



TYNE ESK LAG MEMBERS MEETING

29th September 2021

Meeting held via ZOOM

LAG Members Present

Andrew McDonald, (AMcD), Dunbar Garden Centre, LAG Chair
Anne Hastie, (AH), Private Individual, LAG Vice Chair
Cllr Russell Imrie, (RI), Midlothian Council
Hilary Smith, (HS), North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership
Karen Calvert (KC), The Papermill
Lawrence Wyper (LW), Scottish Enterprise
Patrick Playfair, (PP), Edwin-Thomson
Simon Poole, (SP), Jerba Campervans

LAG Observers

Jamie Baker, (JB), East Lothian Council

LAG Staff Present

Angela Lamont, (AL), Acting Programme Co-ordinator, Tyne Esk LEADER
Barry Leslie, (BL), Finance Support Officer, Tyne Esk LEADER

Other

Annette Lang, (ALang), Midlothian Council, Community Planning Partnership (CPP), CPP Representative

Apologies

Cheryl Brown, (CB), Midlothian Sure Start, LAG Member
Cllr John McMillan, (JMCM), East Lothian Council, LAG Member (present at start of meeting but lost internet connection)

Welcome and Apologies	Actions
<p>AMcD welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the meeting requirements for the virtual platform. Introductions were made for new LAG Observer JB and guest ALang.</p> <p>Apologies were noted.</p> <p>AMcD informed the LAG of his new role and the question was asked regarding AMcD continuing as LAG chair; The vote held was unanimous - 7 LAG Members voted in favour with no objections.</p> <p>Quorum The meeting was quorate with 8 LAG Members present, 6 from the private sector, 2 from the public.</p>	



Action points of 23rd June 21 Meeting

AL

- AL/BL to submit return of financial figures to SG by 29th June 21. **Completed.**
- AL to advise Midlothian CPP leads of future LAG meeting dates and continue to ask re: a rep for the LAG. **Completed.** ALang happy to attend until a CPP Rep can be appointed. ALang reported Midlothian's annual Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Conference is planned for November and staff and 2 LAG members would be able to attend. ALang will send out invites to this.
- AL to ensure that Alasdair Mathers is taken off the LAG email distribution list. **Completed.**
- AL to go back to LAG with retrospective approval for JMW and Crowdfunding Coaches co-operation projects. **Completed.**
- AL to include wording on recuperation of funds on the Track 2 Train de-commitment letter and resend, with request it be passed to the liquidators. **Completed.**
- AL to relook at Track 2 Train Offer of Grant to share with PP/LAG as appropriate. **Completed.**

A discussion arose in regards to whether MC could take over Track 2 Train and if so, would funds still have to be paid back to SG. Midlothian Council Justice department have shown continued signs of take-over but this would not be possible in the LEADER funding period, by end Dec 21.

- AL to liase with AMcD/AH and send email to NB Gin applicant detailing overpayment increase and solution to reduce. **Completed.**
- AL to email SRN on DOs behalf to confirm Tyne Esk involvement in CLLD work. **Completed.**

JMcM entered the meeting, but lost connection almost straight away.

JMcM

- JMcM to re-scan Register of Interest and send. **Completed.**

AH

ALang to send out invites to Midlothian CPP conference.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AH to arrange meeting with Morrison’s Construction/Executive Team/AL to discuss Rural Skills Academy CLLD fund project bid. Completed. • AL to liaise with AMcD/AH and send email to NB Gin applicant detailing overpayment increase and solution to reduce. Completed. • AMcD/AH to liase with DO in Sept 21 to discuss extensions to staff contracts once involvement in CLLD work is clarified. Completed. <p>HS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS to share communications review completed North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership with AL. Completed. <p>AMcD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AL to liaise with AMcD/AH and send email to NB Gin applicant detailing overpayment increase and solution to reduce. Completed. • AMcD/AH to liase with DO in Sept 21 to discuss extensions to staff contracts once involvement in CLLD work is clarified. Completed. 	
<p>1. Programme/Governance Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit <p>AL reported Midlothian Council Internal Audit had run their annual audit on the Programme and were likely to award it Substantial Assurance, with only Low rated recommendations to address. These were several minor issues with projects and an update of the Tyne Esk Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midlothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Membership <p>In the discussion in the previous minutes action section, ALang had further explained Vice Chair of the Community Planning Working Group Lesley Kelly (LK) might be best for this role. Midlothian runs the Midlothian Compact, an amalgamation of public and third sectors who collectively serve the communities of Midlothian. LK heads up the Midlothian third sector interfaces Midlothian Voluntary Action and Volunteer Midlothian. She suggested AL contact LK with the CPP LAG Rep brief.</p>	<p>AL to contact Lesley Kelly re: becoming the LAG Midlothian CPP Rep.</p>
<p>2. Scottish Government/Wider Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Communities Testing Change (RCTC) Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tyne Esk Bids 	



AL reported Tyne Esk had been successful with its Stream 1 bid for this funding stream, Tyne Esk Scottish Rural Parliament Project, but not with Stream 2, the Rural Skills Academy Consultation project. Reasons for this had been that although the Rural Skills Academy project is in itself innovative, the 'tests of change' (targeting lesser heard voices/carrying forward in LAG decision making) were not sufficient / lacking detail when it came to this part re methodology, how to test etc. as had been evidenced in the Stream 1 project.

