

SHETLAND LEADER 2014 - 2020 LAG

MINUTES OF LAG MEETING HELD IN EDU BOARDROOM AT 9.15AM ON WEDNESDAY 4th May 2016.

Present:

Fiona Stirling, HIE Shetland (for Mhari Pottinger)

Juan Brown, SNH

Michael Duncan, SIC

Steve Mathieson, Visit Scotland

Ann Johnson, Shetland Food Producers

Brian Spence, SIC (Global Classroom)

Tommy Coutts, Shetland College

Sally Spence, SIC

Alan Blain, Shetland Amenity Trust

Alec Miller, Voluntary Action Shetland

Graeme Howell, Shetland Arts.

Sheila Tulloch, LEADER Co-ordinator

Jennifer Sjoberg, LEADER Development Officer

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were received from: Mhari Pottinger, HIE, who had sent Fiona Stirling as proxy; Douglas Irvine, Shetland Islands Council; Bryan Leask, Hjaltland Housing Association; Diana Abernethy, AB Associates; Karen Eunson, CAB (resigned); Maree Hay, Northmavine Community Development Company; June Porter, SIC; Kathleen Sinclair, NFU; Ruth Henderson, Seafood Shetland; Annie Nicolson, NFU.

Fiona Stirling introduced herself to the new members of the LAG. Fiona will be the HIE representative and chair the LAG while Mhari is on maternity leave.

2. Membership Balance

There were seven members from the public sector and four from the private/voluntary sectors, but there were no projects to be approved and no vote would be required.

3. Minutes of 9th March 2016

Graeme asked, with regard to LAG member attendance raised in the AOCB, if it would be possible to agree an end time for meetings such as 10:30, as that would be a regular time commitment for LAG members to make. Following discussion it was agreed: that LAG meetings would continue to aim for a 10:30 to 11:00 finish; important items would be prioritised in the agenda for each meeting and the chair would check at the start of each meeting if anyone has to leave early so as to ensure meetings are quorate for decisions. Members also discussed the possibility of delaying applications to future meetings if there was a high number of applications and expressions of interest. Alan said that it would be unfair on applicants if they had to wait a further 8 weeks. It could also cause other problems as the programme has already been delayed two and a half years and has a tight window for project delivery. Sheila said that there was potential for LEADER to be extended but this was still under discussion.

Sally pointed out a typo on page 6 in the 7th paragraph should read application rather than applicant.

The minutes were approved by Graeme Howell and seconded by Michael Duncan.

4. Matters arising

No additional items were raised at this stage

5. LEADER 2014-2020 Update

Sheila informed the LAG that there continued to be problems with the roll out of LEADER, in particular the LEADER Letter of Offer and the grant claim process for applicants is still to be confirmed. Sheila confirmed to the LAG that until there is a satisfactory Letter of Offer the updated Shetland Letter of Offer from the previous programme will continue to be used in Shetland. With regard to the grant claim process the current estimate for the online system (LARCs) being up and running is September. At present only one Letter of Offer has been issued, the applicant has requested a claim form and the Scottish Government is aware that as grant applications have been approved a claim procedure will be required. As an interim measure, it is likely that it will be necessary to develop a Shetland solution similar to what has been done with the Letter of Offer.

Upcoming events – Sheila to attend a LEADER Coordinators meeting in New Lanark on the 17th and 18th May, and representatives from the Scottish Government will be undertaking a monitoring visit to Shetland in mid June.

Steve asked if other LAGs are in the same position, Sheila confirmed that other LAGs are in a similar position or further behind, some LAGs have not approved any projects to date, due to lack of clarity on guidelines. Michael asked if the blockages and delays were at a European or Scottish Government level. Sheila said that the delays have been with the Scottish Government and are mainly due to their concerns over fines from Europe. This has led the Scottish Government to try and ensure all processes and procedures are watertight with no materiality level. The last update from English LEADER was that it was in a similar position. Sally added that the European Structural funds had similar problems and had been delayed.

Alan pointed out that there may be changes and further delays over the coming months following the Scottish Government election on Thursday. Graeme asked if it was known what the impact on LEADER would be if the UK vote to leave Europe. Sheila said that as it would take a number of years to leave it would be best to cross that bridge when the outcome was known.

