



## TYNE ESK LAG MEETING MINUTES

4th July 2019, 9:30am – 12.15pm

North Berwick Community Centre, 8 Law Rd, North Berwick EH39 4PN

### LAG Members Present

Andrew McDonald, (AM), Edinburgh Butterfly World, Midlothian Tourism Forum, LAG Chair  
 Anne Hastie, (AH), Private Individual, LAG Vice Chair  
 Cheryl Brown, (CB), Midlothian Sure Start, LAG member  
 Frank Beattie, (FB), Scottish Enterprise, LAG member  
 Sandra Duncan, (AD), Scottish Women's Rural Institute (SWRI), LAG member  
 Patrick Playfair, (PP) Edwin Thompson, LAG member  
 Hilary Smith, (HS), North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership, LAG member  
 Susan Smith, (SS), East Lothian Council Economic Development, LAG Observer  
 Yvonne Stoddart, (YS), STRIVE, LAG member

### LAG Observers Present

Ann Marie Macaskill (AMM), Midlothian Council Economic Development, LAG Observer & Accountable Body Representative

### Staff Members Present

Joy Godfrey, (JG), LEADER Support Assistant, LEADER Team (notes)  
 Angela Lamont, (AL), LEADER Project Officer, LEADER Team  
 Dawne Milligan, (DM), LEADER Finance Support Officer, LEADER Team

### Apologies

Andrew Bayne-Jardine, (AB) Private Individual, LAG member  
 Karen Calvert, (KC), Papermill Restaurant, LAG member  
 Kerry Clark (KCL), NFU Scotland, Lag member  
 Claire Gilles, (CG) Penicuik YMCA -YWCA, LAG member  
 Cllr Russell Imrie, (RI), Midlothian Council, LAG member  
 Alasdair Mathers, (AMs), Midlothian Community Planning Partnership, LAG Observer  
 Cllr John McMillan, (JM), East Lothian Council, LAG member  
 Simon Poole, (SP), Jerba Campervans, LAG member  
 Neil Ramsay, (NR), LEADER Programme Co-ordinator, LEADER Team  
 Paolo Vestri, (PV), East Lothian Partnership, LAG Observer

Welcome and Apologies	Actions
<p>AM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.</p> <p><b>Quorum</b>            The meeting was quorate with nine members in attendance, seven from the non-public sector and two from the public sector.</p>	
<p><b>1. Matters Arising From Minutes</b>            The LAG reviewed the actions from the last meeting and noted that all had been actioned as far as possible.</p>	



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- SS advised she represents East Lothian Council on community planning and feels it is sufficient for PV to read the minutes and check them against community planning structures.
- The Group Protocol has been updated and will be implemented following LAG member signatories at today's meeting
- NR had contacted MBTAG to inform them they could recruit a staff member rather than procure through a contract. The new staff member has been recruited.
- AH had previously spoken to NR who had indicated that there were three individuals from the National Farmers' Union of Scotland (NFUS) who might be candidates for LAG membership to replace KCL in her continued absence. AH had asked KCL to advise and was waiting to hear back.
- AL had completed wording on the risk of delays to claims payments to go in the Risk Register
- AH had updated the Risk Register and but it requires further updating. AH will liaise with AMM after some suggestions from the AMM before the LAG meeting. A Governance Sub-Group meeting will be scheduled following to look at proposed changes which will be circulated to the LAG by email for comments prior to approval.
- AL reported that the Expression of Interest for the Gorebridge cycle track project had been submitted and circulated to the LAG and the application is a potential project to be developed when the Co-ordinator returns.

**AH and AMM to liaise about changes to Risk Register and this discussed fully at Governance Sub Group meeting**

AM proposed the March minutes and AH seconded them. The November 2018 minutes were also approved and re-signed because they had been signed without a quorum at the March LAG meeting.

## 2. Change Requests

### 2.1 Gorebridge Railway Community Café & Gallery

The delivery of the Gorebridge Railway Community Café & Gallery had been subject to delays due to issues with match-funding, planning and design. The LAG approved all five aspects of the change request, as follows:

1. To extend the end date and milestones from 31/08/18 to 30/06/20
2. To extend the financial end date from 31/10/18 to 31/08/20



3. To accept the change of match funding source from Gorebridge Community Development Trust to the Railway Heritage Trust
4. To change the date of the payment of the match funding from 01/08/17 to the new project end date as the match funding is paid retrospectively.
5. To change the date of payment of the Blueprint match funding from 01/08/17 to 06/02/18

A change of milestone costs may be requested and if this is more than 10% LAG approval will be sought by email.

