

## LAG Meeting

Date and Time: 27 November 2018, Glenbervie Golf Club, Larbert

<b>Present</b>	Ian Howarth (Chair)	Falkirk community	Non Public
	Claire Mennim	Falkirk Community Trust	Non Public
	Frances Tonner	East Dunbartonshire Council	Public
	Lynne Cooper	Scottish Enterprise	Public
	Caroline Brown	North Lanarkshire Council	Public
	Katie O'Donnell	Scottish Waterways Trust	Non Public
	Paul Bishop	East Dunbartonshire Heritage & History	Non Public
	Pete Reid	Falkirk Council	Public
	Neil Christison	Visit Scotland	Public
	Victoria McRae	CVS Falkirk & District	Non Public
<b>Attending</b>	Tom Rutherford	Programme Manager	
	Rachel Sedman	Development Officer (and minute taker)	
	Andy Macpherson	Central Canals Project Officer	
<b>Apologies</b>	Mike Ewart	Central Scotland Green Network Trust	Non Public
	Ellen Archibald	North Lanarkshire Council	Public
	Ian Jarvis	Friends of Kelvin Valley	Non Public
	Irene Watterson	Claims & Compliance Officer	

### Minutes Approved by (at subsequent LAG meeting):

Name:

*Claire Mennim*

Signature:

Date:

*14/3/2019*

### Minutes Seconded by (at subsequent LAG meeting):

Name:

*Victoria McRae*

Signature:

*VMcRae*

Date:

*14/3/2019*

	Action
<p><b>1.0 Welcome and apologies and assessment of quorum</b></p> <p>IH opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance, including Andy Macpherson who will update us on the Central Canals Project later in the meeting. CB is replacing EA as she is off sick at the moment. Apologies were noted from PR, ME, EA, IJ and IW. TR confirmed this meeting is quorate, taking into account that PR will be leaving to another commitment before the voting on current projects takes place.</p> <p><b>2.0 Previous Minutes and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>IH asked the Members for any corrections to the draft Minutes from the previous LAG Meeting. KO'D pointed out there was an error on p2 stating SWT was a public organisation, but it is non-public. CB asked for an amendment to p9 which stated tourism figures in the Falkirk have been increasing. As the project in question is based in North Lanarkshire, she would suggest an amendment to tourism figures in the Kelvin Valley. Given these changes the minutes were proposed by NC and seconded by LC.</p> <p><b>3.0 Programme Budget</b></p> <p>TR handed out the budget paper to the Members. TR explained that at the beginning of the Programme, KVF was allocated £2,824,400. We will have an underspend in our allowable Admin and Animation budget but due to delayed payments from SG, we are still trying pin down the exact amount we have available. For the sake of these figures we have made as close a calculation as possible and estimate our spend and forecast Admin costs as being £471,850. This means we can transfer £234,250 from Admin to spend directly on projects. With our current funds available for projects plus this amount, this equates to approximately £407,996 to allocate for the rest of the programme. Applications today are for £275,123.</p> <p>TR also confirmed that we had surpassed our target for Co-operation projects (5%) and as of today would meet our target for Farm Diversification and Rural Enterprise (now merged at 20%), even if not all projects are approved.</p> <p>PR stated LAGs have until 31 March 2019 to allocate money to co-operation projects and 30 June 2019 for any other projects. Following this (presumably 1 Apr 2019 / 1 July 2019, respectively), SG should publish a position statement on the re-allocation of any underspend from other areas. LAGs would then have until 31 Dec 2019 to commit to additional projects. KVF team will keep in touch with these developments and advise any potential projects in our area who could benefit from these additional funds of how things stand as they unfold.</p>	<p>RS to make amendments</p>

## 4.0 Scottish Government update: Accountable Bodies Meeting, Co-ordinators Meeting.

PR gave a short update on AB matters. A LEADER mid-point evaluation has been published which details the successes and challenges of the programme so far. The main challenge has been the claims process. A recommendation has been made to SG to look into advance payments, going forward. PB welcomed this and recalled that one of our projects - Dunmore Feasibility Study - had pulled out because of their inability to cashflow the project. PR said the Accountable Bodies had also requested that in future evaluation of the programme, projects that didn't proceed would also be researched and that there was some acknowledgement of the additional outcomes delivered by successful projects that fell outside the LDS.

