

Draft Minute

LAG Meeting – 1 October 2019

Forres Town Hall, Forres

Present	Alastair Kennedy (Chair), Bea Jefferson, Erica Beck, Jana Hutt, Fiona Robb, Fabio Villani (part meeting), Alex Walker, Aileen Buchanan, Iain Findlay, Franziska Smith, Drew McFarlane-Slack
Apologies	Reni Milburn, Gavin Clark, Davina MacLennan
In attendance	Michelle Gillibrand (Note taker) and Chris Muir (LEADER Development Officers), Nigel Tiddy (Windswept Brewing Company for item 11 only)
Private/Public Split	10 Private, 1 Public

Details

Welcome & Introductions

AK welcomed everyone to the Forres Town Hall for the meeting.

Apologies were noted and it was agreed that the meeting was quorate and the public/private balance was observed.

Declarations of Interest

IF declared an interest in the item relating to the Green Grow Open Lab project, item 6

Minutes of LAG meeting 6 August 2019

AK referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and asked for any changes on the basis of accuracy. All matters arising from the meeting had been dealt with and accuracy of the minutes was moved by AW and seconded by JH.

Accountable Body Update, including pilot staffing model report to SG (Paper1)

Pilot staffing model report

FV provided an update on the Moray LEADER pilot staffing model. Following on from a meeting with the Scottish Government on 3rd September which was also attended by DM and CM, a more detailed report was compiled and sent to the SG. This report has already been circulated to LAG members. FV expects to hear from SG soon to confirm if they support the new staffing model going forward.

From the Scottish Government's own reports, it is evident that the Moray Programme is running well in relation to managing project delivery milestones, change request and drawdowns.

FV raised the possibility with the SG on creating a Moray CLLD Pilot after December 2020. He was advised by the SG to submit proposals for their consideration.

DMS commented on the success of the non-standard Accountable Body which usually is a Local Authority and staff management model and asked how this success will be captured. FV confirmed that this will be picked up by the annual internal audit and planned external evaluation. Also, Moray LEADER is one of the case studies within the national research the SRUC will be undertaking which has been commissioned by the SG.

Project Updates

Status of Projects

MG and CM presented the updated Project Register which showed the approved projects either being on amber or green status. The main reasons for projects being on amber status is applicants not meeting deadlines set within their project or by the Moray LEADER Team

Standard Projects

CM and MG provided more detailed updates on the progress of the Marcassie Farm Lodges, AB56 Futures, Tynet Milk Vending, and Marine Park Pavilion projects.

Cooperation Projects

Gaining Ground

The second Gaining Ground session took place at Elchies Goat Farm, Aberlour on 22nd September and was attended by MG and AW. There was a good mix of people, discussion and networking to develop the idea of Social Crofting/Care Farming i.e. the promotion of social, mental and physical wellbeing through working of the land. The next Moray session will probably be in February 2020.

Foraging Fortnight

CM reported that although there was a short lead in time to promote the Moray sessions and activities there was a reasonable turn out overall. CM is still waiting for confirmation of the actual figures and feedback which will help plan the sessions in May 2020. There will also be more engagement and discussion with local supported groups for future sessions.

Moray Ecovillage Development: A Model for Sustainable Community Building in Scotland

Before FV left the meeting the LAG asked for an update on the Moray Ecovillage Development: A Model for Sustainable Community Building in Scotland, with regard to tsiMORAY's involvement. FV explained he attended sessions in Brussels for the LEADER and ERASMUS+ projects for which the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) are lead applicant. At this stage of the project it was hoped to have engaged with 20 communities, which could include groups, with the aim of having 3 showcase projects visiting Brussels, Norway and Germany with an exchange visit to Moray. However, to date only 10 communities have been engaged with so far. tsiMORAY are assisting GEN to connect with other communities and groups.

The visit to Brussels last week, 23th-24th September included 3 Moray community leaders and involved 2 sessions with co-operation partners and a visit to the European Parliament. CM joined the delegation to discuss how the project was developing with the other partners. He had a lengthy discussion with the partners on the potential benefits that could be achieved in way of community engagement, eco-tourism, employment and the concept of ecovillage.

FV left the meeting at 10:50am

Moray Enterprising Third Sector Collaborative (Paper 3)

CM tabled the monthly report from tsiMORAY, requested by the LAG as an update on the delivery of the project.

FR informed LAG members that HIE had organised a meeting between tsiMORAY and Community Support Unit, of the Moray Council The meeting was well received and there was an appetite to arrange more meetings to exchange knowledge. Ian Todd from CSU also saw the merit of the meetings. Future meetings will cover Locality Plan Areas (October) and Community Asset Transfer (November). FR also commented that she was aware that there were a couple of community groups in the Forres area that could do with some support.

