

# Vale of Usk Local Action Group

## Llanfoist Village Hall Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019

### MINUTES

Members Present:	Gareth Baker Sarah Coakham Andrew David John Davies John Harris Angela Jones Sharran Lloyd Pamela Mason Alan Michie (Chair) Lynne Richards Ruth Waycott Mandy Moore	Officers:	Mike Powell Mark Lloyd Deserie Mansfield
		Apologies:	Alison Grimson Katy Stevenson Carly Jones Claire Brown Cllr Sara Jones Neville Hart Alastair Robertson Nicola Bradbear Phil Powell (Cyrene Powell attended) Clare Parsons

1. **Welcome.** The Chair welcomed LAG members to the eighteenth meeting and wished all a happy new year. As we are approaching the last lap of the programme members were invited to consider whether we need to adopt a change of direction. The meeting was quorate (2 private; 4 voluntary; 6 public).
2. **Apologies.** Apologies as above.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018.** Approved. In actions change reference from item 8 to item 9. No matters arising. Actions: Potential projects: Work ongoing. Climate Champions: Important meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January to consider motion to declare a climate emergency. Newport engagement: Groundwork laid for workshop. Newport members and officers have agreed to principle. Noted that Newport area has so far accrued 20% benefit which is about right. Noted that NRW have appointed Holly Butterworth in the role of Green & Safe Community Development Officer. Holly is keen to engage with the RDP. Contact details to be provided. ENRaW Grant – MP attended a regional lead body meeting yesterday. John Davies (Welsh Govt) reported that a total of £63M has been applied for across 57 separate projects. This includes a partnership bid including the Vale of Usk area. There are four strands to the bid one of which is for the village halls under the energy make over project to receive funding for energy improvements and also environmental enhancements to the outside of buildings. Creative Communities Toolkit project – On hold pending agreement of a revised proposal to deliver over the final six months of the project. An agreement needs to be in place by the end of February with endorsement required from the LAG by the end of March 2019.
4. **RDP team update.** Zara continues to improve and will be seeing the occupational health therapist in February. Lucinda due back off maternity leave on 7<sup>th</sup> May and has requested working three days a week. Current situation is that Alison Grimson deals with finance with Mike, Des and Mark the main project officers. Alison Howard responsible for the pollinator type projects. Andy Smith is no longer working for the authority.
5. **Financial Update – Mike Powell.** 36 approved projects with 19 completed. Out of total approved projects only around half have submitted invoices. Committed spend equates to 75% of budget. Estimated another 3 projects are required around the average cost. Answers to member questions: About £600K spent. Programme finishes June 2021. Various reasons why certain projects haven't started e.g. some affected by seasons (BEES). Suggested setting deadlines for pipeline project submissions.
6. **Marketing.** Increasing use of social media to demonstrate success of projects based on descriptive nature of the 'soft' outputs. As we no longer need many more projects it was considered the emphasis should change to demonstrating the success of projects and the lessons learnt. Many projects would make useful case studies and short videos were suggested as a useful tool in this regard. Another objective of the marketing now is to influence Welsh Government as to the merits of the LEADER programme and the lobbying of MPs/AMs was put forward. A marketing plan would be useful and this is something that internal communications teams could assist with.
7. **Project update and New Projects – see project update document.**  
Mountain bike guides – 40 benefitted.  
Visitor Information Project – interesting report submitted by Peter Cole.

Living Levels accommodation – Draft report. Meeting with consultants on 31<sup>st</sup> January to see where study goes.

St Mary's Priory project – at least 25 businesses attended pre-Christmas event. Tintern Abbey Trail – delays due to capacity issues etc. but still on course to finish by end of 2019.

Venison Study – Ruth Waycott reported that funding secured on English side to implement two of the recommendations. The training element can include Welsh participants.

Co-working study – Vale of Glamorgan LAG have expressed an interest in collaborative working.

Future Economies Study – report ready within the next month. Will be a redacted report due to business sensitivities.

Fully Charged – final report available shortly. Cyrene reported that level of use appears to depend largely on location, nearest venues to main roads/dual carriageways tend to do better and also level of promotion by individual businesses.

Robotics in the Community – the events at Monmouth School and Newport went well. There was some interest in similar events at other schools.

Pollinator projects – noted there's the pollinator friendly awards coming up and also 'Bee Day' on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Focus is on engaging more with people.

Pipeline projects – a few projects in the pipeline including an interesting one around use of an electric canal boat for educational use. Members to be sent summaries of all pipeline projects.

SBRI Challenge (Food Hubs) – A bid under the 'Small Business Research Initiative' (SBRI) is being made by the 24<sup>th</sup> January deadline. SBRI enables public sector bodies to connect with technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific public sector challenges and needs. The working title for the bid is 'How can we use technology to stimulate and sustain food supplies by supporting local food producers'. The presentation available to download on the website provides more details. (DM)

Heat Networks Delivery Unit – An application for £26k towards heat mapping and energy master planning has been made to the HNDU. We have received a request to provide some further routine information before being informed of the outcome around March 2019. (ML)

**Rural Transport** – Much is happening. At the end of February 2019 two SMEs will be invited to progress their full ideas around "Rural Isolation", which include techie ways of delivering local responsive transport. The two SMEs receive £500k each to develop their approved concepts by February 2020. We are a partner on a responsive transport bid being led by Transport for Wales. This fills an intermediate transport gap, but not the key issues of first and last 50m of travel, so we are looking to LEADER, maybe cooperation to set up a few small scale pilots that will be complementary to the main transport infrastructure in Wales and the IRT (responsive transport) group. The potential pilots are solving the problems of commuter parking at Abergavenny and Severn Tunnel Junction and in-depth research into a small number of the most remote communities to understand and find solutions for them. Each one will by their very nature have differing needs depending on their demographics. (MP)

**Broadband** – To be picked up at a future meeting. (MP)

## 8. Theme Sub Groups

As we are now entering the final phase of the programme with much of the funding spent or committed it was suggested the sub groups should look more towards the sustainability of approved projects and what to do with studies etc. It was also felt LAG members should be given more opportunity to get involved in projects which they find interesting rather than sticking rigidly to sub group member involvement.

## 9. Closing remarks and AOB

It was generally felt that it was an interesting and worthwhile meeting with good dialogue. The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting at 12.25pm.

### Actions

MP - Produce a Marketing/ Communication programme for the next year

MP - Write to members asking them to advise of any projects they wish to be actively involved with over the next year

SC – provide contact details for Holly Butterworth

ML/SL/MM – bring revised community toolkit proposal back to LAG by end of March

MP – members to be sent pipeline project summaries

**Next LAG Meetings: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019 2pm (venue to be confirmed)**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 10am (venue to be confirmed)**

