

WEST LoTHIAN LEADER PROGRAMME



Local Action Group - Minutes of Meeting

Time / Date: 2.00pm – 4.00pm / 3rd November 2016
Location: Fauldhouse Community Development Trust

NAME	ORGANISATION	✓		NAME	ORGANISATION	✓	
Alan Rlach	Scottish Beekeepers Association	✓	N	Fraser Falconer	Linlithgow Community Development Trust	X	N
Andy Gibbs	Land Manager	✓	N	John Jackson	Police Scotland	X	S
Bruce Fairbairn (Vice Chair)	West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network	X	N	Kerry Clark	National Farmers Union Scotland	✓	N
Carol Campbell	Central Scotland Green Network Trust	✓	N	Karen McGhee	CAB	X	N
Councillor David Dodds	West Lothian Council	✓	S	Janice Winning	Scottish Natural Heritage	✓	S
Des Martin (Chair)	Scottish Rural University College (Oatridge Campus)	✓	S	Rob Pooley	West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust	X	N
Ally Graham	Beechbrae Orchard	X	N	Robert Russell	Fauldhouse Community Development Trust	X	N
Eric Burton	Stoneyburn Future Visions Group	X	N	Sheila Fraser	Sheila Fraser Associates	✓	N
George Hotchkiss	West Lothian College	X	S	Simon Amor	Forestry Commission Scotland	X	S
Frank Beattie	Scottish Enterprise	X	S	Tony Foster	Kirknewton Community Development Trust/Visit West Lothian	X	N
George Hipwell	D R Rural	✓	N				
Adam Kosterka	Rural Enterprise Officer	✓	L	Dave Greaves	West Lothian Council	✓	L
Kat Purser	LEADER Co-ordinator	✓	L	Susan Hamilton	LEADER Administrator	✓	L

S = Statutory body (Public) N = Non Statutory Body (Private) L = LEADER Team (does not count towards quorum)

Quorum requirements must be met before any meeting can go ahead or any decisions be made.

All LAG members to have completed the Register of Interests and declared their interest in any agenda items.

Calculations on 'single interest groups' will be based on the number of organisation representing similar issues or sectors e.g. education

	Required	Actual
Minimum LAG members	9	9
Maximum public authority	49%	33%
Maximum single interest group members	49%	22% (environment: CC and JW)
Maximum of either gender	66%	56%

Interest declared? No

Are quorum requirements met? Yes

1. Apologies

Robert Russell, Ally Graham, George Hotchkiss, Frank Beattie, Simon Amor, Fraser Falconer and Tony Foster.

We have had notification of the following resignations from the LAG, Rob Pooley, Eric Burton, Karen McGhee, Bruce Fairbairn and John Jackson (retiring from Police).

As Bruce Fairbairn was the vice chair for the LAG and has now stood down. A new vice chair will be nominated at the next meeting.

2. Minutes and Action Points from 17th August 2016

Minutes agreed by Carol Campbell, seconded by George Hipwell.

Item 5 – Overview of the outcome of 2015 EU Conformity Audit not received as yet still to be sent to Co-ordinators.

Item 5 – LARCs training confirmed for 23rd January 2017.

3. General Update

No formal correspondence from Scottish Government reopening scheme after 23rd November 2016. However, a further announcement was made on 02/11/2016¹ confirming funds until Britain leaves the EU. Gillian MacDonald (3rd November via Yammer) confirmed this but said they are seeking further clarification of the guarantee and we will be updated as soon as information becomes available.

Therefore, the LAG will plan next deadlines and meeting dates and await confirmation.

Given the number of recent resignations from the LAG membership will be looked at and considered as part of the review of the LDS to be conducted after this round of awards. Agreed by Des Martin (Chair) Recruitment for new LAG members will take place after Christmas.

4. Applications

021/P00002 – Almond Valley Heritage Centre, The Oil Shale Discovery Space.

Declarations of Interest: NIL

Quorum: Confirmed as above

The following specialist reports were read out and can be found in LARCS along with application forms and supporting documents.

