



OUTER HEBRIDES LEADER 2014-2020 PROGRAMME



Note of the Meeting of the Outer Hebrides LEADER Local Action Group
Virtual Meeting, online via VScene

on Wednesday 10th June 2020 at 14.00

Present:

- Matt Bruce, Lewis and Harris Horticultural Producers (Private) Vice Chairperson – **Acting Chair**
- Colin Gilmour, Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (Private) Chairperson
- Rob MacKinnon, Outer Hebrides Tourism (Private)
- Neil Campbell, Community Land Scotland (Private)
- Bill McMillan, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Public)
- Andrew Ross, North Uist Development Company (Private)
- Donnie Macdonald, MG Alba (Public)
- Johanne Ferguson, Scottish Natural Heritage (Public)
- Eoin MacNeil, Co-Cheangal Innse Gall (Private)
- Donald Mackinnon, Scottish Crofting Federation – (Private)
- Cllr. Donald Crichton, Chair of Sustainable Communities Committee CnES (Public)

In attendance:

- Kathlene Morrison, Outer Hebrides LEADER Co-ordinator (KM)
- Charlene Macmillan, Outer Hebrides LEADER Project and Finance Officer (CM)
- Domhnall MacDonald, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Accountable Body Representative (DM)
- Peter Middleton, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, EMFF Representative (PM)

Apologies/ Absent:

- Duncan MacInnes, Western Isles Fishing Association (Private)
- Alison MacCorquodale, Tourism Outer Hebrides 2020 Leadership Group (Private)
- Iain MacLennan, Skills Development Scotland (Public)
- Lorna Macaulay, Harris Tweed Authority (Private)

	<i>Action for:</i>
<p>1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from those listed above.</p> <p><i>A quorum was achieved with 7 Private members and 4 Public Members present at the meeting.</i></p>	
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>No Declarations of Interest were declared.</p> <p>LAG members who have not submitted an up-to-date Declaration of Interest in the last 6 months were requested to do so at the earliest opportunity</p> <p><i>ACTION – If not already done so the LAG are to return any uncompleted Declarations of Interest Forms.</i></p>	LAG



<p>3. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT NOTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING THEREOF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note of Meeting on 13/11/2019 – It was agreed that the note was a true reflection of the meeting and was approved by the LAG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>There were no matters arising</i> • Note of the Meeting on 5/02/2020 – It was agreed that the note was a true reflection of the meeting and was approved by the LAG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>There were no matters arising</i> 	
<p>4. EMFF UPDATE</p> <p>The LAG were provided with an update of the current EMFF position. It was noted that there is a remaining £130k to be allocated before mid-November, and there was some concern with regards to the impact COVID-19 in committing the outstanding funds. Current EMFF projects have until December 2022 to drawdown their funding.</p> <p>The LAG were informed of Marine’s Scotland’s confirmation to replace EMFF with a transition fund, the Scottish Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which will be run for 3 years. FLAGs will continue their role in co-ordinating local projects throughout this fund also.</p>	
<p>5. CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE</p> <p>CV-19</p> <p>KM provided a summary of the report noting the current staffing situation and the updated guidance issued by Scottish Government to allow paperless working during the COVID-19 restriction period.</p> <p>SG have confirmed that the current programme will be extended beyond December 2020 for Projects until 31st March 2021, however It was noted that a number of LAGs throughout Scotland are concerned that is not sufficient and there will be a greater impact on their projects being unable to complete and utilise funding.</p> <p>It was noted that all Accountable Bodies are lobbying to mitigate any risk to themselves, and the Programme, in terms of impact of Projects being unable to complete and potential under spend. The Outer Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney LAGs have submitted a joint letter to local MSPs informing them of the prospective impact COVID-19 may have on the Programme. The Vice Chair also sent identical letters to all the Highlands and Islands list MSPs and our MP seeking their support and to raise awareness of the issues.</p> <p>The LAG raised that Fergus Ewing MSP will be undertaking a virtual visit in the Outer Hebrides the following Monday, providing an opportunity to raise the issues directly to the Rural Economy Minister.</p>	

delivered until at least the next academic year, however the Fire Service, who were also delivering the project are not in a position to undertake the training for the remainder of the year. This means that this project will submit any outstanding costs to be claimed and all other funds will be 'under spend'.

15/P00096 – This project has submitted a re-scoping of their activities due to the significant impact the CV-19 restrictions has on their current proposals. The changes to provide online content and the creation of a new CD between the participating islands were responded to positively by the LAG and would be inclined to **approve** the pending Change Request once submitted. Orkney and Shetland LAGs have both approved the proposed amendments.

Action – LAG approved submission of a formal Change request seeking the amendments raised to the LAG.

KM

15/P00103 – The project has been unable to undertake planned travel to work with the Irish LAGs it had hoped too, however it has increased online presence and is undertaking CV-19 response to assist youths during lockdown and reduce any feelings of isolation. The Project requests an extension of up to six months, the end of 2020, and funding for the staff to undertake this which would mean the allocation of additional funding. **The LAG agreed** that if SG guidelines permit, additional funds should be allocated to allow the extension.

Action – should SG allow underspend to be reinvested locally then the project can submit a request for further funding.

KM

11/P00135 – It has been realised that the majority of Island bodies as direct/ indirect participants of this project have been particularly dissatisfied in the level of local consultation with existing, established, tourism organisations and the apparent possibility of some duplication of content. The project also requires to take in to account the impact on the sector post-COVID-19 and when restrictions lift. The LAG agreed for Rob Mackinnon to try and co-ordinate more local input and raise the concerns of the LAG as a main funder.

ACTION – Rob Mackinnon to raise Project issues with the applicant and the LAGs views

RM

16/P0091 – It was noted that this project has also been significantly impacted by the current restrictions and unable to proceed as anticipated. The applicant has requested to take their workshops online and to create an online community via the Smart Village platform. Concerns were raised about the target audience of the Project and the level of direct local engagement and the applicant is now working more directly with all the LAGs involved to allay those issues. Donald MacKinnon mentioned how he has been approached by the project with regards to young crofters and undertaken a short film with them. The LAG noted the proposed amendments.

The LAG agreed that it was useful to read and hear all the project updates following the impromptu changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed that they would like to see this on a regular basis.

ACTION – Updated Projects Risk Register to be provided to the LAG on a monthly basis

KM

<p>7. POST 2020</p> <p>The LAG were informed that a group leading on COVID-19 renewal had been established and led by the Chief Executive of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. It was suggested that this may provide an opportunity to raise the benefit of a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) approach, which LEADER utilises and promotes, to aid recovery and should be included on the Leadership Groups agenda.</p> <p><i>Action – Domhnall Crichton will progress this.</i></p>	DC
<p>8. AOCB</p> <p>No other matters were raised.</p>	
<p>9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next LAG Meeting has been scheduled for 10th August 2020.</p> <p>The acting chair ‘thanked’ everyone for their attendance and ended the meeting.</p>	

CONFIRMATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
LAG MEMBER	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	