

Kelvin Valley & Falkirk LEADER

Investing in Our Rural Communities

Heritage, Tourism & Leisure

Community Services & Facilities

Local Business & Employment



LAG Meeting

Date and Venue: 20th June 2019, Glenbervie Golf Club, Larbert

Present	Ian Howarth (Chair)	Falkirk community	Non Public
	Claire Mennim	Falkirk Community Trust	Non Public
	Mike Ewart	Central Scotland Green Network Trust	Non Public
	Ian Jarvis	Friends of Kelvin Valley	Non Public
	Neil Christison	Visit Scotland	Public
	Pete Reid	Falkirk Council	Public

Attending	Tom Rutherford	Programme Manager, KVF
	Rachel Sedman	Development Officer, KVF
	Irene Watterson	Claims & Compliance Officer, KVF
	Anne Irvine	Minute Taker, Falkirk Council

Apologies	Frances Tonner	East Dunbartonshire Council	Public
	Ellen Archibald	North Lanarkshire Council	Public
	Paul Bishop	East Dunbartonshire Heritage & History	Non Public
	Lynne Cooper	Scottish Enterprise	Public

Minutes Approved by (at subsequent LAG meeting):

Name:

Mike Ewart

Signature:

Date:

11/9/19

Minutes Seconded by (at subsequent LAG meeting):

Name:

Ian Jarvis

Signature:

Date:

11/9/19

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	Action
<p>1.0 Welcome and apologies and assessment of quorum:</p> <p>IH opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from FT, EA and PB. It was noted that NC and VM were expected to attend. TR confirmed this meeting is fully quorate.</p> <p>2.0 Previous Minutes and Matters Arising:</p> <p>IH asked the Members for any corrections to the draft Minutes from the previous LAG Meeting. With no changes indicated, the minute was agreed around the table. Subsequently, the minute was proposed by ME and seconded by CM.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p><u>Change to Constitution</u></p> <p>TR advised that the Change to the Constitution discussed at the last Meeting (allowing decisions by written consent/email) has now been approved by Scottish Government.</p> <p>At the last meeting, it was proposed that a tour of the Kelvin Valley area is arranged and Mhairi Gougeon, MSP is invited to attend, as she keen to see things "on the ground". TR has contacted the MSP's team who have agreed that this is of interest but the visit would need to coincide with an actual event (presumably for PR purposes). The KVF LEADER team have proposed a "Banton Day" to showcase our 3 projects there. A date will be set, once the pub is re-opened and the Minister will be invited to attend.</p> <p>3.0 Members Declaration of Interest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. CM declared an interest in the Connected Dunsmore Feasibility Study and would leave the meeting during discussion.2. ME declared an interest in the John Muir Way project, however, it was agreed that he could remain at the meeting during discussion as the project has already been approved by written consent. <p>4.0 LDS/Governance update, including change to Governance rules:</p> <p>An email was circulated to members of the Group in advance of the meeting regarding the above.</p> <p>The meeting was advised that the KVF LEADER group were committed to spending 10% on co-operative projects, but have been given approval from the Scottish Government to move to 5% expenditure on such projects.</p>	



In addition the Farm Diversification and Rural Enterprise streams had been combined into one stream worth at least 20% of the allocated budget

These proposed Business Plan changes had been circulated to the Group in advance of this meeting. The LAG unanimously agreed this proposal.

TR circulated information on the Summary of Funded Projects and likely Programme spend. It was highlighted that the figures showed a slight deficit, however, these will be addressed by underspends in some of the projects. IH commended the team for getting the Programme to the position it is in.

5.0 Scottish Government Update: Accountable Bodies Meeting, Co-ordinators Meeting

There have been two Accountable Bodies meetings since the last LAG meeting. There have been no co-ordinators meetings, however, one is planned to take place in two weeks time, which will be a staff meeting.

The future of the fund is being discussed at this time and will be advised to the LAGs in due course. There has been no information provided in relation to the next steps and future funding as the focus of the Scottish Government is currently on underspends. IH welcomed that the KVF LAG fund is fully committed, and advised that he is aware that there are significant underspends in some areas in co-operation projects.

PR read from a minute of a recent meeting of Accountable Bodies he attended, and expressed concern that the LAG is having to react to ever moving goal posts from the Scottish Government in respect of deadline dates. PR has discussed this concern at length with the Scottish Government officials.

The Accountable Body has sought clarity from the Scottish Government about the future of the fund and it is understood that the plan for 2021/24 will be discussed at a future meeting. The Scottish Government has cited uncertainties as being the reason for there being no decision about the future. PR advised that he will continue to reflect the frustration around there being no decision about the future and the ever changing deadline dates. IH was in agreement with this. It was acknowledged that the Junior Minister is upbeat about the future.

The Group was advised that monthly claims have been submitted as requested. It was noted that the submission of claims has gone from quarterly to monthly since December 2018 and it is anticipated that monthly claims will be expected going forward.

The Team were commended for meeting the deadlines for submitting

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claims and the pressure the team were under to adhere to the ever changing rules from the Scottish Government was acknowledged. It was highlighted that the team achieved the above without one member of staff in January 19. It was felt that the work of the team in meeting deadlines and targets had gone unrecognised when there were other LAGs who were not meeting deadlines.

PR advised that as the Programme draws to a close there continues to be a need for LAG meetings to take place. He thanked the LAG members for their input throughout the Programme and encouraged them to remain involved. The frustration at the lack of decision making by the Scottish Government regarding the future was reiterated.

