

## LAG Meeting

**Date and Time: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 1:00pm**

**Location: CVS, Falkirk**

<b>Present</b>	Liz Buchanan (Vice Chair) Mike Ewart Robert Hunter Ian Jarvis Pete Reid Karen Herbert Claire Mennim Frances Tonner Ellen Archibald Lynne Cooper Sandra Sutton	Visit Scotland Central Scotland Green Network Trust Falkirk community Friends of Kelvin Valley Falkirk Council CVS Falkirk & District Falkirk Community Trust East Dunbartonshire Council North Lanarkshire Council Scottish Enterprise Twechar HLEC
<b>Attending</b>	Emma McMullen Amparo Echenique Jacqui Davidson	Programme Manager, KVF LEADER Development Officer, KVF LEADER Falkirk Council (Minute Secretary)
<b>Apologies</b>	Katie O'Donnell Jimmy Hyslop Ian Howarth (Chair) Alan Barr	Scottish Waterways Trust Scottish Natural Heritage Falkirk community East Dunbartonshire community

### Papers:



Adobe Acrobat  
Document

**Figure 1: Programme Budget**



Adobe Acrobat  
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**Figure 2: March 2017 Budget Allocation**



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**Figure 3: Investment Proposals**

## Guidance Under Which LAG Meeting Operates:

- LEADER- LAG Project Assessment Guidance 2014-2020 Version 3 05 January 2017
- LEADER- General Guidance for Applicants 2014-2020 Version 4 05 January 2017
- Operating Your LEADER Local Action Group User Document 4- Applicant Users- LARCs Version 2.0 01 February 2017
- Operating Your LEADER Local Action Group LARCs User Document 2- Processing Applications- Part 2 Version 3.0 01 February 2017

	Action
<p><b>1.0 Welcome and Apologies</b> LB opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance, introducing SS. Apologies were noted from KO, JH, IH and AB. EM confirmed that quorum requirements were met.</p> <p><b>2.0 Previous Minutes and Matters Arising</b> LB asked for amendments to previous minutes and noted that there were none. KH proposed and ME seconded the previous minutes.</p> <p><b>3.0 Programme Budget</b> EM presented the admin and staffing budget which had been circulated in advance. She explained that the Scottish Government (SG) always ask for a monthly update on this. The Programme is well within budget.</p> <p>Also circulated in advance was the budget allocation update which highlighted that £268k has been allocated to date with £140k for consideration at today’s meeting. If these applications are approved, there will be approximately £1.7m remaining to allocate.</p> <p>Looking at budget predictions made before the start of the Programme, EM noted that it is behind on spending due to the delayed start and Brexit, however enquiries are up.</p> <p><b>4.0 Scottish Government Update</b></p> <p><b>4.1 RAG Status</b> EM informed the LAG that following efforts to address the issues raised in the monitoring visit, the RAG status has been changed from red to amber. Few LAGs have green. EM explained that green = no scheduled monitoring; amber = monitoring twice a year and red = monitoring every month plus no reimbursement of project claims by SG.</p>	

<p><b>4.2 Co-ordinators Meeting, Accountable Bodies Meeting</b></p> <p>EM had attended the Co-ordinator’s meeting in Linlithgow. The outcome of this was the setting up of various working groups including ones on LARCs and communications.</p> <p>PR stated that he is attending the Accountable Bodies meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April. He will ask EM for information to feed into the discussions and report back at the next LAG meeting.</p> <p><b>5.0 LAG Members</b></p> <p><b>5.1 New LAG Members and Resignations</b></p> <p>LB welcomed Sandra Sutton (SS) as a new member of the LAG, noting that she brings previous experience as a LAG Member. LB informed the LAG that JO had resigned due to workload; EM added that New College Lanarkshire was unable to send a replacement so they will cease to be a member of the KVF LAG. LB also noted that IH had contacted Niall Campbell to advise that he was no longer a LAG Member due to breaching the Code of Conduct in terms of attendance.</p> <p><b>5.2 Register of Interests: Update Required for 2017</b></p> <p>EM informed LAG Members that an updated version was required every year. An electronic version will be added to the members area of the website for completion.</p> <p><b>5.3 Handbook and Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>EM informed the LAG that an updated version would be uploaded onto the members area of the website. LAG Members wishing a hard copy can request one from the Secretariat.</p> <p><b>6.0 Business Plan Update and Investment Proposals</b></p> <p><b>6.1 Business Plan Amendments</b></p> <p>EM reminded LAG Members that amendments to the Business Plan were approved at the AGM in September 2016. SG approved these changes in October 2016, however they queried the issue of LAG Member substitutes having full voting rights. EM made further proposed changes to p.39 of the Business Plan (circulated in advance) to ensure clarity. LB proposed a LAG vote in relation to these changes and LAG Members unanimously voted to accept.</p> <p>EM informed the LAG that SG recently issued a communication stating that only two changes would be permitted to an LDS (including the Business Plan) each year. The changes approved today will not be submitted to SG until there are further changes made (to be discussed under 6.2 below).</p>	<p><b>All LAG</b></p> <p><b>EM</b></p>
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### 6.2 Investment Proposals

