

## LEADER 2014-2020 Meeting

### Vale of Usk Local Action Group

#### Administrative Body Monmouthshire County Council

Meeting Title	Vale of Usk Virtual meeting due to Covid19	Meeting Date	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
Venue	Remote video access from homes	Meeting Time	10am
MONCC Attendees	Zara Bligh, Louise McGuinness, Mike Powell, Deserie Mansfield, Lucinda James Alison Grimson, Delia Newell Ruth Waycott, Andrew David, Neville Hart, Elaine Blanchard, John Davies Lynn Richards, Claire Brown, John Harris, Phil Powell, Nicola Bradbear		
Apologies	Alan Michie, Alastair Robertson, Sharran Lloyd		
Meeting Description	Virtual -LAG meeting. Notes from the meeting with action points for officers. Telephone Conference due to Corona Virus.		

- Mike Powell explaining that Alan Michie was unable to join the meeting for technical reasons. He invited Andrew David to be chair. The notes for the January and April meeting had been circulated and matters arising were approved.
- Finance Report and Update on Lead Body: Alison Grimson explained that the remaining balance from the Co-operation Budget had been transferred to the Implementation Budget. By the end of this month she will know the budget for the ongoing programme. She needs to submit the re-evaluation of the LDS by the end of next week (24<sup>th</sup> July). Mike Powell asked the group if they were happy for him to do the necessary revision of the LDS on behalf of the LAG and they would be copied in afterwards. This was voted on and APPROVED. Mike explained that 92% of the funds were allocated leaving approx. £100,000. The projects needed to show they were good value for money. Project spend needs to be allocated and defrayed by December 2021. Thirty out of 40 projects have been achieved so far.

Nature isn't Neat: this project has ended but it has been hailed as a great success with many UK councils adopting and sharing it as good practise. The Bee project has also been adopted in Sweden. Alison Howard's post is redundant this month and she is taking her annual leave now, as the funding for ENRAW (Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing) is not available. If this should change in the future she may come back.

- **New Projects:**

**Halls Together:** circulated to LAG members. Lucinda explained that the Halls in Monmouthshire were going to be supported and that halls in Newport could be funded volunteer time as 20% match funding. The Halls Together bid aims to promote working together, sharing resources, encouraging greater use of the halls to create a sustainable future, greater use of technology including booking systems and use of solar power and joined up sourcing of energy to maximise bulk purchasing power. Mike explained the project had not been scored but had been divided into three main elements. First to engage with all halls, second to set up projects as required, third to create a CIC to control the projects going forward. The group voted 10 for and none against. APPROVED.

**Welfare Unit for Farmers:** An old exhibition unit which will be re-purposed, branded and sited at Raglan Livestock Market. Even more essential now with COVID stresses added to Brexit, Ecological elements and Climate Change. Strong links to NFU, NHS and co-ordinated by Farming Connect Network all related to wider picture for sustainable farming. All in favour, no negative votes, APPROVED.

**Van Project.** Elaine gave an overview of this project with a view of getting full information ready for voting in the next few months. She explained how access to food has become a real issue and Food Poverty (especially finding fresh produce in rural areas) was causing major hardship. Des stated that this project crossed some of the existing food platforms and they needed to get together to ensure there was no duplication. Elaine aims to put a business plan together and present it to the LAG asap.

**E-Bikes:** Mark not here to give a presentation but the project idea will be worked on over the next few months.

**Food projects:** Des briefly explained about the Data Mining that has been undertaken which highlights that there should be no boundaries with food, farmers should be encouraged to allow others to develop local volunteer growing activities that are community led to reduce food miles and keep food buying local. Food banks have a stigma whereas Community Larder Projects can develop local volunteer growing activities. Crickhowell has developed a Food Hub for community co-operative called Our Food and they want to do this Monmouthshire wide,

**This was amended at the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**

**(After discussion CB, EB, JH, MM, LR agreed that food projects would be amended by Des Mansfield.**

**1b. Food projects:** Des briefly explained about some of the food initiatives being developed. The information gleaned, highlights that there should be no boundaries with food. Farmers should be encouraged to allow others to develop local volunteer/growing activities that are community led, to reduce food miles and keep food buying local. The data analysis project, funded by Welsh Government, is progressing. Food banks have a stigma whereas Community Larder Projects can develop local volunteer growing activities. Crickhowell has developed a Food Hub for community co-operative called Our Food and they wish to expand their activities into Monmouthshire to support the food/farming/producers in our area.)

**Social Services** working with Mark Lloyd have an agenda to develop a Care Leavers agenda along with a mentoring scheme for young people starting out in the community. Funds have been provisionally allocated for this. **Canal Boat** project is on hold due to COVID 19. **Gilwern Schools** still want to go ahead with the outside classroom project and wish to start in time to take advantage of the autumn season for over winter growing. Elaine is hoping that regardless of the weather the children will be able to grow, cook and eat the food. Extra volunteers may be needed but DBS checks are essential. Des pointed out that Bee project volunteers were already DBS checked.

**Digital Officer - 5G** County wide opportunities as described by Mike Powell. Two major projects one aimed at tourism based at Raglan Castle using augmented reality and the other also based near Raglan aimed at protecting farming assets and crop production. New post required to oversee this work and assist it in growing beyond Monmouthshire. This was voted through with no negatives. APPROVED.

- **IoT Independent Living Presentation - Delia Newell** - Attached is the [presentation](#) and the films: [Shetland Isles 1](#); [Shetland Isles 2](#); [Shetland Isles 3](#); <https://www.ethelcare.co.uk/>; [ARMED](#).
- **AOB** – Neville Hart – was the RDP money left £60,000 or £100,000. £100,000 is the amount
- **Andrew closed the meeting at 12.10pm after thanking everyone for their input and time.**  
**Date of next meeting Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.**

*Actions arising from the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020*

- *Alison Grimson and Mike Powell to re-evaluate LDS and submit by 24<sup>th</sup> July. Need to share this information with the LAG*

- *Mark Lloyd to do consultation and research on E-Bikes project – 28<sup>th</sup> August.*
- *Lucinda James to call the halls and also engage with Newport Halls after she receives details of the halls from John Davies.*
- *Des and Elaine need to get together to discuss Food Platforms. Zara will keep all informed as this project develops over the next few months.*
- *Mike Powell to develop Job Description of Digital Development post.*
- *Claire - DCMS – will put some information together about the Open Reach Community and share with Phil Powell and LAG.*

Notes prepared by:	Louise McGuinness/Zara Bligh
Date:	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2020