

**Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group Meeting
Committee Room 1, Council Officers, Kilmory, Lochgilphead
Thursday 20th June 2019 at 10.30am**

MINUTE OF MEETING

LAG Attendance		
Name	Organisation	Sector
Iain MacInness (Chair) (IMaCl)	Cowal Area Network	non-public
David Adams McGilp (Vice Chair) (DAM)	Visit Scotland	public
Iain Johnston (IJ)	Kintyre Cultural Forum	non-public
Stuart Shaw (SS)	Scottish Natural Heritage	public
Hannah Robinson (HR)	LLTNP	public
Reeni Kennedy Boyle (RKB)	Fyne Futures	non-public
Lucy Sumsion (LS) (teleconference)	NFU Scotland	non-public
Colin McLean (CMcL)	HIE	public
Marina Curran Colthart (MCC)	Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Partnership	public
LAG Apologies		
Alastair Fleming (AF)	Scottish Islands Federation	non-public
Arlene Cullum (AC)	Argyll & Bute Council	public
In Attendance		
Ishabel Bremner (IB)	Argyll & Bute Council (Accountable Body)	
Lynn Rew (LR)	Strategic Co-ordinator	
Dorothy Middleton (DM)	Compliance Officer (minutes)	

1. Sederunt and Apologies

The Chair, IMaCl, opened the meeting at 10:40am. He welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked all for attending the last decision making meeting for this LEADER programme. Although the LEADER programme had been hard work this time round he felt that the group got there in the end. He thanked the staff of the Argyll and Bute Council LEADER team for a job well done with a small team. As Chair, his main concern was getting good projects up and running within the small time remaining so hoped everyone would have a good and productive meeting considering all applications on today's agenda.

1.1. Sederunt

Attendance noted as above.

1.2. Apologies

Apologies noted as above.

2. LAG Requirements

2.1. Quorum

The meeting was quorate but had an imbalance of public and private members, it was decided that 2 public members would stand down for each project.

The Chair declared the meeting quorate.

2.2. Declarations of Interest

HR and SS declared an interest in the John Muir Way project

HR also declared an interest in Lodge on Lochgoil as this is within the LLTNP area for planning.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

3.1. Minute of 7th March 2019, Manse Brae, Lochgilphead

IB pointed out that the incorrect theme was used for Item 6. The minute was amended to reflect this change.

The minutes were proposed by DAM and seconded by RKB.

Minute was then signed by IMaCl

3.2. Matters arising from previous meeting.

There were no matters arising.

4. Accountable Body Report

IB informed LAG members that LR was leaving the Argyll and the Islands LEADER team to take on a new post as the CARS Officer for the Mauchlin Conservation Area starting on the 22nd July. She thanked LR for all her hard work and dedication during her time spent with LEADER.



LR expressed her sadness at leaving LEADER and thanked those present. She said it had been a pleasure working with the LAG, and she was sorry to be leaving before the full LEADER funding was allocated.

4.1. Co-operation Budget process

The Accountable Body had been asked by the Scottish Government to return any unallocated co-operation budget to a central pot so that this could be re-allocated to those LAGs which had over demand for their budgets. As a result, the Argyll and the Islands Accountable Body returned £106,233.35 to the Scottish Government for redistribution.

4.2. LEADER Funding Post June 2019

IB updated the LAG on the key dates for submitting claims to the Scottish Government. These are contained within the Accountable Body report submitted to LAG members. All claims must be submitted to the Scottish Government before the end of March 2021 with no spend incurred after 31/12/2020.

4.3. LAG Requirements Post 2019

IB informed the LAG that this was the final scheduled LAG meeting for the 2014-2020 programming period. However, there may be a requirement for the LAG Chair and Vice Chair to be available for decisions and the signing of paperwork. IB asked the LAG if they were prepared to input into any written procedures for decisions should this be required.

In terms of projects, with the conclusion of this meeting, all pipeline projects will have been addressed.

As with the co-operation budget, the Scottish Government will shortly be looking for a reconciliation of the remaining LEADER budget for non-co-operation projects. Following this meeting, the LEADER team will work on this figure and inform the Scottish Government.

Additional information will be provided in agenda item 5.

