

SHETLAND LEADER 2014 - 2020 LAG

MINUTES OF LAG MEETING HELD IN EDU BOARDROOM AT 9.00AM ON WEDNESDAY 26th August 2015.

Present:

Fiona Stirling, HIE
Tommy Coutts, Shetland College
Wendy Hand, Voluntary Action Shetland
Sally Spence, SIC
Karen Eunson, Citizens Advice Bureau
Michael Duncan, SIC
June Porter, SIC
Juan Brown, SNH
Bryan Leask, Hjaltland Housing Association
Diana Abernethy, AB Associates Ltd
Ruth Henderson, Seafood Shetland
Kathleen Sinclair, NFU
Ann Johnson, Shetland Food Producers
Steve Mathieson, Visit Scotland
Brian Spence, SIC (Global Classroom)
Lewie Peterson, SIC (Global Classroom)

Sheila Tulloch, LAG LEADER Co-ordinator

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were received from: Douglas Irvine, SIC; Maree Hay, NCDC; Sarah Taylor, NHS Shetland and Donald Anderson, Shetland Arts

Fiona Stirling welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of new members Steve Mathieson from Visit Scotland and Brian Spence and Lewie Peterson from SIC's Global Citizenship programme. Brian and Lewie said that in future one or other of them would attend LAG meetings.

It was noted that Alan Blain from Shetland Amenity Trust had neither attended any LAG meetings this year nor sent apologies. LAG members also observed that Shetland Arts representative Donald Anderson was facing redundancy and they thought that it was important that both Shetland Amenity Trust and Shetland Arts continue to be represented on the LAG. Sheila will contact Alan and Shetland Arts to ascertain their respective positions regarding LAG membership.

Action: Sheila

2. Membership Balance

There was one more representative present from the public sector (with the Global Classroom counted as having just one representative) than from the private/ voluntary sectors, but there were no projects to be approved and no vote would be required.

3. Minutes of 1st July 2015

The minutes were approved by Wendy Hand and seconded by Ruth Henderson.

4. Matters arising

Fiona went through the action points from the minutes of 1st July:

- i. Douglas was to approach Steve Mathieson and invite him to join the LAG. Steve's presence at today's meeting showed that that had been accomplished.
- ii. Douglas was to ask the agricultural group if they had any suggestions for a second agricultural representative on the LAG, Sheila reported that Douglas had forgotten to ask them this time. Kathleen said that the request had been passed round the agricultural community but no-one had come forward.
- iii. Michael was to speak to people within the SIC to identify a suitable representative for youth issues on the LAG. Brian Spence and Lewie Peterson from SIC's Global Citizenship programme were here today to fill that role.
- iv. Sheila and Fiona were to look at profiles of LAG members and that is covered by a separate agenda item.

5. LAG Constitution

Fiona noted that the LAG's constitution needed to be updated to reflect the new programme. Tommy commented that the LAG has responsibility for the LEADER staff under the new programme although they are line managed by Douglas Irvine as Executive Manager Economic Development for Shetland Islands Council. SIC is responsible for all payments on behalf of the Shetland LAG whereas some LAGs may be formally constituted with their own bank account. The LAG agreed that they did not wish to be a legal body as the potential financial risks were too high. Sheila said that the Scottish Government has not provided a specimen LAG constitution but they have provided some guidance as to the role and responsibilities of the LAG which can be drawn on for the revised constitution. It was suggested that other LAGs might have constitutions we could copy although details of the LAG structure might vary. LAG members were invited to submit any comments to Sheila and a revised constitution will be circulated for the next meeting.

Action: Sheila

6. Election of Vice Chair

Fiona suggested that it would be appropriate for the Vice Chair to come from the private/ voluntary sector. Michael nominated Ruth and Diana seconded. There were no other volunteers or nominations and Ruth accepted the nomination.

7. LAG member profiles

Fiona said that she and Sheila had discussed this and thought each LAG member should complete a template listing details of relevant skills and experience. As this would be put up on the Shetland LEADER website, photos would also be requested from LAG members. Sheila is to prepare template and send out to LAG members.

