

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

on Wednesday 18th November 2020 at 10.30

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)
Kathleen Stewart, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Public)
Johanne Ferguson, Scottish Natural Heritage (Public)
Donald Mackinnon, Scottish Crofting Federation (Private)
Duncan MacInnes, Western Isles Fishing Association (Private)
Alison MacCorquodale, Tourism Outer Hebrides 2020 Leadership Group (Private)
Lorna Macaulay, Harris Tweed Authority (Private)

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, EMFF Representative (PM)

Apologies/ Absent:

Cllr. Donald Crichton, Chair of Sustainable Communities Committee CnES (Public)
Iain MacLennan, Skills Development Scotland (Public)
Eoin MacNeil, Co-Cheangal Innse Gall (Private)
Andrew Ross, North Uist Development Company (Private)
Donnie Macdonald, MG Alba (Public)

	<i>Action for:</i>
<p>1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.</p> <p>It was noted that Bill McMillan from HIE has now moved on and Kathleen Stewart will be taking his place on the LAG.</p> <p><i>A quorum was achieved with 8 Private members and 2 Public Members present at the meeting.</i></p>	
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>The Chair noted his public membership of An Lanntair, but no involvement in any Boards so there should no conflicts of interest.</p>	

<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 28/08/20 – this was agreed to be a true and accurate reflection of the meeting and was approved by the LAG 	
<p>4. UPDATES</p> <p>4.1 EMFF – <i>Additional Item not originally on the Agenda</i></p> <p>PM noted that £528k awarded was to EMFF with the FLAG so far committing £427k to projects providing a good geographical spread through the islands, with projects being various sizes, and supporting marine tourism and infrastructure. More recent support has been provided to projects that support the Regional Inshore Fisheries Group Management Plan and coastal communities have benefited from these, included remote rural areas.</p> <p>The FLAG have £100k to commit by the end of the calendar year and have currently approved 4 EOI's, with full applications anticipated to be approved by December.</p> <p>It was noted that FLAGs from all over Scotland met to discuss EMFF replacement scheme. Marine Scotland has suggested the Crown Estate funding could be used to replace some of the type of projects that the FLAG have been supporting, however this decision is for Local Authority's to make as they are administering the funds currently. It was noted that only the East Coast of Scotland has administered the Crown Estate funds via a FLAG. Locally, it is advised that any communities who may have projects that could benefit from Crown estate funds should approach their local Councillors.</p> <p>Action - The Chair advised that he shall contact fellow LAG member Cllr. Donald Crichton to raise the situation with him.</p> <p>Kathleen Stewart joined the meeting via telephone.</p> <p>4.2 Coordinators Update</p> <p>4.2.1 – Funding Strategy - LAG members may receive a request from Siar Management who are undertaking the funding gaps strategy to join panel meeting to go through questions. This will help to finalise the Study before the end of the year.</p> <p>4.2.2 Annual audit report – No major issues reported. LEADER staff will ensure the list of Actions to be undertaken once programme closes is made available to be handed over to the Accountable Body. As per the SLA the AB is required to have processes in place to administer and monitor LEADER obligations until 2022.</p> <p>4.2.3 Annual accreditation certificate – This year's annual report has been submitted to the Scottish Government as required and takes into account the amended procedures in relation to the COVID pandemic.</p>	