There is a big push to ensure grantees are sticking to their milestones or, where timescales have slipped to complete the necessary change request process. TR confirmed we had been behind but had recently had a big sort out of milestones and now the ones that were still showing as overdue were for projects that we were currently dealing with their claims. The milestone delivery dates will be rectified as part of the claims process, but it did not make sense to try and make changes to them until we had a clear picture of what was needed for their claim.

See above section for description of the dates that we are now all working towards for project allocations / re-allocations. All claims for project spend to SG should be submitted by 31 December 2020. Admin costs are committed until 31 December 2020 and possibly until March 2021.

PR's two final points: it was agreed that the AB remit should continue as it is and the next AB meeting is in Jan/Feb 2019.

RS attended the last Co-ordinators meeting in place of TR who was on Annual Leave. Much of the discussion was around confirmation of the dates for project allocation and reallocation (as described above), as well as potential Co-operation projects and the work being done by Scottish Rural Action ahead of the Scottish Rural Parliament. TR will also shortly attend a Central Belt Co-ordinator meeting, which he hopes will be for Co-ordinators as usual but also breakout sessions for Development Officers and Claims Officers, as he finds these meeting incredibly useful.

## 5.0 Approved projects update - including Central Canals Development Project

### 5.1 Central Canals Development Project.

AM introduced himself, having been recently appointed the Project Officer for this LAG-led Co-operation Project. He is employed by

CSGNT, with Mark Smillie being his line manager, but is also strategically linked to our own LAG (and West Lothian's). AM gave a bit of his work background as a Development Officer at Clackmannanshire Council and his wish to find out the gaps (including funding gaps) in various partner organisations and to work to deliver solutions along the length of the canals.

He has written a small blurb on what his project will do (see below) and intends to present a work plan to the partners/steering group in January. This morning he had also been at a positive meeting with Sustrans.

IH stressed the importance of getting Scottish Canals involved as early on as possible, and PR also said he could promote the project through his contacts, as he had presented to the new Falkirk Council Chief Executive along with Helena Huws (of Scottish Canals). PR requested RS to send a short briefing note on the project to Douglas Duff.

Other organisations are keen to see that the work done is joined up and benefits the length of the canal. This would include SWT, and both North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire Council and Tourism reps.

Andy's blurb:

***In couple of sentences:***

*The Central Canals Project will work with communities and wider partners to develop the Forth and Clyde and the Union Canals as unique assets and as a tourist attraction and route in its own right. The project will create business opportunities around walking and cycling tourism, and enhance access and facilities for local communities and visitors of all abilities.*

***In a couple of paragraphs:***

*The project will support priorities for action identified by, among others, local communities and businesses, councils, Scottish Canals, Scottish Waterways Trust, Sustrans and visitscotland, and help to deliver national priorities including the Central Scotland Green Network.*

*The project is co-ordinated by Central Scotland Green Network Trust and funded by Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER and West Lothian LEADER. Emphasis will be on the sections of the canals within these funders' areas, between Bishopbriggs in the west and the River Almond in the east.*

***Further detail***

*This project is the second stage in a development plan instigated by Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER's application for a feasibility study*

RS to send Andy's blurb to Douglas.

