Scottish Borders LEADER
Developing Enterprising Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS LEADER PROGRAMME 2014-2020
Local Action Group meeting
8 March 2016
Tweed Horizons, 10am-1pm

MINUTES

Present:
Heather Batsch, The Bridge (HB)
Frank Beattie, Scottish Enterprise (FB)
Claire de Bolle, Youth Borders (CdB)
John Dougan, Forestry Commission Scotland (JD)
Gordon Harrison, Scottish Borders Community Council Network (GH)
John Henderson, Scottish Borders Food and Drink Network (JHe)
Jules Horne, Borders Creative (JH)
Paula McDonald, VisitScotland (PMcD)
Bryan McGrath, Scottish Borders Council (BMcG)
Andrew Mitchell, Berwickshire Community Councils' Forum (AM)
Andrew Panter, Scottish Natural Heritage (AP)
Jane Rosegrant, Borders Forest Trust (JR)
Hans Waltl, Federation of Small Business (HW)

Secretariat:
Hugh Williams, Scottish Borders Council (Principal Officer Rural) (HBW)
Fiona McDougall, Scottish Borders Council (LEADER Co-ordinator)
Simon Lynch, Scottish Borders Council (LEADER Facilitator)
Joanna Pringle, Scottish Borders Council (European Programme Support Officer) (JP)
Bartje Magee, Scottish Borders Council (European Programme Support Officer) (BM)

		Action
1.0	**Welcome**	
2.0	**Apologies** Carol Byers, The Haining (CB) Luke Comins, Tweed Forum (LC) Ian Tod, The Hippodrome Arts Centre CIC Ltd (IT) Will Haegeland, Selkirk Chamber of Trade and Commerce (WH) Ian MacDonald, NFU Scotland (IMacD) Gary White (GW) It was noted that Will Haegeland has notified the LEADER team of his	

	resignation from the LAG. Due to his business expansion he feels he cannot give LEADER the dedication it requires from him as a LAG member.	
3.0	**Minutes of previous meeting** Minutes of the previous meeting were circulated prior to the meeting and matters arising have been actioned. Group protocol changes have been made as requested and send to the members. Members agreed the changes and a signature sheet was circulated to sign that they accept the group protocol. The project outline document has been developed further since the last meeting and SL has developed guidance to simplify this process for members. Project outlines were discussed in detail later in the meeting. The launch of the Scottish Borders Pub is the Hub pilot was held at Carfraemill on 20 March. A sub group of the LAG has since been formed to assess applications, these will be circulated to the group and decisions made by email. The sub group members are GH/CB/GW/JHe/HW/AM, Steve Osbourne from Business Gateway and Alastair Prior from SG. The next meeting was previously arranged for 14 June however this would require an application deadline in April. It was felt this was too soon given we are still waiting for paper application forms and guidance to be published on the Scottish Rural Network website for use. It was proposed to move the meeting date to 19 July with a 31 May application deadline. The second round will be 31 August deadline with the LAG meeting on 18 October, both dates were agreed by the LAG. A question asked regarding the implications for LEADER should the EU referendum vote result in Britain exiting the EU. The meeting was advised that all EU programmes would stop however a timeline on how long that would take wouldn't be clear at this stage. Minutes were proposed, seconded and subsequently approved.	
4.0	**LEADER team report** FMcD presented her report on her work in post to date including attending LEADER Coordinator meetings, LARCs monitoring and evaluation workshops	

	and project familiarisation meetings with SL. A detailed breakdown of SL workload was given which demonstrated the majority of interest to date has been from Social Enterprises with farm diversification showing least interest so far.	
	The Scottish Government IT system LARCs has encountered many delays over the last year but progress is looking positive and SG proposed by the end of March part of the system will be available to access by LEADER staff. The claims side of the system is planned to be delivered by the summer and the monitoring and reporting by Autumn 2016.	
	Application guidance has been circulated to LEADER staff and comments fed back to SG. All LAGs across Scotland have had issues with the content and SG have advised this is being fed back to the Accountable Bodies Board. As a result of the delayed guidance, the preparation of the LAG manual has been postponed.	
	It was thought that other groups such as the Borders Exporters Association should be included in any PR opportunities and a LEADER session with the team should be organised. FMcD/SL to arrange.	FMcD/SL
	A concern to establish social media sites for the Scottish Borders LEADER programme was expressed. JP explained this is being considered internally and the correct channels to create accounts should be followed. The LEADER team are to take forward a plan for social media use.	JP
	Concerns were raised that the continued delays with LARCs would disadvantage projects further and that a paper application form should be available. FMcD advised this is scheduled to be published on the Scottish Rural Network shortly, the LAG made a decision if LARCs is not available to access by 1 April then applications should begin to be taken by paper version. Another concern raised was that communities with poor broadband connections are being disadvantaged by an online system and paper versions should be available for their use. Support from the LEADER team would be needed to then transfer this online to LARCs.	
	LAG members requested a tracking sheet to record Expressions of Interest/Project Outlines by sector/budget requested/progression possibilities be created. This would help identify sectors where promotion of the LEADER programme is needed.	SL

