

VALE OF USK LAG MEETING

Minutes

Meeting Title	Vale of Usk Virtual LAG Meeting (due to Covid19)	Meeting Date	21 st January 2021
Venue	Remote video access from homes	Meeting Time	10 am – 12 pm
LAG Attendees	Pamela Mason (Chair), Alan Michie, Ruth Waycott, Andrew David, Elaine Blanchard, Lynne Richards, John Harris, Nicola Bradbear, John Davies, Mandy Moore, Katy Stevenson Late arrivals: Alastair Robertson, Sharran Lloyd, Neville Hart		
Guest	Katy Watkins, Welsh Government		
Apologies	Phil Powell, Helen Fletcher, Claire Brown		
MONCC	Mike Powell, Mark Lloyd, Zara Bligh, Louise McGuinness (notes) Deserie Mansfield (11.30 am)		
Meeting Description	First LAG meeting of 2021		

10 am Welcome – Pam Mason, Chair. Meeting is quorate

1. Approval and Matters Arising from Minutes 22nd October 2020 – PM.
 - Zara to check with Des M and amend minutes to include details of City Food Meeting.
 - Other items covered during general meeting

2. Financial Update and Update on Lead Body – MP:

Mike explained that Alison was working on WG claims for many projects. He explained that the financial re-profiling is complete, and has been approved by WG. That Claire Brown had left Spectrum for a new post but still wanted to remain a LAG member. Adam Greenwood was new in post as the Digital Officer. At the time of this meeting, Mark Lloyd was working with John Davies on renewables. Des and Mike were working on Food and Digital while Zara and Lucinda were working on mental health & the Farmers Welfare Unit. Alan requested these changes were put in writing for the LAG members.

Mike discussed the financial issues and outlined the projects going forward. Claims were being submitted this week and new funding letters received for signing off. Expected expenditure needed to be in place for the end of March claim or it will be lost; Mike explained that the any successful RDP wider applications will show extra spending profiles up until June 2023. Alan asked if there was any chance of extra funding.

3. New Projects Update – MP and ML. Mike outlined the details of the broadband grant for the Llanthony Valley. The Tintern Trails project has stalled but is expected to be completed before the end of March. Goytre Wharf narrowboat project has additional funding for a disabled toilet and lift. Training has been undertaken but the project cannot get going because of Covid 19. Elaine B explained how Gilwern School was still engaged with the Growing Project and themes were being linked into the curriculum. She described a Zoom gardening club with guest speaker Cherry Taylor on raised beds, no dig gardening and sustainable food production. Mike said this was a good fit for sustainable farming



projects going forward. Elaine will produce a document about this project. Owen Wilce says that the Be Community Project has been well supported. Rogiet Café has finished with LAG funded section of their plans and are looking at moving forward with 25-year lease, planning permission and building funds. The Farmers Welfare Unit project is moving ahead and it is hoped it will be in place by end of March 2021. Developing Our Young People project officer is delayed due to Covid, the job description is being put together. The Heat Networks mapping project and sustainable energy should produce a draft report by end of March. Llanover Halls together held successful Christmas wreath making workshops in Dec and on line children's cooking workshops. Safe Living at Home project has been well received. Pilot project of 5 local authorities working with Amazon Alexa to combat social isolation using digital tools has begun. Des Mansfield will soon be able to present to the LAG her Community Food Larder Project.

4. LDS Review – Mike explained that he had not succeeded in getting the review written before Christmas. He will continue working on it ready for the early February. Pam said an executive summary was always helpful with large documents like this.
5. Future Ways of Working – Pam told the group about the pre-Christmas meeting with Mike, Zara and Ruth to look at alternative ways of working. It was agreed that presentations delivered by applicants to themed groups or interested individuals was the best way for new projects to be introduced. It allowed the passion to show and for pertinent questions to be asked. Themed groups should be allowed to evolve and fluctuate so the right people were always involved and cross cutting themes could be explored eg Food, Farmers & Mental Health. MCC has potential access to new funding going forward. Alastair agreed that “Bubbles” were better than themes as it allowed greater crossover between individuals and themes.
6. Presentation on Food Projects. Food Centric collaborative working is required. Mike delivered a PowerPoint presentation about the links between Food & Technology; a complex challenge with numerous parts. Pam agreed that the LAG needs to get behind as many potential projects as possible. Rural poverty issues, leisure and tourism, links within Monmouthshire economic drivers can generate future work. Food projects is a locally led strategy including supply chains and procurement policies. Ruth said Wye Valley AONB were looking at this subject. Neville Hart outlined the importance of small scale producers like himself and the potential for a co-operative approach. Des will put a call out to the press to ask for engagement ideas. Monmouthshire has 90,000 residents who could get behind the projects if aware of them.
7. AOB. Katy Watkins WG spoke of windows of opportunity for funding as being competitive, so the group needs to get expressions of interest submitted asap. She reiterated that funding spend cannot be carried over so needed to be spent on Leader projects by end of March.
8. Pam thanked everyone for their time, effort and commitment to the Vale of Usk project and closed the meeting at 12noon.
9. Date of the Next Meeting - Thursday 22nd April 2021 - 2 pm

Actions

- Des/Zara to check the Minutes of the previous meeting including details of City Food Meeting
- LAG members requested the Themes officers put in writing
- LDS Review update

Notes prepared by:	Louise McGuinness/Zara Bligh
Date:	28 th January 2021

