

**Vale of Usk Local Action Group
Graig Community Centre
Wednesday 26th April 2017
MINUTES**

Members
Present:

Gareth Baker
Nicola Bradbear
Peter Cole
John Davies
John Harris
Neville Hart
Debbie McCarty
Pamela Mason
Alan Michie (Chair)
Mandy Moore
Clare Parsons
Lynne Richards (Rep)
Alastair Robertson

Officers:

Zara Bligh
Mark Lloyd
Mike Powell
Andy Smith

WG:

John Davies
Lowri Norrington-Davies

Apologies:

Claire Brown
Andrew David
Helen Fletcher
Bob Greenland
Angela Jones

Guests:

Liz Bickerton, Consultant
Sara Middleton, GAVO
Karin Molson, MCC Culture & Leisure
Joanna Davies, MCC Culture & Leisure

1. **Welcome.** The Chair welcomed the members and advised them we had now reached the half way stage of this funding period. The meeting was quorate (4 private; 4 voluntary; 5 public) and there was a change to the published running order of the agenda to assist the speakers.
2. **Apologies:** as above.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Matters arising: All items completed or in hand.
Minutes of 19th January 2017 - Approved.
4. **Non-Statutory Services Study – Liz Bickerton (See attached presentation)**
5. **Financial Update – Andy Smith (See attached)** Twenty approved projects, £426,500 with an average project size of £21k and twenty projects in the pipeline, £695,000 (av. £34.5k). There is a greater spend on some themes and it is possible to move money between theme allocations, but this would be a LAG decision.

Mike will provide a mechanism to assess project 'value for money' as resources are limited. Also, additionality will be recorded as a soft outcome in our Programme evaluation to support future funding applications.

6. **Project update – Pam Mason (see attached notes)**

Two films relating to previously approved projects were shown – the 'Huw the View' social media tourism campaign (now called Our View) and the renewable energy film encouraging community projects.

7. Project Review and Vote – Mike Powell

- **Creative Lives, Active Lives. Presentation by Karin Molson, Tourism, Leisure and Culture Officer for MCC.** £130,000 application (see attached presentation)

MM – why doesn't one of the key partners in the project deliver this scheme? *MCC has already delivered some of the services and they have the experience and will have the support of the partners.*

CP – how will the project measure the impact? *The evaluation will involve experts and tenders will be invited.*

PC – there is a large social care element of this project, therefore is the project statutory or non-statutory? *It is a cultural/leisure element that will have a social care benefit but the line is blurred. Tourism, Leisure and Tourism section is driving this project and sees it as an innovative use of their experience to benefit a sector of society in light of the Health & Wellbeing Act. If the Department becomes independent under the Alternative Delivery Mechanism (ADM) review, they could continue to deliver the project for MCC with a Service Level Agreement (SLA).*

AM – Is this project/funding designed to reduce the costs for social services? *No, this is an additional service. GP referral schemes are recognising the benefits of art classes, particularly with dementia.*

AR – does the project have a process of selecting people, (checks, controls and sanctions), to run the courses, as the users are vulnerable? *The team involved with the pilot are experienced and by collecting robust data from the pilot quality models can be set up and replicated for future use. The Steering Group will monitor.*

LAG discussion following presentation

DMc – Excellent project but £130k is a lot of money (nearly £1,000 per projected beneficiary) – could the Partners contribute to reduce RDP amount?

CP – Happy that it is a non-statutory project. Working with the Powys Health Board on an environmental programme with similarities. Partners often struggle to unlock funding until there is an actual project.

NB – Sympathetic – the project is innovative and it is a pilot so potential problems will be addressed and ironed out.

JD (Welsh Gov) – has not read the application but it appears to be a Statutory Service and the team is currently delivering some of the services already. The presentation did not make it clear as to what the funding was for, that amount would suggest staff costs. How does this project fit into the LAG commissioned Non-Statutory Services Study that Liz Bickerton presented?

NH – enthusiastic about the project but is it a way of delivering a service for MCC during a period of funding cuts? Partners in the project were not detailed. This is a big project and would take a large percentage of the Theme 3 funding allocation – is this what the LAG wants?

MM – a PhD student could conduct research for this project, free of charge?

The LAG decided not to vote as they generally felt it was a significant amount of money and they had outstanding questions including: could the project be delivered for less; with partner contributions or other funding? Is the project

subsidizing a statutory Council service (social care) or is it non-statutory (culture and leisure)?

- **Nature's not Neat Project** – this application was only received by LAG members the previous day and not everyone had had a chance to read it so a discussion and vote was deferred – this project will be circulated for an on-line vote. It was felt that the title of the project was negative and that it should be positive – i.e. Nature is Neat? Name of project to be reviewed.

8. Welsh Government Updates – John Davies

- Good that 20 projects have been approved, 17 of these on the Wales Rural Network (WRN) website that lists all RDP Leader and RCDF projects in Wales. It currently has 60 on the website and all 150 Welsh projects that have been approved will be added. The LAG should look at this website [Wales Rural Network LAG groups](#) .
- LAG members are encouraged to sign up to the monthly newsletter which can also be found at the link above.
- All RDP schemes will receive funding until 2020, this was already confirmed for Leader.
- The first project claim is now invited.
- There is a stakeholder event regarding future programmes on 24th May at Builth Well – invitations for two LAG members/Admin body staff will be issued.
- September – UK Rural Network event in Northern Ireland on the Leader approach – invitations will be issued to the LAG
- A Farm Business Grant Scheme is open from 2nd May – 30th June, to agricultural holdings for equipment with an intervention of 40%. This is for £3,000 - £12,000 grants. There will be Road Shows – Chepstow on 18th May – through Farming Connect.
- Performance Indicators – WG has to report these, at a local level if the LAG chooses to include additional outputs/indicators it can only strengthen the project evaluation.
- Mark Lloyd attended the recent funding fayre in Builth Wells – all LAG members welcome to attend future events.

9. **Chair Comments** – Thanked the organisers for the use of the hall and also to those who made the arrangements for members to network prior to the meeting. The practice of holding meetings in different appropriate locations and giving time for members to network prior to the meeting should be continued.

The LAG is running more effectively with a healthy number of prospective projects. With funding limited we can now afford to be more choosy and make certain that **each new project represents good value for money and be sustainable.**

10. Actions

MP – Project 'Value for Money' calculation.

LW - Further discussions with Karin Molson, regarding Creative Lives, Active Lives.

DM - Nature isn't Neat – recommend a change to the project name and submit for on-line vote.

MP - Advise on the transfer of allocated funds between Theme Groups.

MP - Organise who should will be attending the stakeholders' event in Builth Wells on the 24th May.

2017 LAG Meetings:

Thursday 20th July 2017 – 10 am;

Wednesday 18th October 2017 – 2 pm

