

Vale of Usk Local Action Group Underwood Community Centre Wednesday 17th October 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
Ruth Waycott

Phil Powell
Gail Devine
Sarah Coakham
Clare Parsons
Mandy Moore

Officers: Mike Powell
Mark Lloyd
Deserie Mansfield
Carly Jones

Apologies: Katy Stevenson
Claire Brown
Cllr Sara Jones
Neville Hart
Alastair Robertson
Katy Stevenson

- Welcome.** The Chair welcomed LAG members to the seventeenth meeting. Members were asked to consider whether we are going in the right direction and to consider what the focus should be over the next quarter. Thanks to John Davies for setting up the meeting and to Pam Davies for the catering. During the lunch members were able to view the plans for the new gymnasium and to ask questions. The meeting was quorate (3 private; 5 voluntary; 8 public).
- Apologies.** Apologies as above.
- Minutes of the last meeting 19th July 2018.** Approved. No matters arising. PP contacted BBC Wales but no interest yet in follow up story on EV charging. Other actions addressed in this agenda.
- RDP team update.** It was noted that Zara is recovering well and members wished to record their best wishes. Carly Jones has joined the team as an apprentice and will mainly be assisting Alison Grimson with finance and also ICT. Mike, Des and Mark currently the main project officers with Alison Howard looking after the pollinator type projects. Next week Des and Pam will be attending final Agri-Urban meeting in Barcelona.
- Financial Update – Mike Powell.** 35 approved projects with 18 completed. Studies represent 18% of total spend. Average project cost is £24K. Spending is on course with a good spread across all five themes. Estimated another 16 projects are required around the average cost, 5 projects already in the pipeline.
- Programme and project evaluation.** The end of programme evaluation needs to be undertaken independently. As well as the hard outputs, soft outputs are considered to be as important. These would be more narrative and would describe how a project has been successful or how it has identified challenges for example. Members to be sent link to mid-term evaluation of Vale of Usk LEADER programme.
- Marketing.** It was agreed that it is important to use successful projects to promote funding opportunities and this is where the descriptive aspect of the 'soft' outputs should prove their worth. Clever, targeted marketing using social media to be increasingly used and project officers will be expanding this with the assistance of Carly. It has also been identified that there is a gap in terms of internal communication so Des and Mark presented on RDP opportunities at the volunteering networking meeting last week and agreed to meet with the Partnerships team and improve connections in Newport.
- Project update and New Projects – see project update document.**
Feedback from recent SE Wales regional meeting indicates Vale of Usk is ahead of other areas in terms of project variety, quality and spend.
Additional comments: Venison Study: In response to MM question of what will now be done with the completed study the response was that there will be a follow up with the project applicant Wye Valley AONB.
- Potential Projects**

There were some interesting ideas put forward for new projects:

- Food tourism: Investigate using bronze/silver/gold awards to encourage use of local food. To be discussed with Des, Nicola Edwards (PM). Also consider potential cross border food projects linking ethnicities (DM).
- Potential projects around ecosystems (NB).
- Projects to mitigate measures to address climate change in light of IPCC announcement that zero carbon emissions necessary within 12 years (PP).
- Replicate an energy educational project currently operating in Powys. Meeting to be held with project officer to discuss further (MP/ML).

10. Further developments:

- A. Community toolkit – The Project has stalled. GAVO is drafting a project proposal for delivery over the final six months of the project. GAVO intend to add value by strengthening links internally between the new project manager and existing GAVO development and volunteering staff.
- B. Transnational Cooperation project, Food Hubs – We have approved the funding and are awaiting the outcome of the full application in Belgium. The opportunity to develop the unique partnership will start in Belgium and then extend to other countries with Baena, Spain and Fundeo, Portugal indicating they may join.
- C. Rural transport – Following the successful study funded under LEADER an application has been made to the Community Transport Association for an additional £212K to employ two members of staff over a three year period to work specifically on solutions and implementing the recommendations from the study. Furthermore, we shall await with interest the solutions developed under the GovTech challenge. There have also been discussions on using additional LEADER funds to expand the community transport schemes run from Bridges at Monmouth and also commuter projects around the stations at Severn Tunnel Junction and Abergavenny. It should be noted that Mike has been liaising with Cardiff Capital Region in respect of the Metro and wider transport issues. JD reported that Llanwern station is going ahead and asked if efforts could be made to assist people living in rural areas with accessing the new station.
- D. IOT independent living – Mike is looking at the potential use of IT solutions in agriculture. This is against the backdrop of pressures farmers are experiencing. Digital connectivity remains a key issue and a project is being considered with four farms in Monmouthshire and Caerphilly that would provide CCTV in lambing barns, microchipping of livestock etc.

11. Any Other Business –

- a. Ideas were sought for reinvigorating The Community Climate Champions meetings as attendance has significantly dwindled. SL suggested linking in with Public Service Boards. MP advised contacting Nicola Summerville at Blaenau Gwent. Mandy offered assistance and this was considered a good first step in addressing the issue (PP).
- b. A meeting was held involving Lynne, John D and John H to look at ways of engaging more with Newport and bringing forward more projects. Ideas to be brought to next LAG meeting (LR).
- c. The new 'Enabling Natural Resources and Well-Being' grant has been launched by Welsh Government. Mike is attending a meeting in Merthyr on 23rd October and will report back at the next meeting.
- d. JD thanked RDP team members for help with securing grants for gym extension.

12. **Closing remarks.** Members are satisfied with the progress and current direction of travel. The Chair encouraged members over the next quarter to work up new project ideas. The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting at 3.45pm.

13. Actions.

- All – Bring forward new project briefs as outlined in item 8 above.**
PP - Report back on Community Climate Champions item.
LR - Report back on Newport engagement.
MP - Report back on 'Well-Being' grant.
MM- Community Toolkit update.

Next LAG Meeting: Thursday 17th January 2019 – 10 am (venue to be confirmed).

