

Vale of Usk Local Action Group

Thursday 25th February 2016

Usk Hub Community Room

MINUTES

Members
Present:

Gareth Baker
Kerry Counsell
Andrew David
John Davies
John Harris
Debbie McCarty
Alan Michie (Chair)
Mandy Moore
Sally Richardson
Alastair Robertson

Officers:

Zara Bligh
Alison Grimson
Mark Lloyd
Mike Powell

Apologies:

Claire Brown
Peter Cole
Helen Fletcher
Pamela Mason
Andrew Nixon
Clare Parsons
Lynne Richards (Sub)
Cath Fallon

1. Welcome

2. **Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.** Marketing via social media has been pushed, promoting the awareness raising events in March. **Minutes of 20th February 2016 - Approved.**

3. **Welsh Government RCDF Application – Llanover** Mike Powell gave an overview of the Llanover Community Council application for Wifi and community access to four halls within the ward. (See application) The LAG were required by WG to confirm that the potential capital project met the Vale of Usk Local Development Strategy (LDS). The members agreed unanimously that it did meet the LDS. A response form has been provided, MP will return it to Welsh Government with Alan Michie's name as Chair.

It was agreed that wifi in village halls would enable a number of initiatives that could potentially be supported by Leader. Rural areas still struggled with poor broadband and also poor mobile phone signals. Alan Michie is happy to write letters on behalf of the LAG outlining the problems – MP to draft a letter.

4. Programme Update – Mike Powell.

- **Local Development Strategy Review** An annual review is to be submitted to Welsh Government by 31st March 2016. The RDP team will discuss any potential changes but it is not expected to change very much as the Programme is still at an early stage. Alan Michie will review on behalf of the LAG and submit. The WG will then visit the RDP team to discuss.
- **Finance.** Vale of Usk has £2.465 m to spend during the life of our programme which equates to £107,000 per quarter. However the early quarters usually are low on project implementation as the focus is awareness raising.
- **March Leader Events.** Three events will be held – Llanarth, Monmouth and Redwick. Community groups are invited to find out about Leader funding and other funding. Funding officer, Andy Smith will be attending.

5. Vale of Usk Leader Funding Applications

- **Non-statutory services baseline research project – RDP £1,220.** See the Theme group recommendation report (scored 82/100) and application form. This report is designed to identify which services are non-statutory and how the communities

prioritise them. There is existing information that needs to be brought together. All ten members present voted in favour of this application – it will be circulated to the remaining LAG as a minimum of 11 members' votes are required.

- **Three Fields Community Trust Survey – RDP £3,909.** This application has been submitted by S E Wales Energy Agency on behalf of a consortium looking into community use of land in Undy which is available for Community Asset Transfer. A survey assessing community aspirations for the site and what they would be prepared to support, will be sent to 3,200 properties and there will be two local events. (See Theme Group recommendation – (79/100)). It was felt that care should be taken to focus on deliverable aspects and not create an unachievable “wish list”. The survey will provide evidence to support capital funding applications for the future. Andrew David of S E Wales Energy declared an interest and did not vote but the remaining 9 members voted in favour of accepting the application. This will also go to LAG members, via email as the meeting was not quorate.
- **The BEES Project – Breeding, Education, Environment and Skills. Vale of Usk RDP - £14,800.** This is a Co-operation project with Caerphilly LAG and Merthyr LAG. This potential project has been discussed with representatives from the three areas since before Christmas, apiarists have been consulted via a survey with an excellent response.

Queen bee import figures are alarming and this project would like to create a local breeding programme which will concentrate on bees that are more suited to the Welsh climate and conditions. Education in schools (including youth to encourage the Welsh honey industry sustainability) and upskilling and information sharing with apiarists (a strong hub of local bee keepers) will also be an important element. Each LAG will contribute the same amount for a total project cost of £44,400.

The LAG members present were all supportive of this project, adding that they should promote the economic benefit to Wales but the remaining LAG members will be asked to vote as the meeting was not quorate. Also, any vote made by Vale of Usk LAG was dependent upon approval by Caerphilly and Merthyr LAGs.

6. Any Other Business

- LAG members interested in social media training. There is a £250 budget (per quarter) for LAG training. Mandy Moore may know a free trainer. A number of members would be interested.
- Cywain is funded by the Welsh Government and The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development / European Fisheries Fund and seeks to “Add Value through Collaboration and support new products and markets for agricultural and fishery products. They held two local events and a number of food producers from the Vale of Usk attended.
- Agri-Urban Project. A European project involving 10 countries, Abergavenny is the UK contingent. They will initially produce an action plan focusing on local produce and undertake exchange visits (€55,000). Team Abergavenny (independent constituted group) is the likely lead on this project and once an action plan is drawn up, they will be well placed to apply for capital funding.
- At the next quarterly meeting review the current method of assessing and approving projects to see whether improvements can be made.

- Circulate all the theme projects under review to members prior to the next meeting so that they are aware and can contribute.

Actions

- **MP** – Send Vale of Usk LAG response on RCDF to Welsh Government
- **MP/ZB** – Draft a letter regarding poor wifi/mobile reception for AM to sign
- **RDP team** – Local Development Strategy Review for AM approval
- **ZB** – Email project information to LAG members for voting
- **MM** – pass social media trainer (free) details to ZB
- **MP** – circulate the quarterly (Welsh Government) project update to all members
- **ZB** – add the review to assessments to next LAG meeting

2016 Vale of Usk LAG Meetings:

Wednesday 20th April 2016 – 10 am – 12 noon,
Caerleon Town Hall, 2 Church St, Caerleon, Newport NP18 1AW

Wednesday 20th July 2016 – 2 pm – 4 pm
Wednesday 19th October 2016 – 2 pm – 4 pm