AL said procurement was underway for a contractor to deliver Stream 1, scoring had been done and the winning contractor selected, though this could not be shared with the LAG until the contractor had been notified. A point was made to thank Jonathan Livingstone from Midlothian Council Procurement for his support with this process.

- Learnings from Other Areas

AL reported on the wealth of test of change ideas being deployed in wider Scottish LEADER areas which she hoped Tyne Esk could actively learn from. These were split into the following categories: testing rural youth forums/LAGs, some with grant making abilities; shared resources (eg: a shared project officer) for 'resource poor' orgs to help with applications development etc; new methods of funding being tested, including participatory budgeting, trust based grant making and grants based on the Human Learning System (which is trust based, informs how the grants are paid to the applicant, what learning has been made and what partnerships this creates); and community led tourism (community groups want to take over local assets and making a plan in order to do this, with added support for legal and planning), Local Development Strategy for Shetland.

AH asked if we had a list of the successful projects and was informed that a list of successful projects would be sent from SRN, as soon as grant acceptances had been received. AL to circulate.

- Rural Communities 'Ideas into Action' Fund

As circulated to the LAG prior to the meeting, this fund was also open to community groups, with closing date of 8th Oct 21. It dealt with small, up to £3k, and large, £3k - £50k grants and also had an onus on testing change. It was being administered by Inspiring Scotland. This was another way of testing change in regards to CLLD. ALang stated that Lesley Kelly has distributed information regarding this fund through the MVA distribution list, the main communities distribution list for Midlothian.

- Future Possibilities

Tyne Esk had been in touch with Elaine McGregor (EMcG), of the SG Rural Communities and Economy team about the funds listed below, but also about

AL to thank Jonathan Livingston (Midlothian Council Procurement) for his assistance through the procurement process.

AL to circulate list of successful RCTC Fund Stream 1 & 2 projects once received from the SRN.



LAGs being constituted to bid into certain funds, as this had come up in certain cases. AH had been involved and had conveyed the discussion Tyne Esk LAG had at the start of the present programme, which had concluded that to become constituted with no legal entity would confer the risk of the LAG staff/projects on to the LAG which they were not willing to take. At that time there was only establishing a charity or limited company which could reduce this risk.

The LAG decided that a Group Protocol was the most robust form of governance, with continuation of the involvement of the Accountable Body (AB). AH went on to say nowadays, Community Interest Companies, with eg: LAG indemnity insurance would be a good option to reduce the risk, but highlighted the benefits of staying with an AB – the in kind contribution of the office/equipment/HR support etc. being valuable and costly to procure outwith. AH argued for the continued relationship with an AB. AH also reported JMCM had suggested in a separate meeting, the idea of an 'upper tier' LAG with sub groups for East and Midlothian as a way of going forward. More information would be required, along with and discussions on this and possible constitution in future LAG meetings. AH stated that she would circulate paperwork in regards to the original discussions of the LAG being constituted.

The ideas/funds EMcG had circulated as possibilities for LEADER were as follows:

1. Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs), as well as developing NPF4
2. Participatory Budgeting (PB) – Just Transition Fund

Discussion centred around how Participatory Budgeting (PB) actually works. Each local authority by law should have at least 1% of their budget allocated by PB. It was noted that COSLA is pushing for PB to be mainstreamed instead of being fed outward from a grants pot from Midlothian Council. It is used in Midlothian on capital projects, not revenue and is awarded in small amounts for small scale projects. East Lothian administer most through the Area Partnerships who decide on the best means for allocation, with a small amount administered centrally. This was done pre-Covid in the traditional events/voting way but had been done virtually for one project during Covid with the voting dropped (the funder was content a transparent process had been used, and all projects bidding received their requested amounts). This was seen as a more positive model with projects funded which would never have received it otherwise.

3. Rural Entrepreneur Fund for new business set or existing business relocation. There is £20m being allocated to this fund with grants available of up to £10k per project. AL suggested this was a more traditional LAG based fund, but Business Gateway as well as LEADER had also a bid in to run it. There was interest in this from the LAG.

AH to circulate paperwork referring to discussions LAG had regarding becoming a constituted.