The LAG asked to be kept updated by the LEADER staff on the project.

**LEADER staff to keep LAG updated on the Gorebridge Railway Community Café & Gallery progress**

## 2.2 Athelstaneford Village Hall

HS declared an interest in the Athelstaneford Village Hall project having sat on the Area Partnership which supported the project in principle. HS remained in the room but abstained from contributing to decision making. The LAG remained quorate.

AL reported that costs had gone up by £28,208 and that applicant organisation, Athelstaneford Parish Hall, will cover these costs. The LAG approved all aspects of the change request, as follows:

1. The increase in eligible costs by £23,208. AL displayed the old and new project totals, with changes to individual Milestones which make up this change.
2. New match funding provided by Athelstaneford Parish Hall of £23,208

## 2.3 NB Gin

The applicant has circa £9,000 grant remaining to spend. AL reported that the applicant has not yet submitted a change request but one is anticipated. AL therefore asked the LAG to approve in principle three changes. The LAG approved these aspects:

1. To extend the project end date and milestone from 01/03/18 to 01/03/20 to enable the applicant to complete their grant spending and make their final claim
2. To extend the financial end date from 01/03/18 to 02/03/20

The LAG agreed to send the applicant a letter covering:



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An acknowledgement of the busy-ness of the applicant since visitor centre completion and opening and their achievements since then</li> <li>• The EU requirements behind the request</li> <li>• The requirement for reply to the letter by a certain deadline</li> <li>• The requirement for plans to make up the underspend by the next scheduled LAG meeting</li> <li>• The requirement for LEADER promotion, via a plaque and website inclusion etc. AL and Executive Team (AM, AH and AMM) will draft the letter.</li> </ul>	<p>AL and Executive Team to draft a letter to NB Gin</p> <p>AL to action all approved Change Requests</p>
<p><b>3 Feedback on Scottish Government Developments</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Rural Development Organisation Committee (RDOC) Visit</b> RDOC recently appointed a new Scottish Desk Officer, and in May they visited two Tyne Esk LEADER projects – The Chalet and Drift – along with Scottish Government LEADER staff, staff from the Scottish Rural Network (SRN) and AH from the LAG. The Desk Officer was very impressed with both; calling Drift “One of the best examples [of a Farm Diversification project] I have ever seen”. AH lead the visit on behalf of Tyne Esk and had shared further case studies.</p> <p><b>3.2 Enhanced Annual Implementation Report (AIR) Evaluation</b> The Enhanced AIR is undertaken for the SRDP 2014-2020 programme every year. The data for 2014-2016 was submitted by the Scottish Government in June 2017 and the data for 2014-2018 was submitted by Tyne Esk LEADER in June 2019.</p> <p>AL summarised the questions posed by the AIR Evaluation – questions on innovation, developing the knowledge base, diversification and creation and development of small enterprises and job creation, accessibility and use and quality of ICTs, synergies or otherwise within the SRDP schemes and SRN input. AL summarised the feedback in that it mainly gave project examples rather than quantitative feedback, and that in the whole feedback for synergies with other SRDP schemes and on SRN input was positive. Where this did not stand was for the Food Processing Manufacture Co-operation (FPMC) who had not previously provided clarity around eligibility criteria.</p> <p><b>3.3 Scottish Government Internal Audit</b> The Scottish Government Internal Audit team were auditing Tyne Esk at the time of the meeting, checking for compliance with EU</p>	



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and Scottish Government regulations and guidance. The Expression of Interest, application, change requests, claims and in situ processes were being checked. Four projects were also under assessment: Track 2 Train, The Rocketeer, Midlothian Sure Start and Dalkeith Agricultural Society.

DM highlighted that the LAG minute dated August 2018 had a minor inaccuracy in the scoring for the Rocketeer project and sought the LAG's approval to alter this in LARCS from 7 to 6. The LAG approved the request.

