



**NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Monday 13th August 2018
Newton & Bywell Community Hall
5.30pm - 8.30pm**

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

1. **Apologies:** Alistair Cochrane, Andrew Poad, Louise Kirkwood, Mike Murray, Andrew Poad, Jeremy Phillipson, Ruth Dickinson
2. **Declaration of Interest**
SJ declared an interest in Jack's Fast Track Fitness and will leave the meeting during the discussion of the application
3. **Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 3 July 2018**
Minutes agreed as a true and accurate record.
4. **Matters Arising & Actions**

2018 Meetings

GC confirmed that a list of meetings for the rest of the year has been circulated to the LAG

Physio & Therapy

TC advised he has visited the project and that the new EOI idea has merit. He advised the project to submit a new EOI to be considered by the LAG. No new information has been submitted by the applicant so no further action can be taken at this point.

5. Programme Officer's Update

GC went through the programme officer's report. The LAG has committed £1,296,554 which leaves approx £245,000 of available funding. Projects currently in the pipeline total £314,000 so the LAG is currently overcommitted by £69,000.

Update on Projects in Development

Ciunam - FA received - planning permission has been confirmed but there are still conditions to discharge before project can commence

Hay Farm Heavies - FA due 17/08/18

GoGilsland - FA received - further information needed. The applicant has stated they will turn down funding for one vehicle as they believe this will make the project unviable

Henderson Zero Tillage - may withdraw due to financing issues

JRG Johnson Zero Tillage - FA received and in appraisal

Shieling Meats - due September 2018

Anthony Robinson - FA received

Green and Sons - planning not yet applied for. The project has requested an extension to their deadline. The LAG agreed this but wanted to make clear to the project that there may be no funds available by the time the applicant is ready to submit

Gateway into the Community - FA received - further information requested

K Wharf - FA received

Ash Tree Planters - FA in progress

Pit Top Brewery - FA in progress

Mountain Rescue - Looking to submit in September 2018

RPA Update

DB updated the LAG on the latest bulletin from the RPA. Approval has now been given for the AB to use 22% of the budget towards RC&A costs. This means that the staff team can be extended to December 2019 to cover the programme extension. The full budget is to be revalued at 0.88 to the Euro but the RPA have not released the final figures yet. This should mean that the LAG now has enough funds to approve all the EOIs currently in the pipeline.

GC will circulate the reserve list to the LAG as additional projects can now be brought forward

The LAG can apply for additional funding but the request will be based upon the value of projects the LAG has in technical appraisal by 12th September. NULAG is unlikely to qualify for further funds based on this criteria

AS raised the High Staward project. This has now been withdrawn from the Growth Programme due to timescale issues and the regulations around procurement. The reasons for signposting the project to the growth programme rather than continuing with LEADER were discussed. The situation at the time meant that timescales would have been restrictive if the project has stayed with LEADER so it was felt that Growth Programme was the better fit for what the applicant wanted to do.

6. Review and Decide on Full Applications

JRG Johnson - Zero Tillage

This project will fund the purchase of capital equipment to allow introduction of zero tillage techniques to the arable side of the business and improve animal handling and welfare through the combi clamp handling system.

The business aims to do this by acquiring the following equipment:

- SimTech T-SEM 300P drill
- Ritchie Combi Clamp Mobile System

Purchase of this equipment will complement the existing farm operations and allow the business to become more productive and efficient.

Looking to create 0 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £16,644.95 (40% of costs)

The LAG were very supportive of the project. The group recognised that there was no job creation but noted that the funding will allow for an expansion of the contracting side of the business.

Vote - unanimous approval

Jack's Fast Track Fitness

This project will fund the purchase of capital equipment to allow expansion of the applicants existing personal training business and help set up a mobile gym operation.

The business aims to do this by acquiring the following equipment:

- Gym equipment
- Van (for transporting equipment)

Purchase of this equipment will complement the current personal fitness training offered by the applicant and allow the business to diversify by offering a more mobile fitness training service meaning the business will become more productive and efficient and diversify potential income streams.

The project will allow the business to expand to deliver a wider range of personal fitness training services to clients who are unable through transport or time constraints to access fixed gym facilities.

Looking to create 0 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £5,694.70 (80% of costs) - costs reduced by appraiser as to remove ineligible items

The LAG raised concerns over the viability of the business plan but all believed that the applicant would work very hard to make a success of the project. The LAG felt it was a worthwhile risk for a relatively small investment. The LAG also raised the point that some of the scoring on the technical appraisal becomes if irrelevant if both the appraiser and the LAG believe the project is viable despite a low score

Vote - unanimous approval

Fire and Dough

The aim of the project is to expand a newly established pizza van business based in the Tyne Valley, Northumberland.

Grant is sought to purchase an additional second hand van, undertake renovation of this vehicle into a wood fired pizza van that replicates their existing vehicle and the associated signage on the side of the van that will help the business to increase their capacity and enable 2 new jobs to be created.

Looking to create 2 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £15,488 (80% of costs)

Vote - unanimous approval

7. October Event

The four project case studies have now been confirmed. The speakers will be Red Kelly, Ayesha Banks, John Holmes and Ross Wilson.

The speaker from DEFRA has been confirmed as Gordon Jones. Jeremy Phillipson has also agreed to speak. TC will contact Cllr Peter Jackson to ask if he will give a business and council perspective.

GC and LM will look at setting up Eventbrite by the end of August but more work is needed to determine the intended audience and put together an invite list.

8. AOB

A future funding event is to be held at the Sill on 17 September 2018. GC, BS, NB and AM are planning to attend.

TC advised that the House of Lords enquiry into the rural economy has been very critical of DEFRA. JP has given evidence to the enquiry and has used NULAG as a case for the continuation of the LEADER approach. The committee has expressed interest in a rural visit . The LAG discussed this and agreed that they would be keen to host a visit or at least provide an itinerary of projects. TC will gather further information and report back at the next meeting

9. Date of Next Meeting

The LAG agreed to change the date of the September meeting to 11th September to allow more time for projects to progress through the appraisal process. It was agreed that the meeting should be in Bellingham if possible