

Vale of Usk Local Action Group

Llanover Village Hall, Thursday 17th October 2019

MINUTES

Members Present:	Gareth Baker Nicola Bradbear Clare Parsons Andrew David John Davies Alan Michie (Chair) Phil Powell Angela Jones Sharran Lloyd Mandy Moore John Harris	Officers:	Mike Powell Zara Bligh Alison Grimson Deserie Mansfield Mark Lloyd Shirley Hughes
Guests:	Lesley Ball Nick Ramsay AM Richard Dommett	Apologies:	Ruth Waycott Sarah Coakham Elaine Blanchard Alastair Robinson

1. **Welcome.** The Chair welcomed Nick Ramsay AM and LAG members to the twenty first meeting since February 2015.
The meeting was quorate (3 private; 4 voluntary; 4 public). Members were reminded that they must declare any interest (as and when).
The Chair reported that the aim of the LAG was to oversee the RDP and it was important to vote on projects. John Harris stated that in the present written format it was difficult to establish whether the project was viable and value for money. MP advised that there would be a change in the style of information given to members.
The Chair advised that as per the rules of LAG members failing to attend on 3 consecutive occasions would be asked to leave. Two members, Sara Jones and Claire Brown fell in to this category. The meeting AGREED, with one abstention, that their membership be withdrawn and the Secretary should write advising them of the position.
2. **Apologies-** Apologies as above.
3. **Election of the Chair:** At this point, Mike Powell took the Chair.
Chair: Clare Parsons proposed and Angela Jones seconded Alan Michie. Alan agreed and was duly elected.
Appointment of Vice-Chairs (2): There were 3 nominations so a closed ballot took place, and Ruth Waycott and Andrew David were voted on to become the two Vice-Chairs. The Chair expressed his sincere thanks to Alastair for all his expert advice and support that he had given to this role. Alastair has taken an active part since the very outset of the current round of funding.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting 18th July 2019.** Accurate and approved.
5. **Matters arising:**
 - a) Final Evaluation of programme – MP advised this would be done in 2021, but currently preparatory work by volunteers on filming project is being carried out.
 - b) AM asked what progress had been made about the Rural Stress Project at the Livestock Market which Kate Beavan had spoken about at the last Meeting? MP explained that a great deal was going on in the background. The Chair requested the meeting be updated on progress at the next meeting.
 - c) MP stated there was funding available for a 5G related project which has the potential to support farmers in many aspects for example improving farming techniques and allowing isolation to be combatted.
 - d) **Rogiet Community Shop** – ML & AD will be having monthly meetings with the ladies to support them.
6. **Financial Update** – AG/MP. Alison explained that at the end of Sept, £862k had been spent on 39 projects. There were 2 projects in the pipeline totaling £75k, so we were at present 83% spend, therefore on target. The Programme had recently successfully undergone 3 Audits – Village Hall, Circular Walks in South Monmouthshire, and AG Tensile, which were all projects prior to 2015.
Alison reported that owing to underspend on some projects there was approx. £200k still available for rural development. Our aim should be to fund another 20 worthwhile projects at £20k each.
7. **RDP Projects Updates and Marketing**
 - (a) **Updates** - See previous attachment.**Items of note:**
 - 1a. **Food Hubs** – Work with Belgium will now not take place, and the SBRI has been shelved for the time being.
 - 1b. **Nature isn't Neat** – Queries were raised on the effectiveness of the existing project and the appropriateness of the

name. Nicola Bradbear outlined the current activity and support received from the town and it was clear that to be more effective more funds were needed. It was agreed that:

1. Phil Powell, Andrew David and Sharran Lloyd would meet up with Nicola Bradbear and Alison Howard and make sure that the aim of the project fitted LAG criteria.
2. Alison Howard should come to the next meeting to explain more about the project.
- 1c. BE Community – Owen Wilce will be attending the January meeting to update the LAG.
- 1d. Rogiet Community Shop – ML & AD will be having monthly meetings with the ladies to support them.
- 1e. Fully Charged – Clare Parsons mentioned that BBNP have evidence that charging points brings tourists into the area. ML said that it's been advertised on Sell to Wales, and should have builders engaged within a month.
- 1f. Village Hall Energy – Phil Powell mentioned that Solar Panels should be self-funding, and Halls need to evaluate how much they have saved.
- 1g. Sudbrook Skills Swap – Mark Lloyd explained that insufficient votes had been received electronically on this project. A further vote was taken by 3 members who had not voted previously. The final tally was 6 for and 7 against, so the project was declined. Note that this does not stop this project being resubmitted. AD would have liked to see it coming from the grass roots community, rather than GAVO.
- 1h. Projects in the Pipeline – MP stated that one project coming forward would involve the Village Halls, with a scheme to encourage them to combine their purchases when buying oil, gas, electricity etc.

(b) Marketing

MP explained that the volunteers from the Our View Project have been commissioned to film 10 short films of exemplar Leader projects that had made a difference over the last 15 – 20yrs. A list had been made, and 4 have been filmed, with Monmouth Skatepark completed. These will be shown to the SE Wales LAGS.

AM hoped that Nick Ramsey would have chance to make known to his colleagues in Cardiff the successful work being carried out by the Vale of Usk LAG.

8. Llanover Digital Halls Project

Lesley Ball from Llandewi Rhydderch said that the four halls, Llanfair Kilgeddin, The Bryn, Llanover and Llandewi Rhydderch had been rejuvenated by having Broadband installed, as they are now more attractive to hirers. All halls have had their facilities upgraded, such as new flooring, interiors decorated, improved security and baby changing facilities. Classes such as On-line banking, Train the Trainers, Digital photography etc. have seen a steady increase in hall hire. Their next aim is to get an online booking system set up for all four halls. Following the presentation, AM asked if the LAG had helped? The resounding answer was yes, and MP said that The Bryn VH has been rejuvenated.

9. Monmouthshire Brecon Canal

Richard Dommatt gave a very interesting presentation – (see Presentation on website)

10. Thank you to Guests - the Chair thanked Lesley Ball, Richard Dommatt for coming to talk to the LAG members, and a special thanks to Nick Ramsay for coming along to listen to the LAG's activity and the successful projects being carried out in the area.

11. AOB

1. CP said it was good to hear directly from the project leaders.
2. JH stated that the meeting helped when running his village hall, because he found the info very informative.

The Chair when closing the meeting said that our aim in the next quarter was to get existing projects finished and thanked the members for their contribution to making the meeting both enjoyable as well as effective.

The meeting closed at 4pm.

Actions

- 1) Feedback from Nature isn't Neat Project PP/AD/SL/NB/AH
- 2) Update on Rural Stress Project
- 3) Final letters to SJ & CB

Next LAG Meeting: Thursday 16th January 2020 at 10am (venue to be confirmed)