It was noted that the Scottish Government have only agreed to funding animation and admin costs until the end of December 2020. Assurances have been given that Falkirk Council will meet salaries up until 31st March 2021. By then, it is hoped that it will be known what the next LEADER is going to look like. TR to bring information on this to the next LAG meeting.

PR reported that the date for the next review of underspends has been moved from the end of June to the end of August 2019. It was noted that there are a lot of pending co-operative projects. Concern was raised that the Scottish Government may be subject to a penalty if the budget is underspent. PR advised that he attended an Accountable Bodies meeting where it was reported that a 75% spend had been achieved nationally.

6.0 Programme Update

TR reported that the projects discussed at the last meeting have been progressed and are already claiming.

There were issues receiving payments from the Scottish Government for the Colzium and Bridge over the River Carron projects, however, these have now been received. There has been an issue with the Bridge over the River Carron and this is being addressed. IW explained that she understands the claim was delayed due to the wrong figures being submitted, as only half the project is being funded by LEADER.

People United for Banton (PUB) - TR reported that the PUB project has commenced and the contractors are on site.

Three Kings, Shieldhill - This project is now progressing.

Butterflies Too Project - This project has been completed and an inspection is due in the coming week.

7.0 Programmes Update

7.1 Connected Dunmore Feasibility Study

CM declared an interest in this project and left the meeting during discussion.

TR noted that a project for Dunmore has already been approved in a different form. This project is for a feasibility study which will be part of maximising tourism in the area and making use of the assets in the local area. Falkirk Great Places Project is involved as they have an interest in the plan and intend to set up a group to push ideas forward. A team has been set up to take the project forward should the application be successful. This project is looking for £10,000.

PR is of the view that the feasibility study would be good to help the area's profile from a tourism perspective. It was acknowledged that the Pineapple already attracts visitors along with other attractions in the area. It was highlighted that the project will be community led with involvement of the Great Places project.

Although the programme is fully spent, LAG Members were keen to fund the project right away, on the anticipation that underspend from other projects will cover this relatively small grant.

All present recognised the potential of the project from a tourism perspective. IH recommended approval of the funding for the project with standard conditions. All present agreed with the recommendation to approve funding of £10,000 for the Connected Dunmore Feasibility Study.

7.2 Central Canals Infrastructure Development - Update

RS advised that written consents were required to meet the deadline. The project was passed and approved yesterday (18/6/19). A request has now been submitted to the Scottish Government reallocation pot for this project for just over £129,000 for all of KVF's share and just over £26,000 for West Lothian's share (they also have some of their original projects budget to allocate to this).

The benefits of taking away the barriers to accessing the canal paths were acknowledged, however, it was agreed that work is required in educating cyclists who use the canal paths to ensure that walkers are not discouraged to use the paths. Discussion has taken place with Sustrans regarding signage for paths asking everyone to be respectful of other canal path users. IH suggested there was potential to utilise Sustrans funding for the infrastructure element of the project. Sustrans will be consulted around the possibility of match funding.

It was noted that 20% of the budget is for access paths on and off the canal paths. It was suggested there may be an opportunity to include links to attractions in the signage element of the project.

It was acknowledged that the Central Canal Co-operation has already been approved with Standard Conditions. The team was commended for meeting the deadline for submitting the application for funding.



7.3 John Muir Way - Creating a Sustainable Income Stream and Developing a Brand - Update

This project has also been approved by written consent by the LAG on 18/6/2019. At the meeting the comments made were supportive of the project. In the scoring, a question arose about funding for branding, merchandising and legal costs as there was no contingency included in the figures. It was clarified that LAGs cannot provide funding for contingencies.

As the project involves 4 other LAGs, in order to bid for extra funds (as per Central Canals project). ME advised that FVL LAG met yesterday and did not approve the project, which has meant that the request for extra funding cannot be submitted for the June deadline. ME noted that another meeting has been scheduled to take place in July. The reasons given for the decision not to approve the funding were unclear, as formal feedback has not yet been received. It was thought that extra information was to be requested and from that a subgroup of FVL LAG would assess it and make a final decision.

The options to take forward the project were discussed. It was suggested to wait until FVL LAG have approved the project or consider cutting the FVL LAG out of the equation. If this was possible, the other LAG areas could be asked to contribute additional funding to the project. It is uncertain at this time if this action is possible. The project needs to get started asap, as the route user survey needs to be procured and there needs to be time for 12 months of route user surveys on the grounds, and then time for a write up and final invoice to be paid by October/November 2020.

The members expressed their disappointment at the decision made by FVL LAG. IH acknowledged that £30,000 was the contribution being required from FVL. It was agreed to give further consideration to this once formal feedback from FVL LAG has been received. PR acknowledged that the deadline has been missed at this stage. RS outlined the funding required from each LAG for the project. It was suggested that the other LAGs could be approached with this proposal. CM suggested there may be reluctance from the other LAGs to agree to this as the FVL area would benefit from the project without making a contribution.

It was agreed to await formal feedback from FVL as to their decision and then have further discussion as to the steps to take to progress the application. It was suggested that, if required, a sub-group could be established to consider the above, to make a decision on behalf of the LAG. A full funding package is required before applying to the next deadline for additional funds, which is 24th July 2019. The meeting expressed disappointment of the decision by FVL LAG and acknowledged the impact this may have on the LEADER Programme.

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<p>8.0 Any Other Competent Business</p> <p>None</p> <p>9 Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 11th September 2019</p>	
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