

# Vale of Usk Local Action Group Bridges Centre, Monmouth Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 MINUTES

Members  
Present:

Gareth Baker  
Nicola Bradbear  
Peter Cole  
Andrew David  
John Davies  
Helen Fletcher  
John Harris  
Angela Jones  
Debbie McCarty  
Pamela Mason (Chair)  
Mandy Moore  
Clare Parsons  
Alastair Robertson  
Katy Stevenson

Officers:

Zara Bligh  
Lucinda James  
Deserie Mansfield  
Mark Lloyd  
Mike Powell  
Andy Smith

Apologies:

Cath Fallon  
Neville Hart  
Alan Michie  
Sarah Price  
Bob Greenland  
Lynne Richards

Guests:

Judith Langdon, MCC  
Owen Wilce, MCC  
Vivien Mitchell, Transition Monmouth

1. **Welcome.** Apologies as above. Best wishes to Alan. Introduced Katy Stevenson from Groundwork Wales as a new member. The meeting was quorate (4 private; 5 voluntary; 5 public). Conflict of interest – four in project votes outlined below.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Matters arising: All items covered on Agenda  
**Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 - Approved.**
3. **Project Updates – Pam Mason (See attached notes)**
4. **Financial Update – Andy Smith (See attached)** Suggestions welcome regarding how the financial information is reported.
5. **Training and recruitment – Pam Mason**

Members can have one to one guidance on Members pages on website with Mike after meeting, if required.

Training for Chair/Vice Chairs is not available through RDP but information has been circulated to all LAGs in SE Wales asking if they would like to share bespoke training. GAVO could provide this – ZB to liaise with MM.

## 6. **Project Review and Vote – Mike Powell**

- **Community Leadership Academy** – £130,000 over two years to support training and personal development opportunities at low or no cost to volunteers; people who give their own time to support their communities. This would include a two-year co-ordinator role to develop and deliver the programme. (Please see attached presentation).

**AR** - A combination of an actual training hub and on-line services would meet today's volunteer requirements. Has course certification been considered, eg NVQ may attract and engage with employers. Link with Digital Badges Project.

**PC** - Excellent idea but why isn't it already being done given increasing demands upon volunteers – *there is research and models in England that will help*; isn't GAVO providing this service? – *in collaboration with MCC and others on steering group*. What will happen at the end of project, how will it be sustainable? *Group already looking for future funding opportunities, it will be part of the project to find funding.*

**CP** – Evaluation/Outputs need evidencing – a regular update at quarterly LAG meeting? Impact is difficult to measure but vital.

**PM** – The volunteering network needs to be inclusive, eg the Church volunteers. The mapping of volunteers needs to be wide and extensive. Area needs to include rural Newport – discussions already started.

**AJ** – Digital will help to address some barriers.

Good project to use in publicity – LAG can help through Sharon Chilcott.

**Vote: Approved** – 12 YES; 2 conflict of interest (DMc and MM)

- **Abergavenny Castle Events Project**

£53,700 (Max) required to commission community consultation and development of a summer events programme in the castle; events management toolkit developed from existing material; trial a temporary cover within the grounds.

What is evidence of need/demand?

- Project should be broken down into a feasibility study first with no investment of funds. Public/business consultation vital, avoid displacement of local businesses. Phase 2 could be submitted as a separate application if feasibility report supports it.
- Events likely to conflict with other local events, especially weddings with long lead time
- Is there expertise in MCC Events Team or Abergavenny Town Team that could do feasibility? Consultancy costs are too high. Many free event guides already available, not necessary.
- How long is the lease on Abergavenny Castle
- What are the CADW/regulatory constraints that might impact an events programme/permanent structure? Chepstow Castle battle for a temporary cover for a few weeks per year.
- What is innovative about this project? Programme of regular events in Castle grounds with marquee to potentially pilot whether permanent structure is possible.

Invite a feasibility study to include extensive community and business consultation to ensure that it is complementing the existing offer and not in competition. Is there any benefit to considering Museum space as well as outdoor in the study?

**Vote: Not Approved** – submit a new feasibility study project.

- **Breaking Down the Barriers (Cotyledon)**

£47,892 – a project to develop high quality, affordable rural markets which complement and enhance the local offer; training and networking opportunities; community buy-in and sustainability for the future.

This would be an excellent project but a check needs to be made that funding has not been given for the same project in Blaenau Gwent/Caerphilly?

**Vote: Approved with caveat\*** 12 YES  
1 Conflict of Interest (Katy Stevenson)  
1 Abstention

\* Confirm that similar project has not been funded by RDP in South Wales.

- **Venison Study**

£4,800 – a feasibility study production, marketing and sale of locally produced wild venison in and around the Wye Valley AONB, as well as woodlands experiencing highest impact from deer between Symonds Yat, Chepstow and Wentwood. Collaboration with Rural England – Leader funds will only fund the Vale of Usk regional study.

**NB** – many deer/venison studies already available.

**AR** – would study consider poaching problems; legislation/liability

**GB** – current audit not accurate as many deer grazing outside the woodland perimeter.

**Vote: Approved with caveats\*** 11 Yes  
2 No  
1 Abstention

\* **LAG members to email their project requirements to ZB and they will form caveats to the approval.**

7. **Priorities for 2017**

Good Broadband in rural areas.

8. **Any Other Business** – none

9. **Transition Monmouth Project Update** – Vivien Mitchell

Following on from Monmouthshire County Council's proposed Flood Risk Management Plan, Transition Monmouth (TM) raised a number of issues relating to the use and application of natural flood alleviation techniques to achieve some of the Council's objectives. These techniques complement other renewable energy TM projects, namely community woodlands, community orchards and small hydroelectric schemes. The brief is being written and will go out to tender shortly.

Woodlands and orchards have many advantages: renewable energy; food; reducing surface water run; reducing air pollution; combatting climate change as well as numerous other benefits – combatting noise pollution, allowing for community engagement by all sectors of the community, improving health and wellbeing of all, providing opportunities for education and skills learning. The local community has already shown support for new planting.

10. **Actions**

**ZB** – Discuss training with MM, GAVO.

**ZB** - Community Leadership Academy Project in touch with Sharon Chilcot for PR.

**DM** - Confirm non-duplication with Breaking down the Barriers project.

**LAG** - Email caveats for Venison Study to ZB.

**Dates of 2017 LAG Meetings**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 – 2 pm

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – 10 am

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – 2 pm

