



**NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS LEADER  
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)**

**Thursday 8th March 2018**

**Knott Memorial Hall, Heddon-on-the-Wall**

**5.30pm - 9.00pm**

**Present:** Terry Carroll, Steve Jopling, Mike Murray, Barbara Sexon, Alan Sharp, Louise Kirkwood, Nicola Bell, Jeremy Phillipson, David Baird (NCC), Gillian Cowell (Programme Officer), Louise McCreery (Admin Officer)

1. **Apologies:** Anthony Murray, Tom Johnston, Alistair Cochrane, Andrew Poad, Ruth Dickinson (NNPA)

2. **Declaration of Interest**

SJ and MM declared an interest in Falstone Play Park, and agreed to leave during the discussion

3. **Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 8 February 2018**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record

4. **Matters Arising & Actions**

Celebration Event

The LAG discussed the celebratory event planned for summer 2018. It was agreed that this would be a solo event, rather than a joint one with Coast & Lowlands. TC and GC will work on a draft programme to present at the next LAG meeting. It was agreed that the venue should be close to the area boundary between Guy Opperman MP and Anne Marie Trevalyan MP.

Defra Consultation

TC advised he had received a consultation paper on the future of farming and the environment. DEFRA have planned a consultation visit for 22/03/18. The invite will be circulated to interested LAG members

Hay Farm Heavies

BS visited the project. The applicant has lots of ideas for developing the attraction but has already bought the equipment listed in the EOI. The applicant had said she would contact GC to discuss updating the application but there has been no further

contact. The LAG discussed the project and recommended that a final deadline of 30/04/18 is given for the applicant to submit a full application

#### 5. **Programme Officer's Update**

DB updated the LAG on a possible extension to the programme. It is expected that projects can be approved until 31/03/19 with spend allowed until 31/12/19. A decision will need to be made as to how big an extension NULAG can put in place - this will depend on what can be sustained within the RC&A budget. The programme is to be revalued which is expected to free about £5.5 million in funds but there has been no indication of how this will be apportioned.

GC updated the LAG on funds committed to date. If all projects to be discussed at the meeting are approved the LAG will be overcommitted by £55,000.

The LAG have currently created 40 jobs against a target of 65. There are a further 30 jobs within the current project pipeline. 92% of project funds have been allocated to projects that directly create jobs

#### Update on Projects in Development

**Ingram Venison** - FA received

**Bays Leap Dairy** - no update since last meeting

**Ciunam** - FA received

**Halls of Heddon** - submission deadline extended to 31/03/18

**Robert Laverick Joinery** - project withdrawn. The applicant is not currently in a position to proceed

**Black Bull at Etal** - FA received

**West Moneylaws Workshop** - FA is in development

**Redesdale Equestrian** - FA is in development

**Chirdon Head (CYVP)** - FA received

**Hay Farm Heavies** - discussed under item 4

**Turn About Pegasus** - FA received

**GoGilsland** - final draft FA expected imminently

**Wooler Fountain** - HLF funding has been rejected. The applicants have requested an increase in LEADER funding to bridge the gap. The LAG discussed the project. There are issues which need to be addressed if the project goes forward, such as procurement. The LAG agreed they would be unlikely to increase their offer.

**Woodland Thinnings** - FA received

**Elsdon Village Hall** - FA received

#### Reserve List

The LAG reviewed the current reserve list and agreed to bring forward Haltwhistle Film Festival, Gateway into the Community and Ian Atkinson. The LAG agreed that SoundTouch and the Forward holiday cottage projects should be removed from the reserve list as they are not a high priority and would be better suited to other funding streams.

#### Variations

**S&J Smith** - GC advised that the 0.5 FTE has become a contractor post so should be removed from the project. LAG approved the variation

**JT Murray** - the applicant has requested a change to the claim profile to a single September claim. LAG approved the variation

**Doddington** - claim was due 29/03/18 but the pasteuriser will not be ready in time for this. Applicant would like to claim for the rest of the equipment and add the pasteuriser into the second claim. LAG approved the variation

## 6. Review and Decide on Outline Applications

### S Henderson - Zero Tillage Drill

The project is to purchase a zero tillage grind drill. Zero tillage is a more natural way of cultivation. It increases carbon storage, help improve soil structure, is environmentally friendly and helps with the growth of crops.

The applicant has a mainstream arable farm which includes two SSSI sites. The soil is light and easily blown away when cultivated. The applicant trialled the zero tillage system about 3 years ago in partnership with a manufacturer. In the first couple of years there was an increased weed burden and yield depression which reinforces the need for the funding. Production is at a par with traditional methods in year 3 then increases.