5.0	**Budget** HBW presented a report on the programme budget forecast per year. The whole LDS budget is made up of both LEADER and EMFF programmes. The budget shows the full programme expenditure until 2020/21 including the proportion expected to be received back from Fife and Tyne Esk for their elements of the EMFF admin/animation costs which totals £158,155. A question was raised about flexibility of the project spend profile as the costs in the first year of operation are low. JP explained the low spend profile in 2016/17 reflects the timings of LAG assessment meetings, the expected applications and potential claim timescale. It was also highlighted that the aim is to pay projects as swiftly as possible and a 'stop the clock' system will be in place. In order to receive payment timeously, projects are required to cooperate in answering questions relating to claims evidence. It was also noted that in terms of reporting to SG we are best to be reserved in our expectations and over achieve than over estimate and under achieve.	
6.0	**Monitoring & Evaluation** HBW explained all 21 LAGs across Scotland each submitted individual LDS's which contain indicators and outputs reflecting what each area wishes to evaluate throughout the programme. SG are now working on condensing the common indicators from the 21 strategies to create a core list that captures the information SG need to report to the EU. Once this list is created the LAG will need to review the Scottish Borders LDS to establish which of our indicators are covered by the SG core list and which we need to capture in addition. BM and FMcD are attending a workshop on 29th at which this will be developed further and more information provided.	
7.0	**Project Outline Reports** SL gave a brief overview of the guidance and revised traffic light assessment system. Members agreed the level of detail is good and the balance of information provided is appropriate at this stage. A number of project outlines are waiting consideration and it was decided that SL should send these out at a rate of three per fortnight for LAG comments.	

	It was suggested that feedback should be provided to SL in bullet point form with an indication of a red/amber/green assessment.	
	Networking sessions are being planned to link similar projects together to share ideas, network and potentially establish collaborative working.	
	Three project outline reports were then discussed. It was highlighted that the feedback in the following discussions should be focussed, further discussions would occur come the assessment of full applications.	
	The comments below reflect discussions during the meeting, in addition, absent LAG members also provided feedback by email to SL which will be included in feedback to project applicants.	
7.1	**Project 1 – EOI 012** Members had a thorough discussion on the project with the conclusion there are areas which require more consideration and development. In general it was felt it was an interesting model and support was shown for the creation of an anchor unit and bringing MACLab to the Borders. There were however concerns about access to funding, the relationship between the applicant and the current building owner regarding future ownership of the building, the wider community benefit, involvement with Creative Scotland and limited deliverables due to high kitting out and refurbishment costs. Members assessed the project outline as 'amber' and agreed with further work they would be happy to see a full application developed.	
7.2	**Project 2 – EOI 023** LAG members commented that there is a gap in the market for café facilities to be provided at Tweedbank in response to the arrival of the new railway line but felt an application would benefit from concentrating on the community benefit also. Comments included the need for planning consent - SL confirmed the project is in contact with planning officers, a map showing the location would be beneficial for assessment and lack of evidence of innovation. The LAG were overall in support of the project outline and assessed it as 'green' encouraging some minor amendments for the full application.	

7.3	**Project 3 – EOI 021**	
	There was a detailed discussion on the project and some concerns were raised which require addressing before a full application.	
	Members felt more information is required about how the project will be delivered including clear, defined activities. There are issues around sustainability and interest was shown in the proposed sales outlets for the manufactured goods and evidence of the expertise involved in the manufacture and design of the products. Cash flow was raised as a potential issue and more consideration to this should be evidenced.	
	Overall the LAG agreed the project outline requires work before full application and assessed it as 'amber'.	
8.0	**Enterprise Facilitators**	
	A paper prepared by SL was presented as a proposal about the role of the Enterprise Facilitator. HBW explained the opportunity for increased animation in the 2014-2020 programme came from the community consultation process and the flexibility to allow up to 25% of the programme costs for admin/animation.	
	A discussion was had after which it was suggested the LEADER team work on a paper to present to the LAG at the next meeting proposing the Enterprise Facilitator role and how this will be delivered.	LEADER team
9.0	**AOB**	
	It was decided for future meetings LAG members are responsible for printing and bringing along papers to the meetings and the LEADER team wouldn't be printing sets for all individuals. An offer was made for any members with restricted access to printing facilities that print outs can be provided in advance and posted to those who express an interest, one LAG member made a request for printing.	
	The LEADER Conference is running from 10 – 12 March in Aviemore. The Scottish Borders LAG will be represented by 4 LAG members and from the LEADER team HBW/BM/FMcD.	
	Thanks were given to Andrew Panter and Paula McDonald for their contributions to the LAG. AP is retiring in July from SNH and PMcD will be on	

	maternity leave starting from the end of May. VisitScotland are recruiting maternity cover and a replacement LAG member will be introduced prior to PMcD departure.	
10.0	**Dates and times of future meetings** The next LAG meeting will be on 19 July to allow time for an application deadline on 31 May. The meeting will be held at Tweed Horizons from 10.00 – 15.00. The following meeting will be held on 18 October from 10.00 – 15.00, application deadline of 31 August.	