RS to email contact details to AM

*into developing a cycle route along the Forth and Clyde Canal (Canal by Bike). This stage incorporates West Lothian LEADER with the introduction of the Union Canal and widens the proposal to include walkers as well as cyclists in its target group.*

*This widens the original Canal by Bike vision to:*

*The Forth and Clyde and Union Canals will be recognized within the Central Belt and further afield as a destination offering active travel opportunities for all ages and abilities whether for day trips or weekend adventures and to access the Roman, industrial and natural heritage.*

**PR and AM left the meeting.**

## **5.2 People United for Banton.**

The LAG approved £115,390 towards the fixtures and fittings and 4 initial staff members for the community's takeover of The Swan Inn. PUB have gone out to tender on the construction (mainly funded by BLF) and, for various reasons, prices have sky rocketed. Even with a sensible scale back of their plans, they still do not have enough funding to complete the initial refurbishment. BLF have pledged an extra £111,000 to help cover these costs. The group have 2 requests for LEADER.

1. A Change request to move the money from fixtures and fittings to construction/refurbishments costs and to also reduce the wages from 18 months, to 1 year and again, to put the funds freed up from this into the refurbishment of the building. They have also identified other funders for fittings and will be / have applied to these.

Short discussion surrounding what would happen if the request was not granted, and whether 1 year was enough support for the wages. Decided they had built the extra cushion in, and if the restaurant was to be able to make money to cover the wages long term, it should have happened within the first year. LAG agreed to grant the change request

2. The group are still £60,000 + VAT short of what they need. Would the LAG consider raising their grant amount?

Decided LAG really needed to see more of the detail of what was going on, so suggested another application showing what it was to be used for in the March 2019 LAG meeting.

## **5.3 STS Bo'ness.**

The conditions of grant have not yet been met, but reassurance was offered to the LAG that this group were making good progress towards

TR / RS to progress and approve change request and work with group to submit an application for March 2019 LAG.

RS to continue to work

meeting their specific conditions and were hopeful of the project starting early 2019. The LAG were happy to keep the offer of grant open and reassess the situation at the next LAG meeting.

with STS

## 6.0 Current Eols and application for LAG notification

RS present the following projects that may come to the March 2019 LAG Meeting.

### Rural Enterprise & Farm Diversification

1. **Sailing Fast (Standburn): Build of office and showroom to enable business development and employment of staff - £40,000**
2. **Your Local Farm (Slamannan): Accommodation pods - £30,000**
3. **Cairnford Cabins (Queenzieburn): Accommodation pods - £40,000**

No concerns / questions with any of these.

### Community

#### 4. **Falkirk Community Trust: Kinneil Hidden Heritage Play Trail**

CM is involved with this project - it being a partnership between Friends of Kinneil and FCT - and gave a brief run down. The original project (-£100k, LEADER request would be 50%) was turned down by match funder WREN as not having the design finalised. CM is proposing applying to LEADER for the design element of the project along with some training for volunteering and more community engagement. She feels the Friends of Kinneil would also be happier for the project to move at this slower pace. LAG expressed surprise at the willingness of the group to go through the LEADER application process for only £5,000 but CM said she was ok with this.

#### 5. **Herbertshire Castle Park: Follow up works from the feasibility study LEADER funded.**

RS read out Eol about several elements the group had in mind to apply to LEADER for. LAG advised group to focus down on particular elements that fit with our LDS, and note the low level of grant funding left for allocation in March.

#### 6. **Under the Trees CIC: recent enquiry regarding "wee beastie" eco bus taking carbon reduction training out into rural communities.**

LAG did not think fit Local Development Strategy is close enough, so would not encourage an application at this time. There was some concern that some of the activities proposed were already being

delivered in certain communities by other groups and so it would be quite tricky to pin down which communities needed which of the many services offered, and who they would need to work in partnership with to ensure there wasn't duplication. That said, some of the committee commended the organisation's current work and wished them well with their Climate Challenge Fund application.

### Co-operation

#### **7. Forth Rivers Trust - Fishable Rivers of the Forth (Tyne Esk lead) - £20,000**

Tyne Esk are leading on a project surrounding access information (for communities and tourists) in Fishable Rivers of the Forth river network. We do not have a great deal of information on this yet.

#### **8. Post-Industrial Communities - Re-discovering Heritage (West Lothian lead) - £70,000**

RS had sent round a summary of the Industrial Heritage Connections proposal. West Lothian are leading on the project, with RSA being the applicant, and Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde were another potential LAG partner.