EM presented a paper on investment proposals (circulated previously) which highlighted the current situation. EM updated the LAG that the Programme is now at the mid way point, as per the original timescales and there is a mid-term review to be carried out in 2017. SG may be flexible since the Programme launched in October 2015 and did not properly start until 2016.

12% of funds have been allocated to date (£268k). The original prediction was £334k spend in 2016 and £384 spend in 2017 and therefore the Programme is well behind this. Staff are promoting farm diversification as much as possible. EM noted that other areas are experiencing a similarly low uptake. AE reported that there has been some interest following increased publicity.

EM asked the LAG to consider reviewing the grant rates for the Programme. Options were presented in the paper which included increasing the intervention rate as standard for feasibility studies, increasing the maximum amount of funding available under farm diversification and rural enterprise and having no maximum amount for the main scheme.

On grant rates, LB asked if the overall intervention rate for the Programme had to sit at 50%. EM said yes and that the current rate is an average of 46%, but she would confirm this assumption with the Scottish Government.

EA asked why there would be a higher feasibility study standard grant rate for farm diversification and rural enterprise applicants rather than community applicants. This should be consistent across all applicants. CM raised the issue of funding feasibility work at a higher level and the project then not proceeding. The LAG may be reluctant to invest in project planning if there is no guarantee that the applicant will subsequently take the project forward.

KH added that feasibility studies are no longer a theme for the Big Lottery Fund meaning that this funding service has gone. PR asked if businesses in the rural area could apply for 100% funding for feasibility studies. EM said in theory yes.

RH asked for clarification on the point made in the paper about in-kind support. EM explained that in-kind match is no longer eligible for LEADER- match funding must have a cash value. IJ stated that in-kind support should be considered under value for money assessments.

EA raised the issue of quotes being required before projects are approved. Local authorities wouldn't go out to tender until projects were approved. CM felt that a valid project budget quote would be required. EM stated that when assessing

reasonableness of cost, three quotes is required or evidence of a tender process, however technical information could be accepted from a suitably qualified officer within a local authority with the understanding that any grant amount approved would not be exceeded if the costs came back higher at tender stage. EA felt that requirement for quotes/tender evidence at application stage could reduce applications. EM informed the LAG that even with 100% intervention rate, issues remain around funding as LEADER pays in arrears. EA agreed that community groups are unlikely to have an overdraft.

While the LAG was fully supportive of considering changes to ensure the future success of the Programme, LB drew their attention to the recommendation of the paper that a short-term governance sub group is established to consider these changes in more detail and make recommendations to the wider LAG for approval. LB, EA and KH agreed to be part of this group. EM advised that she would arrange a meeting of this group soon and then email the recommendations to the LAG.

EM

#### **7.0 LEADER Staff Recruitment**

PR explained that the Claims & Compliance Officer post was graded at a lower grade than hoped by the Council's grading group. He has met with them along with EM and explained in more detail what the job entails. It will go back to the grading panel. Once approved, it will take around two months to appoint someone.

LB asked if the Programme was expecting claims soon. EM said yes and she is unable to assist applicants with these as there has to be a separation of duties and she has to check the claims for payment. Shieldhill Butterfly Project and Falkirk Rural Skills projects are due to claim. Irene Watterson from FVL may be able to assist under the support contract. EM added that there may be potential to hire temporary or freelance staff, but SG would need to approve. There may also be potential for the admin support team to undertake a Claims Officer function in the meantime.

#### **8.0 Approved Projects Update**

##### **8.1 S.C.O.P.E.**

EM informed the LAG that the start date of the project was delayed. The project, involving funding for a new kitchen and equipment for young people, was approved in October. Uncertainty in ongoing Council funding for the Centre has caused the delay.

##### **8.2 Caldwell Halls, Torrance**

EM explained that the day after the LAG approved this project, new guidance was issued by SG stating that repairs are not an eligible cost for LEADER. EM had asked SG for a definition of a 'repair' as opposed to 'refurbishment' but none was provided. EM asked them if the project would be eligible as it was approved under previous guidance. SG eventually responded that it would. After 30 days. However, the

applicant was unable to confirm their match funding within 60 days of the LAG meeting, therefore no offer of grant could be issued. The application is still on LARCs for assessment and SG have advised to leave it there until the next LAG meeting and the LAG can reassess if the match funding is confirmed. Clarification will need to be sought from SG on the application of the repairs clause to this project.