JB to discuss with AW if there is any information regarding funding they provide at present to Rural Entrepreneurs.



4. Net Zero – including Climate Change Action Hubs, below.
5. 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, part of net zero.

Climate Change Action Hubs

AL expanded on this idea:

- Being developed to help deliver the Climate Challenge Fund
- So far only two developed:
 - Northern Highlands and Islands (Orkney & Shetland) – delivered by the Thurso Community Development Trust; and
 - North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN) – covering Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire
- Development Officers are planned for the established hubs to carry out mapping exercises and determine what support is needed and what priorities are.
- SG are to hold engagement sessions over next few months to widen network & cover all Scotland
- EMcG’s question is now – March 22, do LAGs have capacity to support?
 - Capital funding is available for LAGs/SLSG staff
 - Note of interest required.

AL stated she and BL had some capacity and would be interested in this idea. She asked for feedback and a vote to put in a note of interest.

The following points were then discussed:

- The benefits of a Climate Change Action Hub for Tyne Esk were questioned. AL explained it is to have the Climate Challenge Fund distributed at a local level and help with SG’s aim for net zero, a national target that filters down to all areas.
- The LAG felt more detail would be needed before a decision could be made on becoming fully involved.
- AH expressed more interest in the Rural Entrepreneur Fund, it aligning with LEADER’s economic development principles and Tyne Esk having experience of rural business set up/development. AH suggested a joint bid with Business Gateway to administer it, their numbers reducing.
- AL replied this fund would not be in place until after April 2022, whereas, the Climate Change Action Hubs would be something to get involved with now.
- ALang reported that the Climate Change section of Midlothian Council’s Single Midlothian Plan states a requirement to create such hubs in Midlothian. ALang said regards the Hubs and the Rural Entrepreneur Fund, the Midlothian Sustainable Growth theme may

AL to seek more information on the Climate Change Action Hub engagement sessions and request attendance.



<p>have a gap in regards to rural entrepreneurs who want to change their business model etc. in light of climate change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RI reported Midlothian Council Economic Development department had done some great work regards rural entrepreneurship. • JB said this was work set for development in East Lothian Council but, in relation to climate change, noted the support already available from Zero Waste Scotland etc, concluding there may be less need for business climate change support. <p>It was agreed to note interest in the Climate Change Action Hubs but request more information before deciding on full involvement.</p> <p>The vote held was unanimous - 8 LAG Members voted in favour with no objections.</p>	<p>AL to submit note of interest to SG for involvement in Climate Change Action Hubs project pending more information.</p>
<p>6. Staffing</p> <p>AL reported that because of their involvement in the RCTC Fund, staff contracts had been extended until end Mar 22.</p> <p>Staff funding is coming from LEADER until Dec 21 and will come from SG directly from Jan 22 to Mar 22.</p> <p>AL informed LAG that staff may be extended past this point. A bid has gone into SG and the outcome will be announced with the SG budget, expected Dec 21.</p>	
<p>7. Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-commitments <p>AL reported that all three projects discussed at previous LAG meetings: Church St/Winton Place, NB Distillery and Visitors Centre and Track 2 Train had been de-committed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid Recovery Update <p>BL shared the Tyne Esk Budget Spread Sheet and ran through the Covid recovery projects. 3 had completed with claims on the others in process. All were on track to complete by final payment day of 30th Nov 21. Due to lack of communication/progress by the applicants, Service Course and Drift had been mailed with a warning that their projects would be de-committed if they did not meet certain deadlines. This had been decided/actioned by the Executive Team.</p>	
<p>AOCB & Next Meeting.</p> <p>AL queried whether the LAG would be happy to have an in person meeting at The Fraser Centre for the next meeting and the LAG approved this.</p> <p>Next meeting date was appointed as 15th Dec 21</p>	<p>AL to enquire as to Fraser Centre availability for next LAG meeting and organise accordingly.</p>



Actions

AL

- AL to contact Lesley Kelly re: becoming the LAG Midlothian CPP Rep.
- AL to thank Jonathan Livingston (Midlothian Council Procurement) for his assistance through the procurement process.
- AL to circulate list of successful RCTC Fund Stream 1 & 2 projects once received from the SRN.
- AL to seek more information on the Climate Change Action Hub engagement sessions and request attendance.
- AL to submit note of interest to SG for involvement in Climate Change Action Hubs project pending more information.
- AL to enquire as to Fraser Centre availability for next LAG meeting and organise accordingly.

AH

- AH to circulate paperwork referring to discussions LAG had regarding becoming a constituted.

ALang

- ALang to send out invites to Midlothian CPP conference.

JB

- JB to discuss with AW if there is any information regarding funding they provide at present to Rural Entrepreneurs.

15.12.21