IJ (not present at meeting) had responded "Friends of Kelvin Valley would like to contribute to this project and we have done our own research into coal mining in Kilsyth and the Villages area in consultation with local heritage groups including the now defunct Croy History Society."

CM responded "It's a shame the project isn't going to actually create any change on the ground in terms of conservation work to the assets. The work with the communities is great but it might leave them feeling a bit let down at the end when a fabulous plan has been devised and there is no obvious way of them achieving it."

After discussion LAG concluded this project was really too strategic for this point in the programme with little actual change for our deprived communities (i.e. no more time to come back to LEADER to deliver any plans made). Our portion of the commitment would also be a big percentage of the funds we have left to allocate, and we really wanted to support up to 6 projects in March, so taking this one on would decrease others' chances significantly.

#### **9. SRN led LEADER Evaluation Project**

Project to look at joint evaluation of LEADER programme. TR attending a meeting on Thursday.

#### **10. Canals Project - Capital Developments**

RS to tell KP that KVF do not wish to be included in full application stage

This would be if AM could get a more crystallised view of what infrastructure the project might be able to put in. LEADER would be used in order to match/lever in Sustrans funds.

## 7.0 Projects for Assessment

### 7.1 Battle of Falkirk Muir Experience

RS presented this feasibility project application. The project is looking into setting-up a centre in Falkirk similar to Culloden Visitor Centre in Inverness which is focused on the same period of history. It will look to attract 80,000 visitors per year to visit and spend time and money in the local area.

The LEADER project costs include architect, quantity surveyor, structural engineer, services engineer, ecological consultant and the coal mine board and an independent consultant to review the Business Plan. The eligible costs are £16,803.20 and the applicant is requesting 90% of this amount. The project will run in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2019.

There has been a sight problem with the BRN approval which requires the bank account name to be changed but this is in hand. Pre-LAG meeting question: What type of business/organisation will it operate as? *Private limited by guarantee with charitable status. We are in the process of securing charitable status just now.* Also noted, would be good to make links with Calendar Estate's Battle of Falkirk Muir Trail.

LAG discussed whether Falkirk can sustain another visitor centre and whether the centre would be sustainable. NC said the study would be able to answer these questions, but in terms of encouraging visitors to stay in the area for longer, the more attractions the better and the LAG should take a long term view of the return on investment of this grant.

Standard Conditions:	9
Specific Conditions:	0
Deferred:	0
Rejected:	0

**Project approved with Standard Conditions**

### 7.2 Craigmaddie Roundhouse

RS described this farm diversification project supplying unique high-quality eco-friendly accommodation in a rural setting, providing stunning views over the Clyde valley.

This project brings a new offering to the tourism market whilst also increasing the viability of a farm. The applicants are going out of their way to provide a high quality and unique experience to the local accommodation market which will attract visitors to this area in its own right. That is to say, if they just wanted to make money from



accommodation pods, they could do so in a cheaper and easier way. The project will give the farm an alternative income stream in a period of uncertainty within the agricultural industry and will benefit other local businesses and attractions, most notably Glengoyne Distillery. The roundhouse is being made by Echo Living, who made Burnhead Bothy.

Pre-LAG question: Are furniture and fitting eligible for LEADER? *Yes, if they have 3 quotes.* Also suggestion to think about ways to tap into the inclusive tourism market.

Eligible project costs are £92,750.94 (some works being carried out by applicant) and applicant is requesting 64.68937134% intervention. Project due to complete by summer 2019.

LAG agreed the project fits well with our LDS and will attract people to the area.

Standard Conditions:	9
Specific Conditions:	0
Deferred:	0
Rejected:	0

**Project approved with Standard Conditions**

### 7.3 Weedingshall

RS presented about Weedingshall, a large early 19<sup>th</sup> century house set in 4 acres of grounds and mature woodlands. It was the site of the former 20<sup>th</sup> century Brodie's Centre children's home (previously demolished) and is currently an eyesore requiring environmental improvements and regeneration.

