Scottish Borders LEADER
Developing Enterprising Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS LEADER PROGRAMME 2014-2020
Local Action Group meeting
23 January 2018
10am-3pm, Tweed Horizons

MINUTES

Present:
Frank Beattie, Scottish Enterprise (FB) - Public
Luke Comins, Tweed Forum (LC) - Voluntary
Gordon Harrison, Scottish Borders Community Council Network (GH) - Voluntary
Jules Horne, Creative Arts Business Network (JH) - Private
Jane Rosegrant, Borders Forest Trust (JR) – Voluntary
Annabelle Scott, Messrs A A Scott (AS) - Private
Gary White, Peebles CAN (GW) - Voluntary
Hans Waltl, Federation of Small Businesses (HW) – Private – **Late am and all afternoon.**

Secretariat:
Simon Lynch, Scottish Borders Council (LEADER Facilitator) (SL)
Bartje Magee, Scottish Borders Council (European Programme Support Officer) (BM)
Nesta Todd, Scottish Borders Council (European Programme Support Officer) (NT)

		Action
1.0	**Apologies** Clare de Bolle, YouthBorders (CdB) – Voluntary Heather Batsch, The Bridge (HB) – Voluntary Andrew Mitchell, Berwickshire Community Councils' Forum (AM) – Voluntary John Henderson, Scottish Borders Food and Drink Network (JHe) - Private Ian Tod, The Hippodrome Arts Centre CIC Ltd (IT) - Voluntary Bryan McGrath, Scottish Borders Council (BMcG) - Public Paula Ward, VisitScotland (PW) - Public	
2.0	**Conflict of Interest** AS has met applicant of 17/P00063 but not relating to project. The LAG did not consider this to be a conflict of interest. JH has worked with 17/P00025 in the past and still does occasional hours on specific pieces of work. JH did not know about, and is not involved, in any aspect of this project. The LAG did not consider this to be a conflict of interest.	
3.0	**Minutes of last meeting** The minutes were approved as a true reflection of the last meeting. Proposed: GH	

	Seconded: GW Actions arising from the minutes: - SL produced two maps, one for localities, one for districts, plotting approved projects. It showed some areas were under represented, mainly very rural areas, sparsely populated and with less economic activity. GH asked for SL to send him some information regarding LEADER that he could put on the community website for Ettrick Valley. - From last minutes: Organisation has struggled to get the claim onto the LARCS system as it is extremely challenging for a community group and LARCS has made it very complex. Fines can be imposed if there are errors. LAG felt that this was unacceptable as we should be trying to help the customer. BMcG will escalate this to SG. BMcG did raise this issue with SG, but no report back as yet. This item will carry forward to the next meeting.	SL BMcG
4.0	**Project Applications Round Seven (7)** It was noted that 7 members were present (quorate), 1 member represented the public sector (<50%) Chairperson only votes when a casting vote is needed.	
4.1	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00025** **Total Eligible Project costs: £100,000.00** **LEADER grant requested: £50,000.00 (50.00%)** **Average Score: 61.62%** **Decision: APPROVE** **Decision:** This project was approved by 5 votes, 1 abstained.	
4.2	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00054** **Total Eligible Project costs: £48,000.00** **LEADER grant requested: £28,800.00(60.00%)** **Average Score: 66.58%** **Decision: APPROVE** **Decision:** This project was approved unanimously, 6 votes for approval.	

4.3	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00055** **Total Eligible Project costs: £199,496.17** **LEADER grant requested: £119,496.17 (59.89897951%)** **Average Score: 64.27%** **Decision: APPROVE** **Decision:** This project was approved unanimously, 6 votes for approval. LAG imposed two conditions: - Following appointment of staff, LAG requests the Project creates a plan detailing how the [the applicant] will engage with tourism groups, including VisitScotland, and local businesses to try and maximise the economic benefit to the area, and share this with the LEADER LAG. - LAG want the [the applicant] to actively promote the project by submitting articles to newspapers/newsletters throughout the Scottish Borders, to ensure public engagement.	
4.4	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00058** **Total Eligible Project costs: £227,265.00** **LEADER grant requested: £129,541.00 (56.99997800%)** **Average Score: 61.97%** **Decision: DEFER** **Decision:** This project was deferred unanimously, 6 votes, to be decided by written procedure after receiving answers to the following two questions: [the applicant] lists the other funders it tried to access before applying to LEADER? [the applicant] provides a list of earmarked monies in bank balance.	
	HW joined the LAG at this point	
4.5	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00063** **Total Eligible Project costs: £33,388.95** **LEADER grant requested: £20,033.37 (60.00%)** **Average Score: 51.79%** **Decision: APPROVE**	

