

SHETLAND LEADER 2014 - 2020 LAG

MINUTES OF LAG MEETING HELD IN EDU BOARDROOM AT 9.15AM ON WEDNESDAY 22nd June 2016.

Present:

Ruth Henderson, Seafood Shetland (Chair)
Juan Brown, SNH
Michael Duncan, SIC
Steve Mathieson, Visit Scotland
Ann Johnson, Shetland Food Producers
Lewie Peterson, SIC
Alan Blain, Shetland Amenity Trust
Alec Miller, Voluntary Action Shetland
Graeme Howell, Shetland Arts
Douglas Irvine, SIC
Diana Abernethy, AB Associates
June Porter, SIC
Annie Nicolson, NFU
Elizabeth Robinson, NHS

Sheila Tulloch, LEADER Co-ordinator
Jennifer Sjoberg, LEADER Development Officer

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were received from: Fiona Stirling, HIE; Bryan Leask, Hjaltland Housing Association; Kathleen Sinclair, NFU; Tommy Coutts, Shetland College; Sally Spence, SIC

2. Membership Balance

There were seven members from the public sector and seven from the private/voluntary sectors, but there were no projects to be approved and no vote would be required so it was not necessary for a public sector member to withdraw from voting.

3. Minutes of 4th May 2016

The minutes were approved by Graeme Howell and seconded by Alec Miller.

4. Matters arising

No items were raised

5. LEADER 2014-2020 Update

Sheila informed the LAG that the Scottish Government have now issued a standard Letter of Offer but we are still waiting on details of the grant claim process. User testing of LARCs has been undertaken recently by 7 LAGs, feedback following the testing has been positive with only minor tweaks being required. Roll out of the system is likely to be the latter part of the year. Full training on LARCs is still to be provided for all users.

Sheila attended the LEADER co-ordinators meeting in May, where there was a presentation by staff from the State Aid unit. The main feedback from the presentation was that in their opinion most LEADER projects would not be classed as state aid, as export levels are likely to be small and unlikely to impact on inter community trade. LAGs are to ensure any decision made regarding state aid is backed up by a justification for audit purposes.

Two members of the Scottish Government LEADER team visited last week for a monitoring visit. Two project files and the admin file were inspected. Both projects received comments but as neither has fully started these can be resolved. No comments were raised on the admin file. An ex-post inspection was undertaken at the Levenwick hall which received funding under the previous programme through CEEP, feedback from the inspection was positive with no audit points raised.

6. Declaration of Interest in any Application or Expression of Interest

Ruth asked LAG members for declarations of interest, financial or otherwise, in any of the Expressions of Interest to be considered at today's meeting.

- Ann Johnson; Mirrie Dancers as their product is sold in her shop.
- Alan Blain; Shetland Amenity Trust his employer although not directly involved in project.

7. Expression of Interest

019 Mirrie Dancers

Sheila provided additional information on the expression of interest, as she and Jennifer had met with the applicant. From the EOI and the meeting with the applicant it was clear that the majority of the project had already started, making it ineligible. The remaining elements which were potentially eligible were for marketing and training. However it was questioned if LEADER would be the most suitable source of funding for a smaller project of this type.

Douglas said that this type of project could be looked at under the Shetland Islands Council Business Growth Scheme.

Sheila advised the LAG that at the moment there did not appear to be a LEADER project but a new project may be presented to the LAG in the future. The LAG members agreed.

Applicant will not be invited to complete a full application at this stage.

020 Shetland Amenity Trust – Drama on the Bog

Shetland Amenity Trust are looking to develop a project to illustrate the importance of peat bogs and peatland restoration in Shetland through drama. In addition a teachers' pack is to be produced for the project.

Juan said that he thought the proposed project was good and a close fit to the LDS, this was backed up by Ruth. Douglas asked if the cost breakdown was known, Sheila said that at this stage the full cost breakdown was not known but the applicant had been advised that 50% intervention rate would be the maximum available. Diana asked if the project has had much contact with schools to date. Lewie asked if the teachers' pack was something that the schools had requested and would use. Steve asked if the drama element of the project would be open to the public including visitors or would it just be schools. Sheila said that at this stage she did not know the answers. Douglas said as part of the project application process it would be necessary to check these points. Sheila confirmed that these items would be checked, as the application process was very detailed.