Only projects being worked on at the moment would be considered and all outstanding funds would be returned to the Scottish Government for reallocation to other LAGs throughout Scotland ensuring a full spend in Scotland.

LR explained that EMFF projects were being worked on and hoped that the budget would be fully committed by August this year and claims paid out by 2020. There is no intention of taking on any more staff for this work.

DAM showed his appreciation to the full LEADER team on behalf of the LAG members for all work carried out.

DECISION: Unanimous by LAG members to agree to be available for written procedures as required and for the Chair and Vice-Chair to be available to sign paperwork as required.



5. Financial Report

Mary Simpson from the LEADER team had provided LAG members with a financial summary sheet prior to the meeting. This provided LAG members with an update of the current financial position and showed the balance of funds to be returned to the Scottish Government.

After discussion, the Chair asked LAG members to vote on whether to return £500K of LEADER funding not allocated to projects, to the Scottish Government from the non-cooperation budget and to retain £366K for current and pipeline projects.

DECISION: Unanimous agreement by LAG members to hand back £500k of unallocated funding to the Scottish Government.

6. Consideration of Standard Applications

6.1. 04/P00077 – Iona Village Hall – An Tall Bail – Shaping the Heart of Iona

No declarations of interest.

LDS Theme
Theme 2: Enhancing the services and facilities in the Argyll and the Islands area to attract individuals, families, visitors and investors to grow and maintain economically viable communities.
Objective
Objective 1: To support community-based initiatives to improve and/or retain access to services for those living within rural areas and to encourage people to come and live in these communities.

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
35	10	45	27

This project had a decision in principle at the LAG meeting which took place on 6/12/18, however following a procurement exercise, costs had risen. As a result the application was being returned to the LAG to approve the same project but with an increased LEADER funding allocation. The applicants are looking for a Decision in Principle for the following reasons:

- Evidence of match funding, once received will be uploaded to LARCS.

LAG Comments

- This is a much needed project for the Island;
- There is potential for mixed usage over the next generation;
- It evidences benefits for the community and will enable it to be sustainable and prosper; and
- Good project, although concerns raised on loan required to bridge funds until first claim paid.



All members agreed to issue a Decision in Principle subject to:

1. Evidence of match funding being received and uploaded to LARCS

DECISION: Decision in Principle Subject to Conditions

6.2. 04/P00092- Lodge on Lochgoil - Increasing Capacity

Declarations of interest were made by HR. CM at this stage declared an interest as he had been working with the applicant in another capacity. Seven LAG members discussed this project and participated in the voting process. Four LAG members were non-public members and three were public sector members making the vote quorate.

LDS Theme
Theme 3: Farm Diversification and Small Business Support
Objective
Objective 1: Small business support including farm diversification

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
30	9	36	18

Applicants are looking for a Decision in Principle for the following reasons:

- Planning permissions and building warrant are outstanding and require to be in place before a full Offer of Grant can be issued.

Comments

- The LAG had concerns about the timescale of this project due to the limited time to complete the project aligned to LEADER funding timescales, particularly as both planning and building warrants are outstanding; and
- The applicant is known to provide a high quality service and previous works undertaken by the applicant is to a very high standard.

All members agreed to issue a Decision in Principle subject to:

1. LAG members agreed to set a date in the approval letter outwith the usual 60 days to evidence the submission of planning and building applications being made. There was concern about the timescale required for getting these consents.

DECISION: Decision in Principle Subject to Conditions



6.3. 04/P00098 – St Conan’s Kirk

No declarations of interest.

LDS Theme
Theme 1: Strengthening the rural economy by maximising the sustainable use of our natural, cultural and heritage resources as an economic driver.
Objective
Objective 2: To improve collaborative working to increase opportunities for sustainable economic growth

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
31	10	37	26

Applicants are looking for a Decision in Principle for the following reasons:

- Match funding is outstanding.

Comments

- This is one of the most popular visitor attractions in Argyll & Bute;
- The LAG thought it was a convincing application and could see how it would bring benefit to visitors to the area; and
- This application is part of a wider programme of works taking place in the Kirk.

All members agreed to issue a Decision in Principle subject to:

- Match funding being in place.

