

Administrative Body Monmouthshire County Council

Vale of Usk Local Action Group

Meeting Title	Vale of Usk Virtual LAG Meeting (due to Covid19)	Meeting Date	22 nd July 2021
Venue	Remote video access from homes	Meeting Time	10 am – 12 noon
LAG Attendees	Pamela Mason, Jason Hughes, John Harris, Nicola Bradbear, Andrew David, Ruth Waycott, Elaine Blanchard, John Davies, Phil Powell, Alastair Robertson		
Apologies	Sharran Lloyd, Lynne Richards, Kate Stevenson, Adam Taylor, Claire Brown, Mark McLoughlin, Matthew Bevan, Mandy Moore, Gareth Baker		
MCC	Mike Powell, Deserie Mansfield, Lucinda James, Adam Greenwood		
Meeting Description	Third LAG Meeting for 2021		

10 am Welcome – Pam Mason, Chair. Introductions for Jason Hughes. Meeting is quorate, no conflicts of interest declared.

1. Apologies for absence: see above.
2. Approval and Matters Arising from Minutes 22nd April 2021 – PM – no actions or amendments. John Davis approved, Phil Powell, seconded.
3. Financial Update and Update on Lead Body - MP

Forty-five projects have been completed or are work in progress, 18% are studies and the rest are projects, those outstanding are listed in Update Projects later in the meeting. We have £123,000 to spend but we have an opportunity to extend the programme by 6 months to September 2022. MCC has put in 20% match funding for Monmouthshire wards but Newport did not have any match funding available, but all projects in Newport were community led projects that found their own match funding. We are investigating the MCC money to be used until June 2023 and the Prosperity for All Fund. WG say 2024 for a replacement to the RDP Fund. JD – any funding from any other LAGs underspent? No, it went to the business non-domestic rate funding pot.

4. New Projects Update (see document)

Ruth Waycott – Tintern Abbey Trail

Des Mansfield – Gilvern School Education, Our Food, Nutrition in our Communities (recommendation to amend)
 Lucinda James – Be Community, Farmers Wellbeing Unit, Halls Together, JD and JH – two halls in their areas, they would like to get involved. PP – they have a loan scheme available, up to 100,000 kw of solar to community buildings it doesn't have to be Monmouthshire it can be Newport, being a loan scheme we have to pay it back, so they charge for electricity at a lower rate. Llanover Halls Cluster. IoT and Independent Living Project.

Mike Powell – Basecamp Chepstow – pipeline ML project, if we could actually go forward with this in a fortnight.
 Carbon Literacy Training (pipeline) and Transition Towns Support (pipeline)
 Adam Greenwood – Smart Usk (pipeline).

5. Funding Opportunities – MP – they are enormous at the moment, not discussing them now.

6. Climate Change and current LAG Projects - Andrew David

There is a lot that the various LAG projects are doing, besides those within the Renewable Energy Theme that are helping combat climate change. Initially combating climate change was about energy efficiency and renewable energy, but over the last few years there have been significant changes such as carbon capture, the future banning of gas boilers and internal combustion vehicles and the reduction in other gases that have a far higher Climate Change Potential than carbon dioxide. Methane produced as a result of fossil fuel production and livestock farming, particularly intensive farming is 30 times more potent. Nitrous oxide produced by some

agricultural activities and vehicles is 300 times worse than carbon dioxide and then there are fluorinated gases which can be up to 10,000,000 times as bad, such as some refrigerants and those used in electrical switchgear.

Looking at some of our projects - The Gilwern School Education project - local growing so cutting down on food miles and the 'No Dig' campaign traps carbon in the soil. Deserie's Data Collection project on land use and availability will help farmers and growers quickly respond to changing consumer demand. Diets are changing, (vegan and vegetarian) whether it is for health reasons by eating less red meat or to combat Climate Change. We don't want to allow deforestation, a major source of carbon capture to support beef production. Reduced Food Miles benefit both the environment and the local economy; why import food when we could grow it locally! The Community Fridges/Food Banks project is reducing food waste, and if people are going to be in food poverty, they are likely to be in fuel poverty, which is another of my priorities. The Halls Together project initially was about sharing best practice, securing favourable utility rates and hopefully grant funding for environmental improvements. However, as focal points within communities they be used to disseminate good environmental practices. This will be aided by the proposal to make Carbon Literacy training available to those that run these buildings with what is learnt being cascaded down to users.

MCC has declared a Climate Emergency and the Council has done a lot of work on its own estates with solar panels, electric vehicles, electric charging points and LED lighting. They are looking to work with other organisations to see encourage and support actions that residents can take. The Carbon Literacy training will help with this as it will be available to leaders of the Transition Towns and other environmental groups making up the county's Community Climate Champions. These groups are a great asset in combating climate change in the county, but as they operate on a voluntary basis we are consulting if the availability of paid specialist staff or training could make them even more effective, so it may come forward as a LAG project.

This was just a quick overview of projects discussed during the meeting, with aspects of other projects also be helping combat climate change.

PP – we have had a heat wave but they are going to get worse, in western US they have had a heat wave about 15 degrees above the previous heat wave (45 degrees centigrade), we are not dealing with the carbon emissions as we should. We could also get the flooding that Germany had two weeks ago.

7. Regarding being kept up to date with non RDP interventions that we are working on, two responded positively - AR/PM said it would be very useful.
8. Pam thanked everyone for their time and hard work to the LAG Vale of Usk and she closed this meeting at 12 noon.
9. The next meeting is 21st October 2021 at 2 pm.

Notes prepared by:	Zara Bligh
Date:	26 th July 2021

2022 LAG Meetings:

Thursday 20th January 2022 10 am
Thursday 28th April 2022 2 pm
Thursday 14th July 2022 10 am
Thursday 27th October 2022 2 pm