	Decision: This project was approved, 6 voted for, 1 abstained.	
	LC left the meeting at this point.	
5.0	**LEADER Programme Progress Report** Before the project discussions a brief summary of the current financial position was given, SL pointed out that the next round of applications could potentially use up all of our Community funds and Business applications are approaching their fund budget limit. Farm Diversification used to be slow, but after a publicity drive by AS and FMcD more applications are now coming in. The pressures were with the Co-operation fund, as these projects have been slow to start (delays with guidance & LARCs) and take longer to develop. With FMcD, co-ordinator, leaving her post at end of December, it was felt there is a lack of capacity within the team, causing work pressures. However, SBC committed to recruit a co-ordinator. LEADER projects have been in the news recently, some very good publicity has resulted. One previously approved project has now withdrawn, due to lack of match funding. LAG team asked if LAG members could update their conflict of interest register, taking into account change of circumstances. SL to send round what we currently have on file, including sector, for LAG members to check, amend if needed, and return. Several LAG members have resigned recently and some LAG members have not been attending regularly. It was felt a recruitment drive would be a good idea, as smaller numbers make it harder to be quorate. Chair asked if LAG could identify any potential new members, taking into account what sectors are currently not represented. Chair also reminded LAG members to send apologies in advance to ensure the meeting was quorate. There was further discussion on what projects the LAG would like to see coming forward, least popular with the LAG are self-catering and/or doing up an old steading. It was pointed out that most self-catering projects that have come forward had an edge, something different.	SL/LAG LAG
6.0	**AOB** • (17/P00047) – issues arising [the applicant] reported that there had been an error in their spreadsheets. They created a LEADER budget, ex VAT, but for their own cash flow produced a budget including VAT. Some figures got transcribed to the wrong	

	spreadsheet. LAG approved a grant of £148,001.88, the project would like the opportunity to provide a revised budget, where the applicant includes some items which had been excluded previously because of budget restraints. LEADER team are willing to ask Scottish Government for guidance to see if this is eligible but would like the LAG to state they are happy to look at this should it be possible. LAG was very supportive of the project and would be happy to look at the new budget via written procedure. • Report from Belfast LEADER meeting, Gary White GW attended a LEADER meeting in Belfast, with LAG members from across the UK, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each area works under different rules, some areas restricted funding to Capital projects, some to Revenue projects only. GW felt Scotland had a broader remit. Being able to do both gave Scotland an advantage. GW also went to visit a LEADER Boat project, and in general felt the visit was worthwhile.	
7.0	**Dates and times of future meetings** Next LAG meeting: **15 May 2018 – 10am to 3pm.** Closing date for applications for this meeting is 28 February 2018.	
8.0	**Business Sub-Group** Present: GW, AS, FB, GH, HW. It was noted that 5 members were present (quorate) and that there was 1 member representing the public sector (<50%). LAG confirmed that there was no conflict of interest in relation to the applications presented. HW acted as Chair, and does not vote unless a casting vote is needed.	
8.1	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00059** **Total Eligible Project costs: £20,000.00** **LEADER grant requested: £10,000 (50.00%)** **Average Score: 58.77%** **Decision: APPROVE** **Decision**: Approved unanimously.	
8.2	[Project details and LAG discussions are not published in these minutes] **17/P00061** **Total Eligible Project costs: £46,959.96** **LEADER grant requested: £23,479.98 (50.00%)**	

	Average Score: 42.23% **Decision: DEFER** **Decision**: This project was deferred unanimously, 6 votes, to be decided by written procedure after receiving answers to the following two questions: • The accounts showed 'Other income' of £70k, LAG would like to know where this came from and if it was regular income or one off. • The LAG would also like to know why the Year End accounting date was changed.	

8.3	**AOB**
	• Business Group had a further discussion on Farm Diversification projects. They wanted to come up with a description of what type of project they were looking for, to give SL clear guidance to work with. The LAG thought self-catering projects should demonstrate they have an edge, which could be a number and combination of:
	    o Management skills
	    o Location
	    o Experience
	    o Impact on economy
	    o New to Scottish Border
	• There was a brief discussion on the Outline process, whether the traffic light process was working. Currently projects that have 50% or more Red do not get to go to application. This was still thought to be useful in stopping unsuitable projects going forward.	