Action: Sheila

8. Staffing and Recruitment

Sheila had circulated the proposed job profile for the new LEADER Development Officer for comment and for LAG approval. She informed the LAG that the draft was currently

with SIC Human Resources for evaluation which will determine the salary level. The LAG asked about the timescale for the recruitment and Sheila said that she understood that it would be advertised in line with the LEADER guidance on recruitment once everything was in place and Douglas was back from annual leave on 7th September. LAG members noted that the job profile referred to the LEADER programme 2015-20 rather than the correct 2014-20 and Sheila said she would get it changed. Ruth suggested that the job profile should contain a description of what LEADER is about and Sheila promised to ensure that relevant information was included with the job profile. Otherwise the LAG were happy with the job profile and that Fiona (or Mhari) would represent the LAG on the interview panel.

Action: Sheila/ Douglas

9. LEADER 2014-2020 update

Sheila informed the LAG that Shetland Islands Council have signed the Service Level Agreement with the Scottish Government to deliver LEADER in Shetland. Due to an oversight the data sharing agreement was omitted when the SLA was returned and that is currently with SIC legal services for checking. The next step is for Douglas to meet with the Scottish Government to discuss what else is required before we can get the delivery of the new programme started.

Action: Douglas

10. Expressions of Interest

Sheila had sent LAG members the link to the Expression of Interest on the Rural Network website which is the first stage of the application process. She informed the LAG that all EoIs would be held centrally until the relevant LAG had everything in place for the new programme, but she wasn't sure when this would be. She was aware of one EoI for Shetland that had already been submitted and hoped that the LAG would be able to consider it and any others at their next meeting. She reiterated that the purpose of the EoI was to determine eligibility but that eligibility is no guarantee that an application will be successful. As the eligibility criteria are quite broad, the LAG had previously decided that they wished to see all EoIs so that they could provide feedback to potential applicants, suggesting how their application could be strengthened or advising that a particular application was unlikely to score highly enough to merit approval.

There followed some discussion about the application process and what would be required of applicants. Sheila said that she had not yet seen the final version of the application form which was due to be released within the next week or so but she understood that all projects over £10,000 would also be required to prepare business plans. There would be a pro forma LEADER Business Plan template provided but applicants could use their own business plans as long as these provided all the details included in the template. LAG members expressed concern that the information required for the business plan might be the same as some of that asked for in the application form resulting in unnecessary duplication. Sheila said that the application process for the new programme would be more rigorous and require more detail than the old one but that part of her role and that of the new Development Officer would be to assist applicants through the process. She also understood that training would be offered to applicants as well as to LAG members and staff but as yet she had no details.

11. Promoting the new programme

Fiona said that as the new programme would shortly be launched it is time to consider how the LAG will promote it in Shetland. Suggestions included holding a series of public meetings possibly in the same places where we had held consultation meetings for the LDS in February and March 2014 and also in other places or with particular communities of interest where we are aware of activity which could result in LEADER projects. It was agreed that wherever it was appropriate the LAG should team up with HIE, Business Gateway and relevant SIC departments to present a joined up approach to assistance for community led local development. Michael said that there were also several funding events coming up in Shetland at which LEADER could be represented.

Sheila said that the Shetland LEADER website has yet to be updated with details of the new programme as she was waiting until more of those details have been confirmed. The website is in need of a complete overhaul to make it more lively and attractive and NB Communications, who host the site, have said that they have some suggestions as to how this can be done. Sheila observed that one thing which became apparent when we put together the brochure celebrating the 2007-13 programme was that we had not systematically collected photos of projects. Good photos are an essential for improving the website as well as for other forms of promotion. There was some discussion as to whether it would be a good idea to engage a professional photographer to take photos or whether that would prove too expensive. It was agreed that applicants should be asked to provide photos charting the project's progress along with claims although it was accepted that these might not be of good enough quality for promotional purposes. Sheila will meet with NB Communications to explore the possibilities.

Action: Sheila

LAG members who deal with other EU funding programmes also noted that the European Commission are placing greater emphasis on applicants publicly acknowledging and actively promoting the EU support that they have received.

The LAG agreed that Shetland LEADER should also have a social media presence; Facebook seems to be the most popular social media site for people in Shetland and Twitter should also be considered. Sheila doesn't currently have access to social media on the SIC system but access can be requested.

Action: Sheila/ Douglas

Steve asked if it was ok to distribute the information sheet on Shetland LEADER to members of the Shetland Tourism Association. Sheila said that the purpose of the leaflet was to publicise LEADER as widely as possible but that she would update it to include details of where to find the Expression of Interest form.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

13. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 7th October, 9.00 a.m. at Solarhus.

Meeting closed at 10.20 am.