The applicant himself is a Project Manager within the construction industry and is planning to give up his current employment to manage this business in March, once they are only a few months away from earning income from it.

His parents run the Court Residence in Linlithgow, which is an Aparthotel offering serviced bedrooms like a hotel but the room also includes a small lounge and kitchen. They intend to use this model and similar systems, suppliers and marketing as they know it works. Research has shown the Aparthotel model is used for both business and leisure and tends to extend the length of stays. The applicant sees the Weedingshall site as a development opportunity but in order to make use of the large site, intends to offer lodges and pods as well as bedrooms in the main house.

The first 10 pods - LEADER application - are intended to earn income to allow the rest of the project to proceed (i.e. renovation of the main house and additional lodges) through a mix of helping the newly operating business to secure commercial lending and using the income

from the pods themselves.

Planning Permission not yet granted (submitted 22/10/18) although RS has email from Planning Officer saying it should be approved this week if there are no call ins. Planning only requested 1 extra piece of info - a 3d drawing of what the pods will look like.

IH invited LAG to discuss. Members felt plans focus much more on future phases of project, not the 10 eco pods. There was a bit of evidence of this submitted and NC reported that 'Glamping' is still very much the most visited page on the Visit Scotland website. Also felt it would have been good to see engagement from local businesses and residents.

Project costs are £196,900 for the pods only and intervention rate requested is 50.78720163%. The applicants will be investing probably nearer to half a million pounds into the site over the next few years with the other lodges and renovation of the main house. It was thought the property has been bought (from Falkirk Council) for approx. £200,000.

LAG generally believed the project showed good value for money and would make a big difference to the lack of high quality and distinct accommodation in the local area, which had seen exponential visitor growth in the past few years.

TR suggested the specific condition that Planning Permission and proof of Control of Asset to be submitted by 28 Feb 2019. (If not submitted, will give LAG freedom to re-allocate money to others at March LAG).

Standard Conditions:	0
Specific Conditions:	9
Deferred:	0
Rejected:	0

**Project approved with Specific Conditions**

## 7.4 APU Equestrian

RS described this project to put in place infrastructure (stables and arena) for a new rural business providing top quality livery services to both horse and rider. The site owned by the applicant is 30 acres and has over the last few years been prepared and used for grazing.

LAG members worried about lack of demand based evidence of need, poor engagement with potential users and including no links to relevant strategies. The lack of multiple quotes made it difficult to assess value for money. Members also not convinced LEADER is the right funder and want more info on Planning, plus a stronger business case.

A few people picked up that she is passionate about her business. Computers are not her strong point but she has made a real effort to

learn how to do things better and seek help from a friend when she needed it.

**LAG discussion main points:**

- Quality and depth of evidence of need section is lacking (almost unanimous comment). *Applicant said her business is commercially sensitive so did not want to consult too widely at this early stage and before she had anything to show. Possibly believes the need is obvious within the horse world.*
- When is the match funding being transferred to the business bank account? *Funds should be cleared from the legacy at the beginning of December.*
- Sales figures seem unrealistically high and not to add up with either themselves or other information contained in the application. This brings little credibility to the viability of project.
- Shame it is only providing employment for herself / is this too much work for one person? (i.e. with 16 horses and all business admin and ordering)

Eligible project costs £227,823 and requesting 43.89372451% intervention.

Standard Conditions:	0
Specific Conditions:	0
Deferred:	0
Rejected:	9

**8.0 AOCB**

FT advised everyone she had a new job within the Council. However, she will continue her LEADER duties for the foreseeable future.

RS reminded LAG Members that they were welcome to attend the launch of the Crowdfund Scotland Co-operation Project on Thursday in Stirling (details previously circulated).

**9.0 DONM**

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March, 10am -1pm (finishing with lunch) at Glenbervie Golf Club, Larbert.

Project rejected.