DECISION: Decision in Principle Subject to Conditions

7. Consideration of Co-operation Projects

7.1. 12/P00055 – The John Muir Way – Creating an income and developing the Brand

HR and SS declared an interest in this project therefore did not participate in discussions and did not vote. Seven LAG members discussed this project and participated in the voting process. Four LAG members were non-public members and three were public sector members making the vote quorate.



LDS Theme
Theme 2: Enhancing the services and facilities in the Argyll and the Islands area to attract individuals, families, visitors and investors to grow and maintain economically viable communities.
Objective
Objective 1: To support community-based initiatives to improve and/or retain access to services for those living within rural areas and to encourage people to come and live in these communities.

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
32	8	35	26

Comments

- The LAG thought this was a worthwhile project bringing long term benefits to the area;
- Return on investment was very good for the small amount of grant requested; and
- Long distance routes tend to struggle and are very challenging, and not guaranteed to generate income. This project will assist in sustaining the route.

DECISION: Unanimous – Fully Approved

7.2. 16/P00091 – Youth Rural Project - Youth Rural Co-operation Project

No declarations of interest.

LDS Theme
Theme 2: Enhancing the services and facilities in the Argyll and the Islands area to attract individuals, families, visitors and investors to grow and maintain economically viable communities.
Objective
Objective 1: To support community-based initiatives to improve and/or retain access to services for those living within rural areas and to encourage people to come and live in these communities.

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
29	10	34	24

Comments

- The LAG expressed concern about the lack of detail around the required as this was dependent on how many LAGS would approve the project ranging from 2 to 12 and in that sense did not know how much would be asked from the Argyll and the Islands LEADER programme;
- The information was not specific enough to determine what work would be done within the Argyll and the Islands area;
- Concerns about how the proposed National Network would work in Argyll and the Islands;
- Concerns that Argyll and the Islands would not benefit evenly from the work to be undertaken; and
- The LAG found it difficult to score project delivery based on the information provided.

DECISION: Unanimous – reject

7.3. Co-operation Projects approved through written procedure since March 2019

Three projects have been approved since the last LAG using a written procedure. These are:

- Ref 09/P00050 Social Enterprise Hub in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park;
- Ref 15/P00104 Stone, Sea and Sky: The Architecture of Scottish Islands; and
- Ref 11/P00135 Scottish Islands Passport.

Project Ref 09/P00050 was originally presented to the March meeting of the LAG but due to a declaration of interest by one LAG member, the decision would not have been quorate. The LAG agreed to postpone the decision to a teleconference to take place at a later date as the June LAG would be too late for the timeline of this project. The Strategic Co-ordinator was unable to find a suitable date for a quorate teleconference so the decision was made to make a LAG decision through written procedure.

Six LAG members scored the project – the highest score was 35 and the lowest was 30, giving an average score of 32. The numbers scoring the project resulted in a 50/50 split between the public and non-public sector LAG members. One public sector LAG member was asked to refrain from an email voting procedure which subsequently took place. As a result, five LAG members voted on the project: 2 were public sector LAG members and three were non-public sector LAG members making the decision quorate and the project was unanimously approved.

Similarly, the timeline for the project ref 15/P00104 would not have been suitable for the June LAG. As a result the decision making process for this project was carried out by written procedure.

Five LAG members scored the project – the highest score was 40 and the lowest was 24 giving an average score of 32. The vote was quorate with two public sector LAG members and three non-public sector LAG members voting and the project was unanimously approved.

Finally, as with both projects above the project ref 11/P00135 required a decision between LAG meeting dates so a written procedure was used.



Five LAG members scored the project – the highest score was 40 and the lowest was 24 giving an average score of 32. The vote was quorate with two public sector LAG members and three non-public sector LAG members voting and the project was unanimously approved.

8. LEADER PIPELINE PROJECTS

8.1. Standard Applications in Development

The Strategic Co-ordinator LR, provided the LAG with an update on a project in the pipeline which was not ready to be brought to the LAG today. The project was for a Camp and Motorhome site on Gigha. The land is owned by Gigha Heritage Trust and they had tried to purchase Argyll and Bute Council land to extend their park to provide a car park and amenity block, however this was not approved.

The project had been awarded Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funds (RTIF) however this was awarded as State Aid. After consulting the Scottish Government it was deemed not to be State Aid. This meant that *de Minimis* was not an issue meaning that both LEADER and HIE could potentially fund the project.