### 8.3 Kilsyth Art and Design

The application has been withdrawn by the applicant.

### 9.0 Current EOIs and Applications for LAG Notification

There have been 44 EOIs received. EM updated the LAG on ones received since the last LAG meeting:

- CATCA Growing for Good: there were questions over the eligibility of this activity;
- Greenrig Cycles: Electric MTB Project: the LAG was unable to accept this full application as it was too late for the deadline. The application may come to the next meeting;
- Under the Trees CIC: Falkirk Under the Trees: this will provide skills in outdoor education;
- Silver Stag CIC: this will provide workshops for young people and tourists. Not enough information provided in terms of timescales;
- Heart of Scotland Glamping: delayed due to planning permission not being in place;
- Hillhead Housing Association: Banks Road to Tintock Tunnel Cycle Route: new cycle route proposed for the south side of the canal.

### 10.0 Projects for Assessment

#### 10.1 Bridge Over the River Carron

**Conflicts of interest:** ME and PR, who left the room

**Project presented by:** EM

This project is a Falkirk Council (FC) and CATCA partnership with eligible project costs of £265,000 and a LEADER request of £125,000 (46.38%). Match funding has been partly approved and partly sought from Sustrans (outcome May 2017). SG advised during a pre-assessment check on the application that only half of the bridge is in the eligible LEADER area and therefore only half the costs are eligible. The Sustrans match had previously been approved but the project experienced delays due to land acquisition. Sustrans is expected to approve the application.

The bridge will connect Carronshore with Langlees at a wide point on the river. It will be similar in design and colour to the Dorrator and Dale Bridges. It will be one of the largest pedestrian bridges in Scotland, allowing benefits for residents and tourists.

**Technical and LAG Assessment in Advance:** an SG pre-assessment was carried out and all issues raised under than have been addressed. The Sustrans match is the only outstanding issue. It is considered to be a good project with multiple benefits for tourism and the local communities. Technical elements will be put in place to ensure that only 50% of the costs are put forward to LEADER for support.

EM reminded the LAG that the advance scoring by LAG Members is just a guide to assist the discussion. The application scored a total of 46 with the highest scoring category being displacement/distortion and the lowest innovation. All voted to approve the application in the advance scoring.

**LAG Vote at Meeting:**

Approve with standard conditions:	8
Approve with specific conditions:	1
Defer:	0
Reject:	0

**LAG Result: Approved with Standard Conditions**

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**10.2 Herbertshire Castle Park Feasibility Study**

**Conflicts of interest:** ME and PR, who did not re-enter the room

**Project presented by:** AE

This project is a masterplan and feasibility study proposed by the Community Green Initiative. Eligible project costs are £14,000 and the applicant has requested £12,600 (90%). Match funding has been confirmed from CATCA.

**Technical and LAG Assessment in Advance:** the project is requesting 90% which is over the normal request of 50% but is permitted (the LAG can award up to 100%). Questions raised by LAG Members included whether or not the organisation had the capacity to manage a project of this size and had they considered other match funding. AE explained that the applicant had found it difficult to find other funding sources for a feasibility study. It was suggested they should advertise via Public Contracts Scotland. KH mentioned the Denny Community Fund which has a budget of £66k and is looking for projects to fund, however she was unsure if they would fund feasibility studies. (NB This was followed up by AE after the meeting and the project would not be eligible for support under that fund). The LAG asked if the park is going to be maintained by the Council, why would they not act as a match funder? CM indicated that the park is not a priority compared to other sites in the Council's Open Space Strategy.

The application scored 41 with the highest score being for displacement/distortion at 8.5 and the lowest being innovation with 6.5. All voted to approve the application in the advance scoring.

**LAG Vote at Meeting:**

Approve with standard conditions:	9
Approve with specific conditions:	0
Defer:	0
Reject:	0

**LAG Vote on 90% Intervention Rate:**

Yes	9
No	0

**LAG Result: Approve with Standard Conditions**

**10.3 Mugstock Co-operation Project**

**Conflicts of Interest:** LB and FT, who left the room. PR and ME returned to the room.

**Project presented by:** AE

This co-operation project went to the main LAG of Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER. KVF LEADER is being asked to support part of the costs pertinent to the eligible KVF area. The total project cost is £13,550 and the applicant is requesting 50% from LEADER, £4,065 (60%) from FVL LEADER and £2,710 (40%) from KVF LEADER. The match funding has been confirmed as £675 secured from early bird ticket sales, £2,400 sought from Event Scotland (decision due 10/04/17) and £3,700 from Awards for All (decision due 31/03/17).