Diana said that she thought the project looked like a good way to engage with young people on the subject. Juan added that the peatland restoration project was one of two such projects undertaken in Shetland and was exemplary. Michael asked how does the project fit with the LDS and could the peatland project officer produce the materials without the project progressing. Juan and Alan answered the question in part. The post has been funded through SNH to date but this funding has now come to an end and the post is currently funded temporarily by the Amenity Trust. Full justification for the project will be required in the application.

Ruth asked the LAG members if they were happy for the project to be invited to complete a full application.

The LAG members agreed that the project should be invited to complete a full application.

8. LAG Membership

As CAB and FSB have not been able to find any representatives to cover their seats on the LAG, Sheila asked the LAG members to suggest people who could be approached as potential LAG members, bearing in mind their focus on social inclusion and enterprise. Ann suggested a representative from Cope may be an option, the LAG agreed that Cope would be a good fit

Action - Ruth to contact Cope

Graeme asked if there were any groups or businesses who received funding under the previous programme, which may be interested and could bring experience from the other side of the process, to the group. Sheila suggested Andy Ross from Global Yell who still spoke positively about LEADER. Alec suggested Kellie Naulls who had previously been involved with the Moving on Project but now worked for Unst Partnership.

Action - Sheila to contact Andy Ross

Action - Alec to contact Kellie Naulls

Action – to feedback for next meeting

9. Promoting the new programme – stand at the country shows

Sheila initiated the discussion on the promotion of LEADER within Shetland, as it is necessary to take LEADER out into the community, similar to what was done for the consultation exercise. Sheila said attending country shows would be a good way at this stage, to get out to different areas of Shetland to events with a wide range of people in attendance. Other events which could also be looked at later in the year are the food and craft fairs. The LAG agreed that this was a good idea and some put their names forward for attending the shows others are to check their availability.

Action – Sheila to circulate dates for the shows and ask for volunteers to attend

10. Ideas for co-operation projects – walks and walking

Sheila started the discussion by providing the LAG with a background on co-operation projects, as it is necessary for 10% (£246,700) of the LAG budget to be spent on co-operation. The broad aim of co-operation projects is to share experiences and learn from other areas. Co-operation projects can be with other groups in Scotland, UK, Europe or worldwide. Project partners do not necessarily need to receive support through LEADER. Some non-financial support will be available through the Scottish Rural Network to set up co-operation projects. The Scottish Government LEADER team have stipulated that co-operation projects are not to be approved until LARCs has gone live. The HINT project undertaken by Shetland Amenity Trust under the previous LEADER programme was an example of a co-operation project between geoparks, each of the geoparks had strong links with their local action groups.

Michael asked if co-operation projects would receive the same intervention rate as other projects. Sheila said that the intervention rate for LEADER was set by the LAG and could be increased to a maximum of 100%, if the LAG thought this to be necessary. Annie asked if it was likely to be one project or multiple projects. Sheila said that for the funds available it would probably be multiple projects. Michael asked if funding would be available for capital or revenue projects. Sheila said that due to the nature of co-operation projects funding would probably be for revenue expenditure.

Alan said he had been involved in a number of co-operation projects and one of the key things to consider is confidence in the project delivery partners. This was backed up by Ruth who said she had been involved in a number of co-operation projects and had worked with a range of project partners. She also recommended working with known partners, who we have existing connections with.

Sheila highlighted an existing annual event undertaken by the Dumfries and Galloway LAG 'Day of the Region'. The aim of 'Day of the Region' is to develop a region wide initiative. The initiative is a series of events across the region, which bring together community groups and organisations within a geographical area to celebrate the activities which go on there and attract new people to get involved. The events have been held in Dumfries and Galloway since 2011, although the original concept started in Germany in 1999. The Dumfries and Galloway LAG has sent out an invitation to all of the LAGs in Scotland, inviting members to attend the events held later this year, with a view to potential co-operation in the future.