The applicant advised tha, to the best of his knowledge there is one contractor in Northumberland with this equipment but no one tilling their entire farm this way. The applicant is hoping to do some contracting work with his son.

Looking to create 0 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £26,892 (80% of costs)

The strategic fit score was agreed

### **Vote - unanimous approval**

### Shieling Meats

The applicants both sell meat products from their farms and have dicided to work together. Shieling Meats will pack, label and freeze the meat of professionally butchered animals raised on upland farms committed to environmental stewardship. The applicant intends that products will be sold through local village and community shops, and visitor centres, from display freezers owned by the new company. The applicants have done some market research and every community venue they contacted was very supportive of the idea. The applicants are aware that a full business plan will be needed if the project is progressed as well as more information on packaging and butchery requirements.

The applicants advised that they do occasionally sell at farmers markets but they are not always worth the time and potential wastage of the product

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £7,200 (40% of costs)

The strategic fit score was agreed

**Vote:**

**7 approve**

**1 abstain**

**Project approved on majority vote**

Churnsike Lodge

The applicant owns an old hunting lodge north of Gilsland. The property includes two other buildings one of which has already been refurbished and is currently being used as a holiday let. The applicant is looking for funding to convert the old stable block into holiday accommodation. The project also includes fencing off some land for rare breed livestock and the creation of a fishing lake to add value to the holiday packages. The applicant feels that this will allow him to make the best use of the surrounding area by putting on activities such as llama trekking, mountain biking and shetland pony riding.

The applicant advised the business has a website and a facebook page. They currently also promote the business through the Country Cottages website.

The applicant hasn't looked into planning yet but will do this if the EOI is approved

Looking to create 0.26 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £6,720 (40% of costs)

The LAG agreed the strategic fit score should be raised to 3

**Vote:**

**7 approve**

**1 abstain**

**Project approved on majority vote**

West Wharmley - Zero Tillage and Mobile Pens

This project will provide a specialist zero till seed drill and a mobile sheep combi-clamp for use at West Fenton Farm to enable the farm to adopt a zero tillage approach to crop establishment and improve animal management.

The applicant owns a 1,000 acre farm with 2,500 sheep, 350 cattle and 160 acres of arable land. He has tried zero till drills on demonstration. The applicant believes there are no other machines of this type in the area so he will be able to contract in addition to improving the land on his own farm. The applicant is passionate about the benefits this equipment could bring to his farm and the surrounding environment.

The applicant is also looking for a combi clamp and an upgrade from his current mobile pen. This equipment is better for sheep welfare and increases efficiency of processing.

Looking to create 0.25 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £15,103.20 (40% of costs)

The LAG agreed the strategic fit score should be raised to 3

**Vote - unanimous approval**

## 7. Full Applications

### Falstone Play Park

The aim of the project is to purchase and install an outdoor multi gym to the existing village park in Falstone. The project aims to improve the facilities within the village for local residents aged 10 and above and visitors to the area.

Looking to create 0 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £14,400 (90% of costs)

The LAG discussed the project. There was some debate over whether this was a more suitable project for different funding. The low appraisal score was noted

**Vote:**

**5 approve**

**1 reject**

**Project approved on majority vote**

### Northumberland Mead

The aim of the project proposed for LEADER funding is to purchase and install a semiautomatic disgorging machine and an uncapping machine to increase efficiency and thereby increase productivity within the business. Disgorgement is a process in the traditional method of sparkling wine and cider making which involves the removal of sediment at the end of the ageing process. Uncapping is removal of the wax capping from the honeycomb in order to get the honey out of the combs.

Looking to create 2 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £3,944.72 (40% of costs)

**Vote - unanimous approval**

### Chirdon Head Youth Project

The aim of the project is to renovate a disused cottage and grounds in Kielder Forest Park in order to create an outdoor activity centre to be used by Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project Ltd (CVYP) and other organisations for Duke of Edinburgh activities / expeditions and other outdoor activities.

Grant is sought to undertake capital works extending the cottage on the North side and undertaking internal building works within the main building, the north and the south extensions allowing the new facility to open for business enabling 3 new jobs to be created, an increased wage bill and day visitors and overnight visitors.

Looking to create 3 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £56,267.90 (33.88% of costs)

**Vote:**

**7 approve**

**1 abstain**

**Project approved on majority vote**

**8. AOB**

GC agreed to invite Ayesha Jackson from Young and Sweet to join the LAG

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

the next meeting will be Thursday 12th April. Venue to be confirmed