The LAG liked the principle of the project but they had concerns over double funding and the timescale for completing the project.

Decision: Obtain Clarity on SG timescales and whether this project would fit with existing timelines for handing non-allocated funding back to the Scottish Government.

9. Other LAG Decisions

9.1. Change Requests

Only one Change request had been received requiring LAG Chair approval. This was for the Rothesay CHEP project (ref 04/P00020), which was approved by IMaCl.

9.2. Amendment to Legal Agreement

The Accountable Body informed the LAG that a statement be added onto any LEADER awards where the project requires a Completion Certificate. This will state that the LEADER grant will be required to be repaid where a Completion Certificate has not been received at the time of last possible claim date which is anticipated to be August 2020.

9.3. ACT BRN – Possible fine

LR explained that due to an oversight in the type of BRN ACT had provided. The LEADER team is in contact with the Scottish Government to try and resolve this so that ACT are an 'eligible applicant'.



9.4. Rockfield and Procurement Feedback

The Rockfield Project, which had received an In Principle approval at the LAG which took place on 7/12/18 had issues with their procurement which after extensive discussions with the Council's Procurement and Commissioning team, as well as input from the Scottish Government, was found to be not fully compliant with LEADER guidance. The project had procured as a Public Sector Procurement but the process was not fully compliant with the requirements for public sector procurement.

A wash-up meeting took place with the Councils' Procurement and Commissioning Team where it was agreed that in future they would be available to provide assistance with non-Argyll and Bute Council tenders which are being publicly procured. This would be at a cost relating to the tender price.

10. Other LEADER Updates

10.1. In Principle Decisions taken at 6 December 2018 and 7th March 2019

An update was provided on the status of the six projects which had received an In-Principle decision at previous LAG meetings:

04/P00077 – An Talla Bail – Shaping the Heart of Iona – Project discussed earlier.

04/P00093 – Port Charlotte to Bruichladdich Path – The tendering process is being undertaken by the Council's procurement team.

04/P00095 – This project has been approved.

04/P00101 - This project has been approved.

04/P00102 – All match funding in place – date extension until end of June.

04/P00104 - This project has been approved.

10.2. Previous Decisions In Principle Still Outstanding

04/P00056 – Balliemeanoch Steading Cottages – the applicant for this project had unexpectedly passed away before the project started. His widow expressed an interest in taking over the role of lead applicant and continuing with the project. The property which was part of the LEADER application was part of a disputed will and as such the project could not proceed. It is now assumed that the project will not be progress. The LAG was asked whether LEADER staff should contact the widow of the applicant to formalise the grant withdrawal process.

DECISION: Unanimous by LAG members to withdraw project

11. Recent Chair Activity

IMacl had attended the CLLD Chairs meeting in Stirling on the 7/5/19, which was attended by fifteen LAG Chairs from all over Scotland. The afternoon session was attended by Alistair Prior (AP) (Scottish Rural Network), Vicky Dunlop (VD) (Scottish Government LEADER team) and Dave Tollick (DT) (Rural



Angus LEADER team). The next Chairs meeting will be on 13/8/19. AP explained that he would be looking at combining the 21 LAG evaluations into one single story. VD gave an update on committed spend on all projects which was thought to be better than expected. A decision regarding underspend is expected in early summer. Other topics discussed included the uncertainty around Brexit and getting good news stories out to the general public.

12. Scottish LEADER staff Group Meeting – Stornoway (26th and 27th June 2019)

Mary Louise Howat and DM will be attending the above meeting.

13. AOCs and Date of Next Meeting

LR reported that the Gott Bay Moorings project applicant (ref 04/P00021) which is now complete, is proposing to transfer the management of the facility to the Tiree Development Trust. The reason for this is to get efficiencies on overheads through shared through shared costs for example insurance costs. After checking with the Scottish Government, the applicant is required to notify the LAG of their intent and to provide the relevant back up documents.

The LAG posed for a group photo as it was the last scheduled meeting of the LAG. LR explained that the photo would be used for PR purposes.

There were no other AOCB items.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and input to the meeting, and invited everyone to stay for lunch.

The meeting closed at 13:00.

Signed _____

date _____