**DM to alter August 2018 minutes and LARCS to record the score for the Rocketeer as 6 rather than 7**

### 3.4 Accountable Bodies (ABs) Meeting

AMM had attended an AB Group Meeting on 29 May 19 and provided some updates:

- Uncertainty continues around the future of the fund due to the uncertainty around Brexit.
- There remains uncertainty around where future funding may come from i.e. Shared Prosperity Fund, and henceforth challenges are faced on the security of staffing in the approach to the end of the current LEADER Programme in December 2020. The Scottish Government acknowledged these challenges.
- The uncertainty around funding guarantees for the period January to March 2021. The guarantees are set by HM Treasury. As discussed at the AB meeting on 30 April 19 ABs may wish to consider the timing of putting a collective case forward to the Scottish Government i.e. consider the Scottish Government spending review cycle (as Scottish Government budgets are determined annually).
- AMM and other AB representatives raised the issue of potential difficulties of recruiting for vacancies and retaining the staff knowledge, skills and experience, noting extra difficulties with staff losses for future audits.
- Monthly drawdowns will continue.
- Circa £620k is potentially available for re-allocation to co-operation projects. The Scottish Government have confirmed projects should be approved first and then bid into the re-allocation pot to access. AMM is part of an assessment group made up of members of the AB group, which will decide upon reallocations.
- AM stated this pot may be extended to general project types in time and AL suggested a re-grouping of the Governance Sub-Group to re-prioritise projects for this, as well as for the remainder of the Tyne Esk spend. AL raised the issue that on

**AL to arrange Governance Sub Group meeting**



the previous project prioritisation exercise there was no safety net and four of the six projects chosen to go forward dropped out. She recommended this be addressed at the meeting.

- AM, AH AMM and the Midlothian Council Director of Education, Communities and the Economy met with representatives from the Scottish Government in early May. AMM updated on the agreed points from the meeting:
  - That the staff are line managed by Midlothian Council but the rhythm of their work is often dictated by the LAG (for example with LAG committee meeting schedule etc.)
  - Any staffing issues should be directed to the Accountable Body (Economic Development Manager) both those that are directly related to the staff (for example sickness absence etc.) and those that impact on the programme delivery (for example processing payments)
  - A review / revision of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Accountable Body and LAG would be helpful
  - Ways should be sought to develop positive communication channels at all levels
  - There should be regular meetings between the LAG and the Accountable Body – also potentially including the local LEADER team.
  - The nature of delivering LEADER requires flexibility in working hours and location from the local teams. Midlothian Council need to balance that with staff cover within the LEADER Team, as well as recognising Midlothian Council policies i.e. lone worker and mental health and wellbeing
  - As staff are employed by Midlothian Council then their policies in relation to IT information security etc. must be followed
  - The Accountable Body would provide reassurance to the LAG about resilience and ability to deliver the LDS programme of projects
  - The local LEADER team should be fully engaged on LEADER work unless there is a derogation to the current contractual position supported by a change in the LDS and supporting timesheets / evidence. They should not be carrying out any work which is not directly related to LEADER.

### 3.5 Rural Policy Cross Party Group

- The theme of the most recent Rural Policy Cross Party Group was 'Transition to the Future' and AL presented at this, giving an outline of Tyne Esk LEADER, and positives and challenges of the fund from an individual practitioner perspective (not necessarily reflective of Tyne Esk LEADER).
- Positives identified were the rigorous application process – such as evidencing Control of Asset for five years and bank defrayal
- Challenges included that: the application process has the same complexity for small, medium and large sized grants, requiring the same amount of applicant time and detail; and that the

for review of the project shortlist



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<p>retrospective funding can preclude smaller organisations from applying if they do not have sufficient cash flow. It was suggested that the fund paying large costs directly to supplier/contractor could be one solution.</p> <p>AH commended AL on her presentation stating it was strong and well received.</p> <p><b>3.6 Staff Group Meeting - Lewis</b> DM and AL attended the Staff Group Meeting in Stornoway. The meeting had covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and evaluation of each area's Local Development Strategy as well as national outcomes. Tyne Esk is capturing data quantitatively through end of project questionnaires and qualitatively through case studies, plus Expressions of Interests could feed into a new Local Development Strategy. AL suggested setting up a LAG monitoring and evaluation sub group so that all information required is captured and the LAG can feed into the process. AL stated there was money in the budget to contract a consultant to pull together the full monitoring and evaluation work. AH suggested they do this as an extension of the Governance Sub Group work and HS said she would like to be involved as an additional member. AH suggested they convene to discuss all of Governance Sub Group topics in one day.</li> <li>A Rural Enterprise Future Event to be led by the Chairs in Edinburgh on 19<sup>th</sup> September with the aim of highlighting the value of continuing the rural enterprise aspect of LEADER. LAGs have been asked to contribute stats, case studies and potential speakers, AL to do this.</li> <li>Site Visits to Ness Historical Community Hub and Between Islands co-operation.</li> </ul> <p>At this point PP left the meeting. The LAG remained quorate with eight members in attendance, six from the non-public sector and two from the public sector.</p>	<p>AL to feed information into Rural Enterprise Futures event</p>
<p><b>4 Governance Updates</b> <b>4.1 Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan</b> AH discussed updates made to the Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan in April/May 2019. She said some more changes were required, including some outlined by AMM before the meeting. AL to arrange a meeting of the Governance Sub Group to review these.</p>	<p>AL to arrange Governance Sub Group meeting to discuss updates to</p>



