

Vale of Usk Local Action Group
St Michael's Centre, Abergavenny
Thursday 20th July 2017
MINUTES

Members Present:	Nicola Bradbear Claire Brown Peter Cole Andrew David John Davies John Harris Angela Jones Pamela Mason Alan Michie (Chair) Mandy Moore Clare Parsons Lynne Richards (Rep) Alastair Robertson	Officers:	Zara Bligh Alison Grimson Lucinda James Mark Lloyd Mike Powell
		New Member:	Phil Powell
		Apologies:	Gareth Baker Neville Hart Helen Fletcher Katy Stevenson

Welcome. The Chair welcomed LAG members. The meeting was quorate (5 private; 4 voluntary; 4 public).

1. **Vote on new LAG Member:** Phil Powell, Gwent Energy. Information had previously circulated to members. **VOTE:** 12 – YES. **Approved**
2. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Matters arising: Creative Lives, Active Lives Project has not been approved for funding. Nature's Neater or Nature is Neater – better project name than Nature isn't Neat. **Minutes of 26th April 2017 - Approved.**
3. **Financial Update and Project Evaluation System – Mike Powell (See attached)** 25 approved projects, £601,704 with an average project size of £24k and thirteen projects in the pipeline, £312k. Project Evaluation is for LAG use only – weightings for different outputs is based on opinion. A project score of around 1.5 is probably a benchmark score. "Soft" outputs are also important.

Members felt that evaluating the legacy of Leader funding is important. Look at the five projects that have been completed and evaluate.

4. **Approved Projects update – Pam Mason (see attached notes)**

Members were generally pleased with the types of approved projects. Sustainability of the projects is important. Monmouthshire is benefitting more at present but Newport will benefit from pipeline projects. Ability to help develop Leader projects into capitalised projects is important. Studies should be circulated to theme group so they can consider future potential for completed Leader projects.

More promotion of the funding recommended - Alastair Robertson currently considering an event, details to be shared at the October LAG meeting.

5. **Pipeline Projects and Vote – Mike Powell**

- **Newport Volunteers Project** – early stages but a project to develop "community payback" relationships and co-ordinate a volunteering programme. Leadership Academy and MCC Countryside will have valuable input.
- **Eurocook** - Monmouthshire Comprehensive project – year 8 – pilot – Italian food and Italian language combined. This project will be available for voting shortly.

Project Vote - Co-Working Space Project – Details of this LAG project have been available to LAG members. It is a study into a shared work space and facilities for the creative arts sector with potential

for wider application. Sole traders working together with potential for collaborative working on large projects. The study will identify need and there are many examples of best practice.

Vote: 12 – Yes; 1 – abstain. **Approved.**

6. **Local Development Strategy (LDS)** – this item held over until October LAG meeting, RDP will review and make suggestions for LAG approval.
7. **Community Energy Update – Phil Powell, Gwent Energy** – See attached presentation.
8. **Membership Mix and Election of Officers** – Currently 22 members – 7 Voluntary; 6 Private and 6 Public Sectors. October 2017 is the AGM for the Vale of Usk LAG. New officers will be elected. If any member would like to be considered for Chair or Vice Chair, or would like to nominate a member – please respond to Zara – she will send an email prior to the October meeting.
9. **Marketing of Leader Progress** – Alastair Robertson will report on this at October meeting.

10. **Current Aims and Objectives of Vale of Usk LAG**

- More LAG involvement with projects, possibly through Theme groups and support with supporting projects to the next stage after Leader funding.
- A strategic approach to funding support – geographic spread of projects, sector spread – identify any gaps and follow up with specific marketing. Why projects have failed to get funding, etc. Share experiences with other LAGs.
- LAG should receive studies, their local knowledge might identify future projects or direction. Officers need to make time to review projects/spend/ gaps and work through theme groups.
- Young people should be included – maybe a school competition which will be valuable experience for students?
- Is our process of accepting projects on a continual basis as fair as having publicized windows when applications will be considered? Some LAG's do offer the latter but have experienced problems attracting enough projects. The LAG can change to this method during an LDS review. Increased promotion of the Programme will raise awareness.

11. **Actions**

- MP – Evaluate completed projects.**
- AR - Marketing event to raise awareness and share successes.**
- MP - LDS review and method of accepting project applications.**
- ZB - Email LAG regarding vote for Chair/Vice Chair.**
- MP - Strategic summary of current funding support, eg geographic, sector allocation.**
- ZB - Studies available to LAG/Theme Groups.**

2017 LAG Meetings:

- Wednesday 18th October 2017 – 2 pm
- Thursday 18th January 2018 – 10 am
- Wednesday 18th April 2018 – 2 pm
- Thursday 19th July 2018 – 10 am
- Wednesday 17th October – 2 pm

