

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

on Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 10.30

Present:

Matt Bruce, Lewis and Harris Horticultural Producers (Private) Chairperson
 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)
 Donnie Macdonald, MG Alba (Public)
 Cllr. Donald Crichton, Chair of Sustainable Communities Committee CnES (Public)
 Lorna Macaulay, Harris Tweed Authority (Private)
 Eoin MacNeil, Co-Cheangal Innse Gall (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)

Apologies/ Absent:

Colin Gilmour, Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (Private) Vice Chairperson
 Andrew Ross, North Uist Development Company (Private)
 Rob MacKinnon, Outer Hebrides Tourism (Private)

	<i>Action for:</i>
<p>1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</p> <p>Project 15/P00093 gave a brief presentation, providing an overview of their Project and the impact it has had. They received LEADER funds to renovate a disused property to provide two affordable housing units in the area. The demand for the units outstripped supply and as such the Trust are now looking at possibly creating more properties in the future with a view to attract families back to the area.</p> <p>The Project applicant left the Meeting once the presentation was finished.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and noted apologies from Colin Gilmour and Andrew Ross.</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>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>The LAG Members were reminded that their annual Declaration of Interest Forms were due for submission.</p> <p><i>Action – LAG members to submit their updated Declarations of Interest for the 2021/2022 period to LEADER staff</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 03/02/21 – this was agreed to be a true and accurate reflection of the meeting and was approved by the LAG. <p>All Actions within the minutes had been addressed and/ or are in process.</p>	
<p>4. CO-ORDINATORS REPORT</p> <p>4.1 Staff Contracts LEADER Staff contracts have now been confirmed until March 2022; with a view to providing support to other LAGs, development of future funding, providing LARCs assistance etc. Scottish Government are undertaking a staffing and skills audit and will be in touch locally over the next few weeks.</p> <p>4.2 OH LEADER & EMFF Evaluation Summary The full report will be made available on the OH LEADER website. It was noted that common points raised included the level of bureaucracy and that the Programme was more financially driven rather than by animation. Recommendations provided will be useful for future programmes and can be revisited.</p> <p>4.3 Business Plan The Business Plan is to be updated and circulated to the LAG for review and approval.</p> <p><i>Action – update Business Plan and circulate to LAG</i></p>	KM
<p>5. PROGRAMME FINANCIAL AND PROJECT UPDATE</p> <p>5.1 Additional Funding Scottish Government have approved the LAG’s request for an additional funding to support Projects 15/P00096 and 15/P00103 and the total of £30,000 has been added to the Outer Hebrides LEADER Programme funding allocation.</p>	

<p>5.2 Programme Financial and Project Update</p> <p>The LAG were provided with an overview of the status of the Programmes financial position, with some Programme underspend anticipated, which will be returned to Scottish Government at the end of the Programme and is not be reallocated.</p> <p>It was noted that there were currently only 11 ‘live’ projects remaining at this time.</p> <p>6.1 LARCs processed Change Requests</p> <p>The LAG formally approved all Change Requests that had been submitted via LARCs since the previous LAG Meeting.</p> <p>KM informed that LAG that a further paper requesting an extension of permissions and authorisations relating to Change Requests will be submitted at the next LAG meeting following the extension of staff contracts.</p> <p><i>Action – Change Request authorisation paper to be submitted at next LAG Meeting</i></p>	<p>KM</p>
<p>6. CHAIR’S UPDATE</p> <p>It was noted that recent discussion at the LAG Chairs meeting had focused on the likelihood of a LAG-type organisation being used for delivery for forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with the possibility of a backing of an Accountable Body. Consideration to the possible future of the LAG should be given.</p> <p>The next LAG chairs meeting is 29th April and a further update will be provided to the LAG then.</p> <p><i>Action – Provide update to LAG on Chair’s Meeting outcome</i></p> <p>Donald Crichton left the Meeting.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>7. ACCOUNTABLE BODY UPDATE</p> <p>SG have confirmed funding to continue the Programme until end of March 2022 and the Comhairle has agreed and provided staff contract extensions in line with this. Additional support will be required from staff for the successor programme, but it remains a fluid situation.</p>	
<p>8. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS – POST MARCH 2021</p> <p>It was clarified that £3m for Community-Led Local Development (Post LEADER) funding was available to LAGs to spend over this financial year and will be provided by Scottish Government and separately, the UK Government will be administering the Community Renewal Fund through Local Authorities.</p>	

<p>The CRF has 13 priority areas in Scotland, with Outer Hebrides being one of them, so OH are well placed to submit a bid if it can be developed and articulate what is hoped to be secured. Funding is available for 90% revenue and 10% capital with bids to be approved in June this year and spent by March next year.</p> <p>How the SG CLLD funding available to LAGs will be allocated is still to be confirmed e.g. a challenge fund or division between LAG areas. SG are inviting the Chair's Group, LAG members and ABs to feed into delivery proposals and put forward their views of how they think this funding should be spent by March next year.</p> <p>It was noted that the Funding Gaps study and the OH LEADER evaluation can provide a base for the LAG form a response from.</p> <p>Funding should be used to test change and consider different ways to deliver funds, such as whether the LAG should be constituted. The main principles of LEADER are valued along with the CLLD method, however, it is to be considered if there is another way to improve it and make it more representative of our rural area and ensure it can deliver what the community want it to. The funding provided is to test any new methods before the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) comes forward.</p> <p>LAG Members welcomed the prospect of additional funding but noted there are currently a range of tasks going on in the community already which should be taken into consideration; an example noted was work currently being undertaken by the Comhairle and Communities in relation to COVID response and the local Community Forums which include Ward Members, Community Councils and Third sector working towards development of economic plans for the area and identifying priorities as provided by the community. This process is already taking place throughout the OH and can utilised in any response from the LAG also.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised with the challenge of spending funds by March 2022, therefore any projects would need to be identified early.</p> <p>It was reiterated that funding can be used for other purposes such as an Event or trialling delivering models. LAGs may consider putting out a short call for projects.</p> <p>It was agreed that LAG members would take time to consider various options of how to proceed with the funding and how it could be delivered in a different, more efficient way to suit the needs of the local community.</p> <p><i>Action – A discussion paper to be distributed to LAG members and response proposals sought for consideration before next LAG Meeting in May.</i></p>	<p>Chair/ LAG</p>
<p>9. AOCB</p> <p>As the Programme will now be continuing until March 2022, it was agreed that a proposed timetable for LAG Meetings throughout this financial year be arranged for</p>	

<p>consideration. Given the fluid nature of the future funding landscape, it was agreed that the LAG should meet at least every two months.</p>	
<p>10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The date of the next meeting is scheduled for <u>Wednesday 26th May at 10.30am.</u></p>	

CONFIRMATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
LAG MEMBER	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	