**Technical (FVL Staff) and LAG Assessment in Advance:** Confirmation of match funding will be in place by mid-April. Statutory requirements including a public entertainment license and occasional license for bars will be in place by July 2017. Monitoring and evaluation will include exit interviews for interns and post festival survey for volunteers. They have demonstrated demand and trader engagement and will ensure interns and volunteer targets set are achieved.

The project scored a total of 43 with the highest for organisational competence and the lowest for meeting need and demand at 6. 6 LAG Members voted to approve the project, 1 to defer and 1 to reject in the advance scoring.

AE informed the LAG that the applicant has asked if LEADER would be able to fund more if their match funding applications were not successful. RH asked for clarification





<p><b>11.2 Dumfries and Galloway Best Practice Visit</b></p> <p>EM informed the LAG that the D&amp;G LAG is successful in engaging with potential applicants and in running a small community scheme, Day of the Region. EM and AE have arranged a visit to learn from their ideas.</p> <p><b>11.3 Other Networking</b></p> <p>EM updated the LAG on other networking that has taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Belt Support meeting: this involves five areas meeting to discuss LARCs, guidance, issues in general with the Programme and co-operation;</li> <li>• ESEC event at the Scottish Parliament: this was attended by EM and IH and showcased the impact of EU funding in the East of Scotland. It was an opportunity to lobby for consideration to be given to further funding post-Brexit.</li> </ul> <p><b>12.0 AOCB</b></p> <p>EM updated that the annual report for 2016 is in the process of being finalised and will be circulated by email.</p> <p>EM raised the potential of Crowdfunding. Ayrshire LAG has launched a Crowdfunding portal and EM is keen for the LAG to consider this as a match funding option. EM has spoken to Angus Council who have a Council Crowdfunding portal and have offered some support to KVF LEADER. RH asked if SG were supportive. EM stated that they were very supportive due to reductions in match funding from other sources. KH added that she had previously run a Crowdfunding session which generated no interest.</p> <p>There was no other business raised.</p> <p><b>13.0 DONM</b></p> <p>LB confirmed the next meeting would be held on 6<sup>th</sup> June in East Dunbartonshire. FT to confirm venue.</p>	<p><b>EM</b></p> <p><b>FT</b></p>
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<p><b>Minutes Approved by (at subsequent LAG meeting):</b></p> <p>Name: <i>M. Herbert</i></p> <p>Signature: <i>[Signature]</i></p> <p>Date: <i>6/06/17</i></p> <p><b>Minutes Seconded by (at subsequent LAG meeting):</b></p> <p>Name: <i>K. HERBERT</i></p> <p>Signature: <i>[Signature]</i></p> <p>Date: <i>6/6/17.</i></p>
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on the cost for the exit meetings (£3,000). AE explained that this was the name of the milestone and not the heading for the cost. KH asked if there might be an issue with the LEADER request being less than £5,000. AE stated that the overall amount requested from LEADER was in excess of £5,000. AE confirmed that she would clarify this with SG. *(NB Subsequent guidance sought from SG confirmed that the minimum requirement of £5,000 was not in the current approved version of the KVF Business Plan and therefore the application is eligible).*

**AE**

#### LAG Vote at Meeting:

Approve with standard conditions:	7
Approve with specific conditions:	2
Defer:	0
Reject:	0

#### LAG Vote on funding additional amount if other match not secured:

Yes	9
No	0

#### LAG Result: Approve with Standard Conditions

LB and FT returned to the room. LB signed the scoring sheets for all voting ensuring quorate and the Co-operation Agreement on behalf of the LAG as Vice Chair (in the absence of the Chair) upon returning to the meeting.

### 11.0 Co-operation Activity

#### 11.1 Canals

**Canal by Bike:** EM updated that a consultant has been appointed and the workshops are underway.

**Canal College Co-operation:** KVF LEADER has been approached by a LAG in Belfast, working with Scottish Waterways Trust. They are looking for up to £300,000 for a building to house Canal College training. The overall co-operation project would include LAGs in Northern Ireland, ROI, Wales, KVF and Highland. Sites being considered in Falkirk are at the Falkirk Wheel and the Old Irn Bru Factory. EM stated that herself and IH had met with SWT and the Belfast LAG and they felt the project offered a good fit with the LDS.

**EM**

KH asked if KVF would be the lead LAG. EM answered that she was not certain at this stage as it was unclear how the co-operation arrangement would work as the Belfast LAG was leading the project but the SWT would be the applicant in Scotland. KH asked if the LAG could consider a higher intervention rate. EM said yes. EM agreed to contact SG re. technical aspects.