- QS Report
- Business Adviser Report
- Visit West Lothian Report
- Value for money Report

Value for Money, Return on Investment and Additionality: Discussion continued with the following points - £175,000.00 grant (50% intervention rate) relating to the life-span of building

¹ <http://news.gov.scot/news/eu-funds-guaranteed>

20-25 years, return of investment estimated at 10-11 years was seen as good. Despite the project being of high costs and above the nominal guidelines set by the LAG one member reminded the LAG that they had agreed that higher investments would be welcomed should a project warrant it. The LAG agreed that Almond Valley (AV) was a great asset to the area and should they need to wait until they could afford the costs in full then they would be likely to lose customers in the interim.

Displacement/Distortion: As AV are the only attraction of this kind in the West Lothian area the LAG considered that displacement was unlikely to be a major issue, however, they reiterated the desire to see local tourist attractions working together on joint tourism initiatives and discount schemes.

Strategic Fit: The location of AV was discussed and despite being on the edge of an urban area AV serves all of West Lothian and beyond and focuses on the industrial heritage of the rural parts of West Lothian, it was therefore agreed that its location did not present a problem. However, transport to AV was considered a barrier but LAG members were aware that AV worked with schools to arrange coach trips and that public transport to and from the site is not something AV can solve alone. The LAG agreed that the project would deliver on the themes/outcomes put forward as well as additional ones not listed in the application (Themes 2 and 3, Outcomes 5, 7, 9, and 10) and that AV is integral to conserving the history and heritage of West Lothian as well as being a significant tourist attraction.

Equality: It was agreed that AV provide a great service and that their charges were low compared to similar attractions. However, the LAG agreed that they would like to know what more could be done to enable children and young people from deprived family's access. A discussion followed and it was agreed that a condition of grant would be set asking AV to create a plan to enable more access to those from areas of multiple deprivation.

Organisational Competence and Robust Delivery Plans: It was agreed that AV have always delivered good project management and have years of experience delivering new attractions. Because of the innovative nature of the build it was recognised that the project will need to be carefully managed especially in terms of meeting EU requirements for procurement and the requirement to submit change requests. The delivery plan submitted was considered to be robust but regular meetings with the Co-ordinator will need to be made in order to keep on top of the project.

Outputs: One LAG member questioned whether the outputs listed were too high whilst other members considered them quiet conservative. It was discussed that the figures were based on the opening of other attractions within AV and on visitor numbers to similar attractions. The LAG noted more evidenced could have been supplied to back this up.

Partnership and collaborative Working: Although the project itself does not promote knowledge sharing or partnership working it was acknowledged that AV work with many partners from the council and museum services to schools and other heritage organisations. Once completed the project also affords an opportunity to share what they have learnt with other heritage organisations and at Leader events.

Meeting Need or Demand: The need for tourist attractions to create new products was discussed as important to their continued success and the LAG agreed that the project would create an innovative and unique building that would likely increase their numbers and bring additional income into the area.

Fostering Innovation: The use of 'invisible learning' and the theming of the discovery space

was seen to be highly innovative was considered to be a big draw for tourists.

Legacy/Exit Strategy: The project will continue to make AV a viable business as well as museum service and the structure can be reused for the future. As maintenance costs will be met by their existing team and as revenue is likely to build as a result of the project the LAG foresee no issues in terms of exit strategy.

Engagement and Support: The LAG was impressed by the amount of input visitors have had in deciding what type of attraction AV should build and welcomed their continued input in the project build.

Conclusion: The LAG members overall agreed that it was a lot of money but good value and were in support of the project. A recommendation to award conditional on them providing a plan of how they help disadvantage groups. The chair (Des Martin) formally approved this project.

021/P00003 – Linlithgow Union Canal Society, Canal Boat for St Magdalene Replacement.

Declarations of Interest: NIL

Quorum: Confirmed as above

The following specialist reports were read out and can be found in LARCS along with application forms and supporting documents.