<p><b>4.2 Memorandum of Understanding</b> AM, AH and AMM will meet to update the Memorandum of Understanding.</p> <p><b>4.3 Communications Plan</b> AH will review the Communications Plan.</p> <p><b>4.4 LDS / Business Plan / Group Protocol Change Request</b> AL summarised the most recent changes to these and those LAG members present signed the Group Protocol.</p> <p>At this point AMM left the meeting. The LAG remained quorate with eight members in attendance, six from the non-public sector and two from the public sector.</p> <p><b>4.5 Project Updates</b></p> <p><b>4.5.1 John Muir Way Extension</b> This project has been passed by all LAGs already involved with the exception of Forth Valley and Lomond. Other LAGs will be bidding into reallocation funds by the end of July to fund this project. Tyne Esk LEADER does not need to bid in to the reallocation fund for this project.</p> <p><b>4.5.2 John Muir Way</b> AL gave an update – this project is progressing well.</p> <p><b>4.5.3 Midlothian Girlguiding Essential Upgrades to Campsite &amp; Training Centre</b> AH and AL attended the launch event in May 19.</p> <p><b>4.5.4 The Fraser Centre</b> Project progressing to time. AL to arrange a LAG site visit.</p> <p><b>4.5.6 Belhaven Surf Centre</b> The building may be complete before the August end date.</p> <p><b>4.5.7 Midlothian Borders Tourism Action Group Marketing Activity</b> The new post holder experience has been recruited and has started. She has experience of digital marketing through work done with the Abbotsford Estate in the Scottish Borders.</p> <p><b>4.5.8 Whiteadder – Heart of the Lammermuirs</b> Work has started.</p>	<p><b>Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan</b></p> <p><b>AH, AM and AMM to meet to update Memorandum of Understanding</b></p> <p><b>AH to review Communications Plan</b></p> <p><b>AL to organise LAG site visit to Fraser Centre</b></p>
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<p><b>4.5.9 Fishing in the Forth</b> The project has started.</p> <p><b>4.5.10 Crowdfund Scotland</b> There will be a Crowdfund Scotland event for Tyne Esk on 31<sup>st</sup> July from 2-3pm in the National Mining Museum in Newtongrange.</p> <p><b>4.5.11 Track 2 Train</b> DM gave an update on progress.</p> <p><b>4.6 LDS / Budget Update</b> DM reported that that £2.4m had been allocated of which over £1.24m has been spent.</p> <p>At this point YS left the meeting. The LAG remained quorate with seven members in attendance, five from the non-public sector and two from the public sector.</p> <p><b>4.7 LDS / Past, Present, Future Event</b> AL summarised the aims of the event – to lobby for the continuation of LEADER post Brexit, and provide a reward for present and past applicants. She and the LAG felt it had gone in part to meet its aims, with support for LEADER from Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy Fergus Ewing MSP and the Midlothian Provost, apparent in their talks at the meeting. It was also attended by East Lothian Provost JM plus two Midlothian and East Lothian Councillors, one of whom had been vocal in their support since the event.</p>	
<p><b>5 Finish – Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>TBC</p>	<p><b>AL to circulate Doodle Poll to set date for next meeting.</b></p>

**Actions**

- AL to action approved Change Requests
- AL to arrange Governance Sub Group meeting for review of the project shortlist; to discuss updates to Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan; and to discuss monitoring and evaluation
- AL to organise LAG site visit to Fraser Centre
- AL to circulate Doodle Poll for next LAG meeting
- AL to feed information into Rural Enterprise Futures event
  
- AL and Executive Team to draft and send NB Gin letter



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- **AH, AM and AMM to meet to update Memorandum of Understanding**
- **AH and AMM to liaise about changes to Risk Register and this discussed fully at Governance Sub Group meeting**
- **AH to review Communications Plan**
- **DM to alter August 2018 minutes and LARCS to record the score for the Rocketeer as 6 rather than 7**
- **LEADER staff to keep LAG updated on the Gorebridge Railway Community Café & Gallery progress**

*W. Chalmers*  
15/10/19