<p>4.2.4 Post LEADER – There has been no further update on the SPF. It was noted that Craig Stewart is part of rural finance team and sits with Shiree Donnelly, Head of Rural Finance team in Scottish Government and they have now assumed the role vacated by Gillian MacDonald in the SG LEADER team. They have stated that SG are in the process of preparing a proposed budget for the next financial year and awaiting the announcement of the UK government Spending Review on the 25th November before they can finalise the SG budget. SG Ministers have stated that their aspiration for a CLLD scheme to be in place post March 2021 but there are no guarantees.</p>	
<p>5. PROGRAMME FINANCIAL UPDATE</p> <p>5.1 – Financial Report and Project Updates</p> <p>CM provided an overview of the financial report. The following projects were also discussed:</p> <p>P/1500073 – An outcome of this Project is the installation of an interpretation panel, which now may require planning permission. Given the timeframe involved the LAG agreed that, subject to Audit and SG approval, to accept the final template of the panel as the sufficient output of the Project to allow the release of the final 10% grant before the end of the LEADER Programme.</p> <p>P/1500104 – The Project involved the creation of sculpture by local school children. It is to be erected by the xxxx and the local Trust have advised it wouldn't be installed until after current capital works are finished at the xxxx. Due to COVID this has been delayed and the works will not be completed until after March 2021. The LAG agreed that, subject to Audit and SG approval, visual and pictorial evidence of the sculpture will suffice as the amended output for the release of the final 10% of grant should the remainder of the Project be complete.</p> <p>It was also agreed that LEADER staff will seek an updated timescale from the applicants and will add the items to the Risk Register; the responsibility of which and any relating 'follow-ups' will be assumed by the AB, succeeding the closure of the LEADER Programme.</p> <p>5.2 Change requests – These were noted and approved by the LAG. It was also raised that recently a CR had been submitted by applicant 15/P00054 to extend their Project until the 29th January 2021 to allow final payments to be made. The LAG approved this extension.</p> <p>5.3 Funding Uplift request – The LAG considered a request for additional funding from Project 15/P00103. The LAG approved this request and awarded an additional £21,060 to the applicant to support the additional costs due to, and related to, COVID recovery. It was noted that the applicant was also in receipt of additional ERDF funding, however this is entirely separate from LEADER funding, as per regulatory requirements and the applicant has been informed that this separation is to be maintained.</p>	
<p>6. ACCOUNTABLE BODY UPDATE</p> <p>6.1 Comhairle report to Sustainable Development – an overview on the content of the Report was provided.</p>	

<p>6.2 Comhairle Report to HR – LEADER Exit Strategy – The LAG were informed that a Report is going to the HR sub-committee to request the extension of both the Co-ordinator and the Finance and Project Officer OH LEADER posts until June 2021 to ensure the full closure of the current OH LEADER 2014-2020 Programme following the extension from SG of project activity to 31 March 2021 as a result of COVID related issues. Comhairle funding that was allocated to the OH LEADER programme for contingencies will be utilised to cover this cost.</p> <p style="color: red;">Action - The Chair advised that he shall contact fellow LAG member Cllr. Donald Crichton to make him aware of the report.</p>	
<p>7. CHAIR’S UPDATE</p> <p>The Chair addressed the correspondence between Alasdair Allan MSP, the MSPs in Orkney and Shetland and Fergus Ewing MSP.</p> <p>It was noted that Ministers are aware of the local issues and also the CLLD process and are supportive of it.</p>	
<p>8. LDS and Business Plan Updates</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 pandemic the LEADER LAG processes noted within both the LDS and Business Plan required updating as both documents are used to audit and benchmark the LAG’s work.</p> <p>The LAG approved the amendments.</p>	
<p>9. AOCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>LAG Meetings</i> - As SG have permitted the extension of Projects until the end of March 2021, it was proposed and agreed to have an additional final LAG closure meeting following the arranged February LAG, towards the end of March as project decisions, audit and financial implications and processes will need ratifying. The date of the final meeting will be set at the next February Meeting. • <i>LEADER and EMFF Films</i> - The Chair commented on the quality of the films and that they are to be promoted. It was acknowledged that they show a good record of the work that LEADER and EMFF have achieved and a lasting legacy of the programme. <p>The Chair closed the meeting and thanked Johanne for hosting the virtual meeting.</p>	
<p>10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next LAG meeting will take place on 3rd February 2021 at 10.30am</p>	

CONFIRMATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
LAG MEMBER	
SIGNATURE	



OUTER HEBRIDES LEADER 2014-2020 PROGRAMME



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