

Vale of Usk Local Action Group
Bishton Village Hall
Wednesday 18th April 2018
MINUTES

Members
Present:

Gareth Baker
 Nicola Bradbear
 Andrew David
 John Davies
 John Harris
 Angela Jones
 Sharran Lloyd
 Pamela Mason
 Alan Michie (Chair)
 Lynne Richards (Rep)
 Ruth Waycott

Officers:

Alison Grimson
 Mike Powell
 Mark Lloyd

Apologies:

Mandy Moore
 Clare Parsons
 Phil Powell
 Alastair Robertson
 Katy Stevenson
 Cllr Bob Greenland
 Sarah Cookham

Welcome. The Chair welcomed LAG members to the fifteenth meeting and best wishes were expressed for Zara and Alastair's wife, Ros Robertson. Members agreed to retain the networking lunch at meetings. Thanks to Pam Davies for the catering. There are fewer agenda items in response to member's requests for more discussion time. The meeting was quorate (3 private; 3 voluntary; 5 public).

1. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Matters arising - Letter of commitment sent for Food Hubs Cooperation. Marketing: recent promotion of RCDF capital funding. Lucinda engaged on a social media campaign highlighting work on approved projects. Important to use success of projects to promote funding opportunities. Members requested to follow our RDP facebook/Twitter accounts and to share/like when appropriate. Actions all completed or addressed in this agenda.
Minutes of 18th January 2018 - Approved.
2. **Financial Update –Alison Grimson.** 32 approved projects, £680K with an average project size of £20K. 55% is now committed and 9 projects in the pipeline, an extra £372K if all approved, 85% of funds would be committed. There is a possibility the programme could be extended until 2023. Spending is on course with good spend across all five themes although cooperation showing less spend.
3. **Project update and New Projects– Pam Mason (see attached presentation²)**
 Additional comments: Feedback from recent SE Wales regional meeting indicates Vale of Usk is ahead of other areas in terms of project range, quality, actual and committed spend.
 St Mary's Priory – Interim report available shortly. Probably two thirds completed.
 Nature Isn't Neat – Invitations have recently been sent to town/community councils.
 Rural Transport – Numerous project options arising from study. Meeting this Friday with Community Transport Association to seek support for a bid under the Cooperation and Short Supply Chain measure for a rural transport coordinator post. LAG member interest in project around tourist transport and transport for people likely to be affected by imminent wide ranging changes to universal credit.
 Be. Community Programme – Request for project officer to contact Lynne Richards, John Davies, John Harris.
 Under the successful RCDF application Broadway Partners will be looking to connect a further 400 properties in mid-Monmouthshire within the next six months. Broadway is augmenting this with an additional £2.1M awarded through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.
 Llanover Digital Halls – Capital works now completed.
 BEES – Meetings coming up to look at measuring outcomes. Monmouth Bee Festival 20th May 2018.
 Living Levels application update – The applicant is providing a response to further LAG member comments.

Pipeline projects – In addition to water source heat pumps also investigating through a Belgian company potential for small scale 'vortex' hydroelectric turbines.

In a general discussion as to which projects particularly interest members, most mentions were for broadband/TVWS, fully charged, rural transport. There was also interest in the potential projects around grass cuttings and water source heat pumps with at least two members keen to pursue more green environmental projects and those with links to biodiversity.

4. **Agri-Urban Update – Pam Mason**

Des and John Prosser have been busy writing up the final report prior to the 7th April deadline. Many theme 2 projects are linked to Agri-Urban and the emphasis is now on how the study can be converted into projects. It is likely that the Food Hub will be a LAG application but this is yet to be determined.

5. **Digital Opportunities – Mike Powell (See attached⁴)**

There are numerous opportunities around new 'Internet of Things' technology. It is based on a low level network which is able to measure and send regular small packets of data on a range of factors such as air quality, temperature, humidity, movement, energy, car parking, speed control. There are devices for homes and for towns. The two most popular networks are LoRaWAN and Sygfox with the latter offering a free four year trial. In terms of LEADER there are three areas for projects – Independent Living, Smart Towns, Social Housing. A funding application is being prepared by Monmouthshire County Council's Social Services and Careline team. The details and value will be available within three weeks to share initially with the digital theme group. Similar discussions are due to happen with the Usk Primary School headteacher to encourage the children, staff and parents to embrace and push forwards the benefits of this new age of technological advances. There will be a further report on progress at the next LAG meeting.

6. **Any Other Business –** For information Wye Valley River Festival taking place 5th – 20th May. Date of next LAG meeting is Thursday 19th July 2018 at 10am.

The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting with the aim that over the next quarter we concentrate on successfully implementing projects and look to bring forward further innovative ideas.

7. **Actions**

ML – Request Be. Community Programme coordinator contact Newport members.

MP - Further progress report on digital opportunities for next LAG meeting.

All - Members to vote promptly on recommended projects.

2018 LAG Meetings:

Thursday 19th July 2018 – 10 am

Wednesday 17th October 2018 – 2 pm