Action: CM to discuss with FB the possibility of engaging with the Forres community groups as part of the LEADER project.

LEADER reallocation of general funding – Hillhead Farm Experience Breaks

MG informed the meeting that the Hillhead Farm Experience Breaks application had been submitted for consideration for funding from the LEADER national central reallocation pot. It is hoped to receive the outcome of the decision in a couple of weeks.

New Eols: Cullen Eco Museum (Paper 4) & Green Grow Open Lab (Paper 5)

MG reminded the LAG members that at the last meeting there had been discussion on possible projects that could be considered for funding from the LEADER national central reallocation pot. With this in mind MG was requested to contact Cullen Eco Museum for an update on their project and whether they had sourced alternative funding. The LAG also requested the exploration of a possible commissioned with Aurora Sustainability Limited which would help to address the lack of applications received under the LDS Objectives 2, 5 and 6. As a result two Expression of Interests (Eol) had been received and circulated to LAG members to decide if the applicants should be invited to the second stage of the LEADER application process. Both Eol's had not been fully technically checked.

Cullen Eco Museum – MG informed the meeting that there were no significant changes to the project which had previously been approved by the LAG other than a slightly reduced price for the overall project. MG also confirmed that the match funding allocated to the applicant by the Heritage Trust was still available up until the end of Dec 2019. Although, the project had a strong link to the LDS tourism objective there was a consensus view that it was a good community-led project based in an area of Moray which hadn't received a great deal of LEADER funding and had the potential to develop in other towns within the district. It was therefore agreed subject to the Eol been fully technically checked that the applicant should be invited to the second stage.

Aurora Sustainability Limited – had submitted an Eol for the **Green Grow Open Lab project**. IF who is one of the directors of the company was asked to provide more detail on what the potential funding would be used for. IF was then asked to leave the meeting in order that the LAG members could discuss the suitability of the project for the Moray LEADER Programme. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the project could go to the second stage subject to the following:

- Clarification from the Scottish Government on the process of commissioning a project at this stage of the programme
- No issues highlighted once the Eol has been fully technically checked
- Consideration taken by the applicant to reduce the overall project costs to bring the intervention rate down to below 70%

In both cases, it was agreed that the applicants should be informed that there is no guarantee that their full application will be approved by the Moray LAG, and if approved there is also no guarantee that there will be sufficient funds available, and that funding will be dependent on Moray LAG securing additional funds via Scottish Government through a national reallocation process

IF returned to the meeting and was advised by AK to contact MG after the meeting for the outcome of the LAG's discussions.

Monitoring and Evaluation (Paper 6)

MG tabled a paper to update the progress being made on the Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan. The main area of discussion was around the inclusion of the FLAG supported projects in the Moray area and the timing of the Interim External Evaluation of the Moray LEADER Programme. BJ confirmed that the timetable was still achievable.

Action: MG to finalise the Invitation to Quote Interim External Evaluation Brief and to upload to the Public Contracts Scotland portal

Communications (Paper7)

CM tabled a paper to update LAG members on the Communications Action Plan. CM advised that some of the new actions described were yet to be implemented, but would be moving forward.

FLAG Update (Paper8)

A FLAG update provided by Fiona Hepburn, Highland & Moray FLAG Development Officer, was circulated to all LAG members. Fiona has also expressed a wish to attend future LAG meetings. The update was noted.

Date of Next Meeting and AOCB

The LAG agreed for a Doodle Poll to be circulated to all members to decide future dates of LAG meetings over the next 6 months.

Action: CM to circulate a Doodle Poll

From the Field to the Firkin: summary report and discussion of peer learning visit to GAL Burdinale-Mehaigne from Nigel Tiddy of Windswept Brewing Co and Chris Muir (Paper 9)

Nigel Tiddy and CM gave a presentation on the recent cooperation visit to Belgium. CM also tabled a detailed report. All the businesses visited had a focus on sustainability and social responsibility. There was a genuine sense of cross sector collaboration with all businesses and organisations contributing to the development of the local economy. The LAG members who also attended, thought it was a well organised, worthwhile visit and hoped some of the learning could be developed in Moray to support local breweries and farmers.

Additionally, CM found the delivery model of the Belgian LAG overall very intriguing, especially in relation to the Agriculture and Biodiversity project. It appears that the Project Manager's extensive knowledge of the agricultural industry has enabled the project to succeed securing broad engagement across the region and could maybe be a way of delivering projects in the future?

AK thanked NT for his time to present to the Moray LAG and for CM reporting on an excellent visit.

Meeting Closed

AK thanked all for attending and closed the meeting and invited all to attend the project visit to Macbeth's Hillock.