



Scottish Borders LEADER

Developing Enterprising Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS LEADER PROGRAMME 2014-2020

Local Action Group meeting

5th November 2020

10am – Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Present:

Gary White, Agenda Resilience (GW) - Voluntary
Heather Batsch, The Bridge (HB) - Voluntary
Frank Beattie, Scottish Enterprise (FB) - Public
Gordon Harrison, Scottish Borders Community Council Network (GH) - Voluntary
Jules Horne, Creative Arts Business Network (JH) - Private
Lesley Forsyth, Scottish Borders Council (LF) - Public
Annabelle Scott, Messrs A A Scott (AS) - Private
Hans Waltl, Federation of Small Businesses (HW) – Private

Secretariat:

Linda Cornwall, Scottish Borders Council (LEADER Coordinator) (LiC)
Simon Lynch, Scottish Borders Council (LEADER Facilitator) (SL)

		Action
1.0	Welcome & Introductions LiC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced LF as the new AB Rep for Scottish Borders, following the resignation of BMcG.	
2.0	Conflict of Interest No conflicts of interest noted It was noted that 8 members were present (quorate), 2 members represented the public sector (<50%)	
3.0	Election of Chair & Vice-Chair LAG required to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair and only 2 people put their names forward to take on the roles. HW did not join meeting till 10.18am so election of Vice-Chair took place while awaiting his arrival. All in attendance unanimously voted HW as Vice-Chair (HW joined the meeting at 10.18am) GW left the meeting at 10.23am to enable the election of Chair to be undertaken. All unanimously voted GW as Chair. GW re-joined the meeting at 10.26am and took up role as Chair.	



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4.0	<p>Apologies Luke Comins, Tweed Forum (LC) – Voluntary; Paula Ward, VisitScotland (PW) – Public; Ian MacDonald, NFU Scotland (IMacD) – Private</p>	
5.0	<p>Minutes of last meeting on 22nd October 2019 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 22nd October 2019 were agreed by the Members and proposed by JH and seconded by HB. The Minutes will be signed off by the Chair and sent to LiC. (Meeting scheduled for 24th March 2020 could not be undertaken due to lockdown and technology issues).</p> <p>Matters Arising:- Programme Closure – LiC advised the meeting that the Closure Letter has been signed off and returned to SG. Following the impact of Covid 19 and extension of programme to end March 2021 a further Closure Letter was issued by SG for sign off. LiC informed the meeting that this had been signed and returned with caveats in place to confirm return of all requested documentation by end March 2021 subject to no further delays caused by Covid 19.</p> <p>Monitoring & Evaluation – SL advised that this would be covered in Item 7 of the Agenda.</p> <p>LEADER Event – SL informed the meeting that the LEADER Celebration Event planned for 15th May 2019 was unable to go ahead due to lockdown. GW was impressed by online celebration events carried out by D&G and Angus LAGS and broached idea of a Scottish Borders event. Given the tight timescale for the LEADER Team to undertake claims processing and Monitoring and Evaluation it was acknowledged that the LEADER Team has very limited capacity to undertake this. GW asked if any LAG members would be interested in taking this forward as part of a small Working Group. HB/JH/HW/AS/GW/GH confirmed interest and would meet at another date to discuss.</p> <p>Joint Meeting – Dumfries & Galloway – GW confirmed this would be covered under AOB.</p> <p>17/P00084 – LiC confirmed this project was successful in securing £20,000 from the SG Central Pot of Funding. Project has now been completed and LEADER Team are awaiting upload of cost documentation onto LARCS to complete.</p>	<p>HB/JH/HW/ AS/GW/GH</p>
6.0	<p>LEADER Programme Progress Report incl budget update, staffing etc LiC gave an overview of the paper. Scottish Borders allocation had been updated to £4,015,888 following additional funding for 17/P00084 (£20,000)</p>	



