacks direction. Good for Lynemouth

JL - State of application reflects state of Trust, doing the best they can. Their previous manager also had role to develop market for enterprises

RL - Trust is grant hungry, needs business at core. Needs commercial development and to fill the leadership gap

RB - Any person appointed will have limited time to access funding

CC - Kenspeckle have been around for 18 years, and had previous funding. Felt application lacked credibility

IH - LAG can ask for more information if EOI progressed to Full Application

DB - We need to ascertain if this application is eligible?

RL - That should have been checked before it came to the LAG

IH - Asked RPA for guidance. Post is too long in duration and project has an end date after LEADER Programme end date

IR - Is a consultant fee eligible?

IH - RPA guidance, may be eligible. It's not the accountable body who say

DB - Salaries are not eligible, applicant needs to make special case. Accountable body needs definitive decision from RPA

SC - For LAG group, need to know when there are grey areas around guidance so LAG can make clear decisions, whole question of eligibility criteria

LAG Decision - on EOI as submitted:

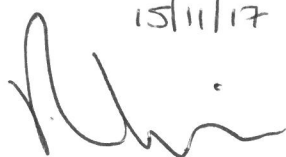
RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote on EOI as submitted:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Expression of Interest as submitted - Rejected

SC - Propose ask the RPA to confirm eligibility of jobs and intervention rate

RL - Do LAG see enough of a project here to progress to FA with advice?

15/11/17  


JL - Yes, application is aiming at right things but needs clarity from applicant and the RPA

RL - Proposed that LAG members consider progressing the project with advice from LAG discussions that would address sustainability issues for enterprises

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Expression of Interest Approved to Full Application with advice from LAG

Process - Chair signed and dated Technical Appraisal Form

Strategic Fit - 1

Special Conditions:

- Long term sustainability
- Leadership around all of the businesses and relationships

LAG Note:

RL (Chair) said that LAG have significant concerns with this business. IH asked to pass comments and advice on to applicant

#### **8. A.O.B:**

a.RC&A Budget:

RL - Issues with LAG expenses

IH - Meeting costs have gone up, need to monitor

AW - LAG meetings help support local communities

RL - LAG role to support rural communities

NOTE - If LAG members have questions relating to the RC&A Budget (Running Costs and Animation), contact Chair after meeting

b. Evaluation Group:

SC - 7 closed projects (£220k) have all had satisfactory evaluations & reports, latest Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre on Wed 27th Sept by SC/JO/ IH. Further 3 recently closed projects (£77k) ready for evaluation: Alnmouth Pantry being scheduled w/c Mon 6th Nov; Northern Edge Coffee and G M Craig being targeted pm Wed 15th Nov whilst members in Berwick immediately prior to next LAG meeting. Further 4 projects have partially paid claims totalling £64k to date. Total monies released = £361K

**ACTION - CS to set-up Evaluation Visits**



15/11/17



c. Communications Group:

RB - Coast & Lowlands LEADER Press Article in the Northumberland Gazette, Saturday 14th October. Will circulate an e-Flyer by email, paragraph to promote Rural Services. Asked if NALC could support?

AW - NALC will be happy to support

RB - Identified that some projects need support with marketing. Need better photos from evaluation visits. Ask applicants for a quote. Can LAG supply plastic plaques for projects?

IH - Not in this programme, supplied in last LEADER Programme 2007 - 2013. RPA guidance on plaques and posters sent to all approved projects with GFA (Grant Funding Agreement) letter

CC - Can LAG make applicants buy their own plaque?

RL - Yes, can add as a condition to new applications

IH - Updated LAG on Organic Egg Laying Unit - FA with RPA. Can LAG vote on application by Written Deposition?

RL - Asked LAG members to vote by Written Deposition

**NOTE - LAG members agreed**

**ACTION: CS to circulate Organic Egg Laying Unit FA & TA out to LAG members for Written Deposition Decision by email with a deadline date**

Date & Time of the next C&L LAG meeting - Wednesday 15th November, venue The William Elder Building, Berwick-upon-Tweed for 17:30

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