

Projects Update LAG 20th January 2022

Theme 1

Pipeline project:

Our View Extension Project

To mark the end of the Our View/ Social Media Tourism Ambassadors project we would like to hold 3 training sessions to create an end of project exhibition and legacy zine (a small piece of print that explains the project and can be digital). They suggest an outdoor exhibition to minimise the Covid risks – and to bring added interest into local towns. This would use waterproof prints on banners and boards which could be displayed in, for example the ‘covid shelters’ along Monnow Street, in Agincourt Square under/ against the railings and in the Market Hall in Abergavenny or along Chepstow’s riverside.

Costing: £4,900 with match-funding being the volunteer ambassadors training.

Gwent Wildlife Trust - eDNA – Grassland Fungi & Dung Beetle –

The proposal is wildlife based and focuses on grassland, concentrating on two different aspects with a common thread running through it of e(nvironmental) DNA. The overarching purpose of the eDNA is to seek cost effective, innovative solutions to make rapid assessments of biodiversity, for use by GWT and more widely in the NRW. This will enable quicker assessment of protected site conditions so they can survey more sites with their limited resources and for the Sustainable Farming Scheme to gather baseline data and post intervention information. The two aspects are the Grassland Fungi and the Dung Beetle.

Cost: RDP amount - £15,885.60 with match-funded from the volunteer workers - £3,971.40

Abergavenny Lido Feasibility Study – The ultimate goal is to bring a heated outdoor pool back to Bailey Park, Abergavenny. This application is for funds to finance a feasibility study with the aim of ensuring that the pool is both viable and sustainable. The application has been approved by the LAG

Theme 2

Gilwern Schools educational programme – we are entering the last phase of this project and closure and the LAG received an update for the last meeting . We are now looking at final spend and evaluation. Despite the hold up by Covid, the schools returned in September and we re-started the face to face opportunities (where possible). However, Covid is still prevalent and still offers some hindrance to the project.

Previously reported on and no change: On a positive note, this project continues to make its mark with the highlight of this being its impact on the developing curriculum. The project has added to the development of the new curriculum (which was one of the objectives of the project) and the new curriculum now offers the opportunity to look at where food comes from and its impact on carbon, etc.

Developing resource for farm enterprise – Brecon Beacons & Monmouthshire

This project funding has come to an end, and we are looking at evaluation. A report was sent previously and the group are seeking an extension to take forward one phase of the project (access

to land. The application has been circulated and the group will make a presentation at this meeting as requested.

Nutritional Project Abergavenny Community Trust

LAG approved the request for changes to the original bid and we have now moved 10K from the original bid into support for access to food in Monmouthshire. A wider report will be offered for this part of the project for the next meeting.

Progress of the project.

The project is making good progress and gains momentum. Contact has been made with all named partners in the development area and there is a build-up of shared foods from surplus supermarket food stock – ACT acts as a catalyst and administrator (liaison point) for supermarket and partners.

In preparation for half term, frozen foods (as well as fresh surplus foods) are being utilised from Morrison and the continued liaison with the Supermarket is good.

As reported in our last LAG overview and with permission from the LAG, we have moved 10k out of this project for direct intervention on and development of support for volunteers. This briefs (attached) have been sent to sell to Wales (as per MON CC procurement policies) and we are now awaiting applications. This will be a short term intervention and be supplemented by successful (non RDP) funding.

- Work in partnership with local volunteers to develop the above and effectively free-up their time to do what they do best – that is, to engage with their local communities”.

No other info available as yet – the project coordinator is on leave and an update will be forthcoming when the evaluation takes place.

Farm Options Study – this project was approved by the LAG via online voting on 31st August 2021. The study focussed on potential future uses of a Monmouthshire county farm. Miller Research was selected to undertake the work and a full report is available on the Monmouthshire.biz website. A useful visit to the farm was held on 22nd September 2021 and thanks are recorded to the LAG members who attended for their valued input.