Douglas said he had wondered in the past about the potential of an event based on the concept of harvest thanksgiving similar to the idea behind the events held in churches each year. The event would focus on food, drink and music, celebrating all that we have.

June asked if groups can come forward with their own projects or do they need to be initiated and engineered by the LAG. Sheila said that groups can bring their own projects forward but due to the 10% commitment it would be necessary for the LAG to initiate some projects. Sheila added that the ENRD website does advertise groups looking for project partners. We have received emails from as far afield as the North Caucasus and Finland. The group in Finland are looking to develop a story walk in Ekenas, to inspire reflections on heritage in the area and conversations about visions for the future.

June and Elizabeth said that it was necessary to be clear about the outcomes and outputs which the LAG would like to achieve prior to looking for project partners to ensure that we got what we were looking for out of a project.

Sheila and Fiona attended a co-operation cafe event, held at the LEADER conference in March. They were asked at short notice to present an idea. The idea presented was adventure tourism in remote rural areas. A meeting between Fiona, Sheila and Jennifer after the co-operation cafe determined that perhaps walking was a better starting point due to the wide nature of adventure tourism. As a next step Fiona called a meeting of various people who are involved in walking, tourism and promotion in Shetland. The preliminary notes from the meeting were circulated to the LAG by email prior to the LAG meeting. Points raised by LAG members are as follows;

- Juan described the Shetland Map project; this project aims to bring together information from different sources into a single map based website. To date progress on the project has been ad-hoc but it is thought that the resource would be useful to a wide range of people and organisations. The project is currently on hold as funding is required to progress the project from its current status as a test page.
- Elizabeth said walking was very important when looking at various aspects of health as it is very accessible and inclusive.
- Steve said that when you look at walking often the issues to be looked at are access, parking and public toilets which link to other potential projects.
- Ann said walking covered a wide range of routes and topics providing her walk to the LAG meeting as an example. As the walk takes in the highly landscaped areas around the Museum, Mareel and the North Ness along with the industrial areas around the pier and Buildbase.
- Graeme said there had been a Living Lerwick bid for an art heritage walk in Lerwick. Steve said that this project was now progressing and it had taken a lot of work to make the project become a reality. The project aimed to use an app to direct and inform people as they walked through Lerwick.
- Steve added that the LAG also needs to consider the long term legacy from any co-operation projects as information can be forgotten and then repeated by another group if not documented. Juan said this would be the benefit of a project like the Shetland Map as it could bring information together.

- Alan said he had been involved in a project in the past to produce a series of interpretive leaflets and panels for geographic areas and areas of interest around Shetland. The initial sites and walks had been identified through consultation with community councils.
- The LAG members went on to discuss accessible walks and the information required but not always considered on a day to day basis such as the angle of slopes for wheelchair users or the on/off points on pavements and do they match.
- Other areas to be considered included placemaking and interpretation.
- Prior to the meeting Kathleen had sent a message to the LAG to remind them of the impact walkers can have on the working of an agricultural holding. This was reiterated by Annie and Ann added that often coastal paths were more suitable as they avoided passing through the middle of agricultural holdings.

Sheila said that the next stage with regard to the walking co-operation project would be a workshop involving people from different geographic and interest areas to decide on the priorities and direction for a walking project.

Lewie reminded LAG members that we may need to take a step back from projects to ensure that they are taken forward for the right reasons and can withstand audit at a later stage. As all co-operative projects are currently at the ideas stage with no funding committed this is not an issue at the moment but should be considered in the future.

Ruth summarised that the LAG understanding of co-operative projects was much increased and it will be discussed at future meetings.

11. AOB

Sheila – Training session held after the last LAG meeting went well and she would look to organise a second training session for new members and those that were not able to attend the last session. This would either be held after the next LAG meeting or on a separate date depending on the agenda for the next LAG meeting.

12. Date of next meeting/closure

Next meeting on 24th August

Meeting closed at 10:30