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

Fiona asked LAG members for declarations of interest, financial or otherwise, in any of the Expressions of Interest to be considered at today's meeting. None were raised.

7. Expression of Interest

017 Tingwall Hall

The Tingwall Hall Committee are looking to improve the energy efficiency of the hall and to provide additional facilities for visitors to the hall and surrounding area. Work to be undertaken includes replacement of block work, the installation of cavity wall insulation, 4 new windows to maximise natural light, installation of an insulated suspended ceiling and the provision of a public toilet and external drinking water for use by the community and sporting groups.

Alec initiated the discussion pointing out that the project at the Tingwall Hall has many similarities to another community hall project discussed at a previous meeting and that the LAG members needed to be clear on how they measure, discuss and make decisions on projects involving community buildings. Sheila said that there are significant differences between the project planned for the Tingwall Hall and the previous project and that the Local Development Strategy does include improvements to community facilities in the priority actions. A key theme for LEADER is innovation and community buildings do struggle to meet the innovation criteria; it is most commonly how the building will be used that makes the project innovative. Unlike the previous project, the project for consideration is all about the hall. In addition the committee are working to strengthen links with the Tingwall agricultural museum whose proposed site is next to the hall. The LAG went on to discuss the project, its fit to the Local Development Strategy, and other strategies. Juan pointed out that cycling links closely to the Community Planning strategy and Steve added that public toilet provision was very important for tourism development in Shetland.

Sally asked if the group had secured match funding. Michael confirmed that the committee have not secured match funding but have been fund raising for a number of years to cover their contribution to the project. A small amount of additional funding would be required to fill the gap which Michael thought would be achievable. Tommy asked if the group have costs for the project and when presented with the figures commented that they appear to be quite low. Michael answered that the project to be undertaken is quite small and that they did have an architect supporting them. Sheila added that the costs were based on quotes received in 2014 so were based on realistic figures but may change slightly.

The LAG agreed that the project was a good fit to the Local Development Strategy and should be invited to complete a full application.

018 Fetlar Hall

The Fetlar Community Association are looking to develop the facilities and services available at the community hall. To provide four hook up points for caravans, to reconfigure and upgrade the toilet facilities to enable their use without the need for access to the whole building and to provide a shower. In addition the heating system is to be upgraded to make better use of the energy available.

The LAG noted that the old campsite on Fetlar on land owned by Shetland Islands Council had been poorly used due to the exposed site and its location away from the

attractions in Fetlar and this had led to the council disposing of the asset. The addition of caravan hook up points at the hall will make better use of space available as the community garden is currently unused. The committee hope that the location next to the hall will attract more people to the hall which is open at weekends.

Michael checked with Fiona with regard to the match funding, Fiona said that HIE would look to support the Tourism aspect of the project but HIE had classed the improvements to the heating system as ineligible. In addition the Community Association has secured CCF funding for a separate project to improve the energy efficiency measures in the hall along with other carbon reduction projects for Fetlar.

Alec questioned the current status of the community purchase of the SOLI premises and whether, if the purchase were successful, there would be any connection between the two facilities. It was confirmed that as some of the directors were involved in both projects it is likely that there will be a connection between the two rather than duplication.

The LAG agreed that the project was a good fit to the Local Development Strategy and should be invited to complete a full application.

8. Promoting the new programme – Website - formal launch

LAG members agreed to continue to promote LEADER through word of mouth, as without everything in place there was reservation about promoting the scheme widely. The Scottish Government would expect a formal launch with a minister invited.

9. LAG Membership – member profiles and photos

FSB – to be chased up for a replacement member

Karen Eunson from CAB has resigned but has a Directors meeting next week and will ask at that if someone else would like to take up the position vacated by her.

LAG members were asked to think of other potential LAG members should it be necessary to recruit new members.

Fiona asked if there was a deadline for the submission of member profiles and photos and, if there wasn't, if a deadline could be set.

10. AOB

Social Investment Scotland event 10th June, LAG members invited to attend, will also be an opportunity to promote the LEADER programme.

Rural Parliament event 13th and 14th May, Fiona to attend, others also welcome.

11. Date of next meeting/closure

Next meeting on 22nd June

Meeting closed at 10:00

LAG training session followed to review LDS priority Actions and Targets and the new template LAG evaluation form.