Theme 3

Be. Community Programme – over the last quarter, there’s been fewer courses delivered (due to the budget getting lower and being focused on different aspects). However, there’s been greater focus in providing bespoke courses for many different community groups and clusters of volunteers in the area. These have ranged from food safety training, manual handling through to leadership training. With each of these courses’ participants have provided feedback, asking how they will utilise these skills in their volunteering moving forward and what aspects of the course they enjoyed. The independent evaluation of the programme is progressing well. Additional funding for the new year would be very beneficial moving forward as its planned to host a few courses in the new year to reintroduce volunteers back to the project with a host of courses for them to join (ranging from online tools to safeguarding) and to purchase online content in order to create sustainable resources for the future. A specification is currently being developed for the online platform to host training.

Farming Community Network Exhibition Unit Project – it is situated at the Monmouthshire Livestock Market on Mondays and Wednesdays, and occasionally on Fridays for special events. A survey has

been carried out at the Livestock Market by the NHS, but we have yet to hear their conclusions. The exhibition unit is being used by different user groups, such as Mind Monmouthshire, NFU Gwent, Farmwell and volunteers like Bob Stevenson and Shirley Hughes.

Theme 4

Halls Together – following the appointment of Shirley Hughes and Louise McGuiness to work on the project, we asked them to design a questionnaire to find out the current position of the halls, what facilities they have and what areas of help and support they need. 26 responses were submitted and after the evaluation the steering group were able to identify a number of areas here the halls would like support. This then allowed us to organise a number of relevant workshops to support the halls, such as how to engage with your community, managing your hall, fundraising to deliver and social media training. We have also asked Andrew David if he is able to offer any support to the halls from an energy perspective.

The steering group are in the process of becoming a constituted group, in order to work towards becoming a CIC. This will allow them to apply for funding to continue to work started through the RDP project.

Carbon Literacy for Communities - this project was approved by the LAG via online voting on 6th September 2021. The aim is to roll out carbon literacy training to communities with three main elements, town/community councils/community buildings, residents via the adult learning programme and training a number of local authority staff/climate champions to be able to train others thus helping the long term sustainability of the project because we will be able to repeat the training again ourselves at minimal cost. A brief has been written to procure a suitable training provider and following agreement with officers from Newport City Council will be advertised on Sell2Wales.

Theme 5

Llanover Cluster – The Llanover project held a number of successful training sessions over the last couple of months including ‘how to use your phone to take photos’, Defib training at each of the 4 halls and 3 wreath workshops.

The project steering group submitted an application to extend their project and to apply for further funding to continue their training, taking in an extra 4 halls, and to work closely with the halls together project to share best practice and offer training session to the wider halls network. The project extension and additional funding has been approved by the LAG

IoT and Independent Living- the Digital Transformation project is now coming to an end, with the trial of the 5 devices finishing in January. The final report is due on the 31st January which we are currently working through. The report will include case studies for each of the devices and will provide the suppliers an evaluation of their devices from both the service users and staff from the 5 Gwent Local Authorities.

From the RDP side, we have recently submitted an application to extend the current project, which was approved with 13 yes votes and 0 No's. Since we submitted the application, we have concerns have been raised to whether the integrated service team can allow the OT seconded onto the project to continue due to major staffing shortages within her team. We are currently looking at option so we can proceed.

Pipeline project:

Heat Networks – Although the LEADER funded project is complete with a final heat mapping report provided, we have been in discussion with representatives from UK Government (BEIS/HNDU) about taking forward more detailed feasibility around a number of farms in the region.

Invisible Fences – an interesting project idea has been submitted by Gwent Wildlife Trust. The project will set up an experimental network of virtual fences and devise experiments to answer some simple questions of relevance to future potential farm and conservation grazing users. Potential applications of invisible fence technology in farming are considerable, including for example, mob grazing; expansion of cattle into extensive pasture area currently only suitable for sheep, buffering of high access zones and hazardous areas and so on. The RDP team have carried out some initial consultation and GWT have been invited to submit a formal funding application.