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	<p>and de-commitment of 17/P00071 (£82,629) and the project commitment is £3,148,653. Scottish Borders has met the minimum 5% target for Co-operation and minimum 20% for Rural Business/Farm Diversification. Despite the impact of Covid, any LAG decisions required have continued via written procedures to assist the continued smooth running of the programme.</p> <p>LiC also advised that SG have allowed LAGS to utilise identified underspends across projects provided there is no additionality and the request for change enables the meeting of original aims/objectives of the application. Additional funding would only be considered for activities carried out which were specifically in response to Covid.</p> <p>Claims are progressing well:- 27 projects have completed 8 projects at final claim stage 27 progressing towards completion</p> <p>Since the update provided to 30th September 2019 there are now a further 7 projects completed and at final claim stage and 7 completed but still requiring upload of final claim documentation to LARCS. This leaves 10 progressing towards completion. Four of these are co-op projects led by other LAGS, leaving 6 Scottish Borders projects approaching completion by 30th November 2020.</p> <p>BM retired at the end of July 2020 and Members wished her well in her retirement and thanked her for her contribution to the LEADER programme.</p> <p>GW/HB thanked the LEADER Team for its dedication in dealing with the difficult situation imposed by the pandemic and the continued support to the Borders projects. This has ensured the continued smooth running of the claims process despite the challenges imposed by home working. All members agreed.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>LAG Reports</p> <p>Members approved the design of the Programme Report to 31st March 2019. JH suggested it would be good to include project logos in future reports for those who have these to provide some project promotion. Suggested that this report should only be promoted on LAG website rather than distributed due to time delay. LAG members expressed the desire that project photographs within any LAG reports should not be restricted to SBC bank photographs as the LAG is external to SBC and permission for projects photographs to be used has already been agreed with project.</p>	<p>LiC</p>



	<p>Members approved the mock up of annual report to 31st March 2019. Requested that restriction of photographs should not be imposed on this report either. JH will provide a pre-face for the front cover. This report should be distributed amongst interested parties as well as promoted on LAG website.</p>	LiC
8.0	<p>LDS Change Request All members approved submission of an LDS Change Request to Scottish Government for the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend programme end date from 31st December 2020 to 31st March 2021 • Extend the staffing requirement for the Programme Co-ordinator, Facilitator, and 3 EPSOs from 31st December 2020 to 31st March 2021 • Update the budget position to reflect the revised LEADER allocation of £4,015,888 • Monitoring and evaluation of LEADER and EMFF programmes to be carried out separately rather than jointly • Update the LAG Group Protocol to reflect the new quorum requirements 	LiC
9.0	<p>Monitoring & Evaluation SL briefed members on the requirement of reporting to cover 7 SG national questions and seek clarification of which LDS 'Enterprising Communities' priorities the LAG wished should be reported on from a local perspective. LAG members agreed that they would wish 'Focus on enterprise, including revenue generation and sustainability' with an additional focus on any adaptations required by organisations/small businesses to address Covid 19 impact.</p> <p>12:07 – AS left meeting; 12:16 HW left the meeting – still quorate</p>	SL/LiC
10.0	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB Futures Group GW/LC briefed members on joint meetings held with D&G LAG and SoSE. D&G are keen for a draft proposal for funding to be put before SoSE for consideration at an agreed meeting on 12th November 2020 (discussion document from joint workshop had been emailed around LAG members previous to the meeting). Much discussion ensued where it was clear that as yet it is still unclear what role SoSE will play in future funding for the areas. There was concern for the potential funding gap to be left not only by LEADER but other possible rural funding sourced by EU and a need to consult with groups/agencies across the areas to identify need and provide an enhanced funding opportunity. The need to complement what SoSE will offer is also important. It is unclear whether there is micro-business support 	



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	<p>offered by SoSE and there is also a need for economic development amongst the creative sector to ensure sustainability for the future. LAG members will provide comments/thoughts on discussion paper and return to LiC as soon as possible. LiC meeting with NH, LEADER Programme Co-ordinator, D&G LAG at 3pm and will report back.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissolution of Business Group GW asked for agreement to dissolve the Business Group since there is no longer a requirement for this. Thanked HW for his role as Chair and the LAG members who sat on this group for their additional contribution. Members agreed to dissolve. Underspends CR request from 17/P00065 had been circulated before today's meeting for consideration. The organisation is undertaking a capital project, which has seen total project costs increase from £257k to £301k due to impact of Covid. This is threatening completion of the LEADER project. The organisation has also experienced a significant drop in income levels due to lockdown and social distancing requirements and would require a loan facility to complete the project. The original soft play design has required to be re-configured to install a more easily cleaned version of soft play. LiC briefed members on the current financial position whereby a £36,086 underspend has been identified and which could contribute towards this. APPROVED: 6 votes, 0 against - Soft Play (£8,035), Build Costs (£28,000) to a total of £36,035. 	LiC
11.0	Date of Next Meeting 23 rd February 2021	