Members Present:	Gareth Baker	Officers:	Zara Bligh
	Nicola Bradbear		Mark Lloyd
	Sarah Coakham		Deserie Mansfield
	Peter Cole		Mike Powell
	Andrew David		
	John Davies	Apologies:	Claire Brown
	John Harris		Cath Fallon
	Neville Hart		Angela Jones
	Sharran Lloyd		Mandy Moore
	Pamela Mason		
	Alan Michie (Chair)	Guest:	Katy Godfrey, Newport CC
	Clare Parsons		
	Phil Powell		
	Lynne Richards (Rep)		
	Alastair Robertson		

Welcome. The Chair welcomed LAG members. The meeting was quorate (5 private; 4 voluntary; 6 public).

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**. Matters arising:
   - Marketing – Alastair Robertson is co-ordinating a marketing push which will be largely theme based. See attached sheet. A marketing sub-group meeting should be arranged. Alan Michie; Mike Powell; Alastair Robertson; Andrew David and utilise the MCC Communication Services.
   - All project funded feasibility studies will be put on website. ZB to provide links.

   Minutes of 20th July 2017 - Approved.

2. **Vote – Chair & Vice Chairs**: Peter Cole is stepping down as Vice Chair and he was thanked for his great contribution to the Vale of Usk LAG.
   Chair: Alan Michie – unanimous support for the appointment. **Voted as Chair**
   Vice Chair: Pam Mason – unanimous support for the appointment. **Voted as Vice Chair**
   Alastair Robertson – unanimous support for the appointment. **Voted as Vice Chair**

3. **Financial Update and Project Evaluation System – Mike Powell (See attached)** 28 approved projects, £650,360 with an average project size of £23k, 52% is now committed and nine projects in the pipeline, £275k – if all approved, 75% of funds would be committed.

   The internal Mid-Term Evaluation of the Programme has been completed and is currently with Welsh Government for comment – this will be forwarded shortly.

   RDP Captial funding - RCDF:–
   - Llanover Halls Cluster has been successful and received £90k;
   - Abergavenny Castle has applied for a covered structure in the grounds – this is being considered.
   RDP Tourism Funding Applications were taken over by Visit Wales. The window is now closed but will reopen Easter 2018.

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

5. **Newport Volunteer Project Presentation – Katie Godfrey, Newport City Council (see presentation)**

   A comprehensive presentation was given and although there was initial support for the project there were concerns about overlapping with other groups in the area and that had been developed and no longer existed also whether the project was innovative or sustainable?

In view of the projects' importance it was decided that a special meeting be organised to discuss the project in more detail and a feedback would be given to the LAG prior to a project vote.

Project Vote – Newport Volunteer Project – deferred until after meeting.

6. **Theme Group Project Ideas Discussion (See attached}**

7. **Any Other Business –** date of next meeting is Thursday 18th January 2018 at 10 am (venue north of region - tbc)

8. **Actions**
   AR/MP –   **Marketing sub-group meeting to be arranged.**
   ZB -   **LAG to receive links to completed feasibility studies**
   MP/LJ   **Arrange meeting to discuss Newport Volunteer Project.**
   MP   **Arrange to progress the Theme Groups Project Ideas**

2018 LAG Meetings:

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

Digital
- Technology to combat loneliness – live local events, reading clubs – video conferencing.
- Virtual tours of rural countryside so access-excluded residents can benefit via film.
- Opportunity to engage with younger residents – volunteer hours with Welsh Baccalaureate – digital is instinctive with young today, they could support older residents.
- Community hubs – RCDF application for community halls to receive broadband
- Play areas that use digital screens, outdoor movies, etc.
- Rural broadband needs to be tackled first as many areas have poor service.
- My Monmouthshire App is very useful, a lot of scope for apps for visitors to area/events.

Tourism
- Dog friendly tourism - accreditation for businesses/walks
- Linking in with Visit Wales themes – Year of Sea 2018; Year of Discovery 2019;
- Linking in with Visit Wales route based campaign – our marketing will benefit. A470 route.
- Celtic Manor conference centre, opportunities for destinations, producers, local economy
- App available for visitors to see what is available to see and do?
- Location apps, digital maps – is broadband/mobile signal strong enough?
- End of bridge toll – more day trips from Bristol area?
- Coach tourism opportunities
- Marketing with examples is good to encourage new ideas.

Renewable Energies
- Support Green Great Britain week? (£5,000)
- Network with forests, eg timber? Replanting?
- Zero avoidable waste – carbon reductions
- Low carbon heating for homes. Electricity but self-generating.
- Zero emissions for taxis – offer incentives/charging points for electric cars
- Low emissions for buses and LA transport. Could hydrogen buses be used? There is funding available for Monmouthshire and Newport buses.
- Water from the Severn Tunnel – could this be used for energy?

General
- Bees Co-operation project would benefit from digital support for sharing information and records.
- Tourist information in Monmouth is poor – kiosks are not ideal. Missed opportunity. WG example of possible project was to support local businesses to provide a Tourist Information service?
- There are Public Service Board links and community links that could be beneficial.
- Village halls could benefit from awareness raising on renewables and RCDF capital funding opportunities. Rechargeable points would be good in shopping areas.
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are promoting, protecting, enhancing and celebrating the natural environment. Leader has supported with feasibility studies in different areas but it is important to know what comes next. Theme groups should discuss their relevant studies and make suggestions.
- Projects should look at the links between biodiversity, health and wellbeing. Awareness raising.
- Communication and sharing of information is an important function.