

## Projects Update LAG 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021

### Theme 1

**Tintern Abbey Trail** (Wye Valley AONB) – this project is stopping at this stage, as a recent developments mean that the central area of the Abbey (which was the focal point of the trail) will be closed off to the public for up to 5 years, due to safety issues which were not known at the outset of this project. Plus, Cadw have been non responsive to requests to place i Beacons inside the Abbey. However, the tech has moved on rapidly and the original proposal and delivery of the app now feels dated.

#### **Pipeline project:**

**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 project is currently being scored by a sub group with a view to a LAG member vote.

### Theme 2

**Gilwern Schools educational programme** – we are entering the last phase of this project and will give a fuller report for the next LAG meeting. 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 offers some hindrance to the project.

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 impact on carbon, etc.

**Harvest** : Gilwern has just harvested their crop - beans, potatoes, salad items, etc. Llanfoist – linked up with Keep Wales Tidy for support with building the beds, adding compost and planting and growing.

**Cooking** has resumed in the schools within the programme with **120 children** participating in session looking at seasonality, nutrition and vegetable is particular.

**Food Waste** – as a direct result of the project we will see a new programme of work which sees the schools responding to a potential food shortage within the families. Directly working with the project there will be an opportunity to introduce a recurring food excess programme – adding to school community and liaising with Morrisons, it is hoped that this will offer nutritious food to families that need it.

**Composting** : Purchase of bins is eminent and the youngsters will be looking at worms for example and impact on compost and looking at a potential training course on compost.

We are now about to relook at the actions of the programme and set about seeking for extensions or shared activities in schools.

**Food Sector development and data analysis** – The funding for the core project of data analysis was sourced through Wales Govt – 240k.

Funding originally allocated has now been returned to the RDP “Pot”. 1k remains in support of activity around the project (via RDP). However, the project has embraced partnership working and

included NRW, Dwr Cymru, OSS and Welsh Govt amongst its growing interested parties. The data includes a gap analysis which means we can better identify base line information such as where are our farms, what do we grow, nutrition of ground, etc. The programme has drawn interest both nationally and locally and our work on public procurement (which is part of this programme of work) was mentioned by Ministers and AM Laura Jones in the Senedd (first week of October). We are seeking future funding which included external bids such as UKRI and Welsh Govt funding to continue the work started.

The key focus for Monmouthshire is still to engage with the supply chain and direct growers to business for use of local produce

### **Developing resource for farm enterprise – Brecon Beacons & Monmouthshire**

This project funding has come to an end and we are looking at evaluation. Please see attached report.

### **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 Community Fridges in Monmouthshire.

#### 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 act 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”

### **Farm Options Study** – this project was approved by the LAG via online voting on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.

The study is focussed on potential future uses of a Monmouthshire county farm. Miller Research were selected to undertake the work and a full report is due by the end of October 2021. A useful visit to the farm was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 and thanks are recorded to the LAG members who attended for their valued input.

**Basecamp Ethical Lettings Agency** – this project was approved by the LAG via online voting on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021. It has since been withdrawn. The applicant cited the main reason as being a short time frame which will not provide the best chance of success and value for money over Christmas as it's not a good time for setting up a housing management agency. No expenditure has been incurred and the funding amount has been transferred back to the implementation budget.

### 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** – the Exhibition Unit is refurbished and the livery wrapping has been applied. It is now at Monmouthshire Livestock Market, after the official opening at the Usk Show on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021. A survey has been carried out at the Livestock Market and Usk Show by the NHS and they now await the completion of the data analysis. The unit is open every Monday and Wednesday at the Livestock Market as well as shows and events.

### Theme 4

**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 areas.

**Halls Together** – The steering group have now appointed Shirley Hughes and Louise McGuinness to work on the Halls Together Project. They have designed an on-line questionnaire to poll the halls on their current position with regards to facilities, energy, broadband, training, community and committee needs etc. The deadline for the questionnaire to be completed is the 15<sup>th</sup> October, although we will keep it open so not to exclude any late entry's. Shirley and Louise will be analysing the responses and will put some proposals on a suitable way forwards for the project. The steering group will then decide which is most suitable. Our next steering group meeting is the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October.

**Carbon Literacy for Communities** - this project was approved by the LAG via online voting on 6<sup>th</sup> 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** – there have been 10 training sessions held over the past couple of months, these include harvest wreath workshops, IT training and defib training. In addition to the 10 sessions there were 2 IT training sessions and 1 remembrance wreath workshop that had to be cancelled due to

low bookings. There are 3 training sessions coming up in early November with more planned before the end of the year.

**IoT and Independent Living**- this project is progressing well, with many of the partners reporting positive feedback on the digital devices that have been installed over the Gwent area. However, there has been low take-up of Ethel Device in Torfaen. Torfaen indicated that there are 5 spare devices which they would not be able to find participants for due to staffing capacity. Monmouthshire CC have now taken responsibility for the 5 Ethel devices and have found participants in Monmouthshire.

Caerphilly have also had issues with finding suitable devices for the ARMED devices, Monmouthshire CC have again offered to help find participants.

We are now looking at trialling the Amazon Echo Show along with smart home devices within Monmouthshire to make a comparison with the 5 devices we are trialling throughout the Gwent area.

**Pipeline project:**

**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 areas 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.