- Business Adviser Report
- Visit West Lothian Report
- Value for money Report

Value for Money and Return on Investment: Discussion continued with the following points – very competitive prices for attractions, increase of visitor numbers which local surrounding area will benefit from. Very strong project, well set out application, several outcomes covered from LDS. Return on investment is good and as the society is run solely by volunteers the added value of all the hours they put in cannot be underestimated. Recommended they engage with Business Gateway for publicity and marketing of new boat and services that the society provides.

Strategic Fit/Outputs: The LAG members overall agreed that it includes a number of outcomes with a strategic fit to the LDS; aiding tourism, heritage, volunteering opportunities and making the most of community assets.

Fostering Innovation: Although not directly innovative the new boat will allow LUCS to make more innovative use of the canal by providing new and improved services.

Partnership and Collaborative working: Whilst the project itself does not engage partners the new boat will allow LUCS to continue to work with existing partners and provide better facilities and learning experience.

Legacy/Exit Strategy: The LAG noted that the new boat will allow LUCS to operate for a further 25 years building a continued reserve for future boat purchases and supporting the museum and maintenance of the canal along with numerous other volunteering activities.

Engagement and Support/Meeting a Need or Demand: The purchase of a boat is meeting a need to replace the existing boat which is costly to repair and at the end of its serviceable life. It will also allow LUCS to meet the demand for parties and other hire services that have been requested but turned down due to lack of space on the existing vessel.

Additionality: The LAG recognised that LUCS have raised over half the money needed but would be unable to gain the remaining funds needed before the exiting boat became unserviceable. As a voluntary organisation reliant on seasonal income they are unable to gain a bank loan.

Organisational Competence/Robust Delivery Plans/Organisational Compliance: Many LAG members noted their knowledge of LUCS as an extremely competent organisation which supported the canal for over 30 years. With the build of the boat being put out to tender the project is relatively simple and easy to deliver. They also noted that the delays to claims that the last project LUCS project LEADER funded were due to significant health problems with delivery staff and the LAG are confident that the current team and the fact that the boat will be built and delivered by an outside partner means there should be no issues this time around.

Displacement/Distortion: The LAG noted there are no competitors within the vicinity and that LUCS have worked with many organisations along the canal over the years including Seagull to take disabled passengers. In addition the new boat will replacement the old one meaning there won't be a huge amount of additional services. They are therefore confident that no displacement will take place.

Conclusion: With a recommendation to engage with Business Gateway and seconded by Alan Riach. The chair (Des Martin) formally approved this project.

21/P00004 – Kingsfield Golf Centre – Kingsfield Extension

The above project was not assessed. During checks it became apparent that the planning permission for this project had lapsed meaning that the project did not meet with the requirements set out in the technical checklist. The applicant has been invited to resubmit once he has applied for planning permission.

5. AOB

Specialist reports – continue to receive report from a Business Adviser for all projects.
Draft Rural Business Action Plan – West Lothian to be taken forward to the next Farm Diversification and Rural Enterprise sub group meeting for finalisation. Date to be confirmed.

Confirmed LARCs Database and navigation of the system training will be on 23rd January 2017. A doodle poll will be circulated to the LAG with the training session times and venue details in due course. Councillor David Dodds suggested that we incorporate project scoring training into the above training session.

General Applicants Guidance Version 2, published 9th March 2016
LAG Project Assessment Guidance Version 1, published 7th March 2016

6. Date of Next Meeting

Susan Hamilton will circulate a doodle poll regarding the next LAG meeting date and it was suggested to be held during 20th – 24th February 2017. Venue to be confirmed.

Item Number	Action	Responsibility	Date Completed
1	New Vice Chair to be appointed at next LAG Meeting	LAG	
3	Recruitment of new LAG members to be carried out due to the number of recent resignations.	KP/SH	

5	Finalisation of Rural Business Action Plan by Farm Diversification and Rural Enterprise sub group	AK and FD&RE sub group	
5	Doodle poll to be created and sent to LAG members regarding details for LARCs training session	SH	10/11/16
6	Doodle poll to be created and sent to LAG members regarding the next LAG meeting date, confirm venue and time	SH	10/11/16

1st *Shari Fraser* 2nd *Car Campbell*