

**Rural Community Led Local Development (RCLLD) Fund
Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (ALAG) Meeting
Conference Video Call via Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 23rd April 1pm**

Present:

Aileen Longino	Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action	(Private) (Vice Chair)
Duncan Leece	Banffshire Partnership	(Private)
Justine Tough	Buchan Development Partnership	(Private)
Gina Ford	Fintray Community Council	(Private) (Chair)
David Hekelaar	Formartine Community Councils	(Private)
John Loder	Formartine Partnership	(Private) (Vice Chair)
Gerald Banks	National Farmers' Union Scotland	(Private)
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland	(Private)
David Jackson	Visit Scotland	(Public)

Guests:

Adam Bunce	Ethos Consulting
Graeme Brown	Ethos Consulting
Liz Green	Youthlink Scotland
Emma Kyles	Youthlink Scotland
Finaly Anderson	Youth consultant (I Will Movement Ambassador)
Rachael Hatfield	Youth consultant (I Will Movement Ambassador)
James Burns	Ansons Consulting
John Pinkard	Ansons Consulting
Mark Kummerer	MKA Economics
Leeanne Lowden	MKA Economics

Officers in Attendance:

Moir Beverley	Investments and Projects Executive
Catriona Nicolson	Investments and Projects Officer
Martin Brebner	Team Manager

Apologies:

Amanda Roe	Aberdeenshire Council	(Public)
Mike Duncan	Federation of Small Businesses	(Private)
Dawn Tuckwood	NHS Grampian	(Public)
David Fyffe	Scottish Land & Estates	(Private)
Millie Clarke	VisitAberdeenshire	(Private)



1 Welcome & Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present and apologies were noted as above.

2 Declarations of Interest (DOI)

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3 Minute of LAG Meeting (23rd January 2024)

3.1 The LAG approved the minute of the meeting on 23rd January 2024. This was proposed by Aileen Longino and seconded by David Hekelaar.

4 Paper 1 – Outstanding matters from 23rd January 2024

4.1 Regarding membership, one response has been received so far from Scottish Forestry expressing an interest in LAG membership.

4.2 Moira Beverley has met with a representative from Poverty Alliance. Dawn Tuckwood will liaise with the LAG on any relevant information as she works closely with the organisation.

4.3 The Bennachie Leisure Centre and Meadows Sports Centre are owned by the council but are both under long term lease agreements. They were therefore deemed as eligible as the produced energy report(s) were considered as revenue.

5 LAG-2324-03 Community Path Development – Presentation by Ethos Consulting

5.1 Adam Bunce and Graeme Brown presented to the LAG on commissioned project LAG-2324-03 Community Path Development.

5.2 It was highlighted that different locations will need different types of surfacing, depending on demand and types of users. The work in the area of Logie Coldstone will likely need a multi-year plan to meet the aspirations. Connecting Logie Coldstone to Tarland is a short term goal. Next steps will likely be influenced by land ownership. Initial conversations with Cairngorms National Park and Aberdeenshire have taken place. The costs presented on surfacing are based on what the expectation in requirements (eg type of path, usage and location) will be. A bill of quantities, calculation of risk and optimism bias have been factored in for costs. At this stage, an optimism bias of 44% is applied based on findings at the feasibility stage. This drops to 12% when the technical stage is reached. The higher costing is deemed important at this stage as it allows, for example, management of expectations. The importance of factoring ongoing maintenance of pathways and getting the diameter of the pathway correct were raised.

5.3 The Chair thanked Adam and Graeme for their work.

6 LAG-2324-07 Rural Youth Engagement Strategy – Presentation by Youthlink Scotland



- 6.1 Liz Green, Emma Kyles, Finlay Anderson and Rachael Hatfield presented to the LAG on commissioned project LAG-2324-07 Rural Youth Engagement Strategy.
- 6.2 The wider survey included 222 young people responses, with 120 in person and the remainder taking place online. The information on split in demographic is based on participants providing the information, of which some participants did not disclose. In the report a map is presented showing demographic spread. It was highlighted that there are many young people willing to participate in conversations moving forward. A short report has been prepared and will be sent to the young people participants.
- 6.3 The Chair thanked Liz, Emma, Finlay and Rachael for their work and participation.
- 7 LAG-2324-04 Rural Transport Strategy – Presentation by Ansons Consulting**
- 7.1 James Burns and John Pinkard presented to the LAG on commissioned project LAG-2324-04 Rural Transport Strategy.
- 7.2 A lot of activity is already taking place on rural transport in Aberdeenshire. Therefore, a partnership approach would be the stronger approach to take. The approach in the report is suggested as a pilot to begin with, taking the scale of the topic into account.
- 7.3 The Chair thanked James and John for their work.
- 8 LAG-2324-05 Rural Community Led Vision Strategy and Action Plan – Presentation by MKA Economics**
- 8.1 Mark Kummerer and Leeanne Lowden presented to the LAG on commissioned project LAG-2324-05 Rural Community Led Vision Strategy and Action Plan
- 8.2 The group discussed various aspects relating to the project. The main themes highlighted in the report were reflected in the recent LAG chair's meeting that took place. Renewables money and the model currently used in Ayrshire was highlighted as an example to consider. Although not confirmed, Just Transition funds are hoped to be available in the next few months.
- 8.3 The Chair thanked Mark and Leeanne for their work.
- 9 Paper 2 – 2023.24 Projects Update**
- 9.1 Moira Beverley reported back to the LAG on Paper 2.

9.2 The level of reports received from the commissioned projects were felt to be of a high standard.

9.3 The Chair thanked the officers for their work on the 2023 2024 programme.

10 RCLLD Workshop - Glasgow 19th /20th March (verbal)

10.1 The issue of deadlines and lack of clarity each area had to work with were evident at the workshop. The workshop was felt to be helpful.

11 Update from Scottish Government (verbal)

11.1 Moira Beverley reported back to the LAG.

11.2 An update was received on 18th April from Lynne Douglas at the Scottish Government (SG). An initial grant letter is proposed for distribution before the end of April detailing 5% allocation from CLLD budgets to each LAG / area. This is based on last year's spend including actual staffing spent within 2023 24. In 2023 24, Aberdeenshire LAG received £512K (7.65% of £6.75 million) in revenue before capital allocation was received. The expected budget for 2024 25 is assumed to be a similar allocation. No official notification in writing has been received from the SG to date. The remaining budget beyond 5% requires further approvals within the SG. When approval is complete, any other funding will be communicated. Plans for the upcoming year are to be submitted outlining the 2024 25 Community Led Vision Plan. Areas that are ready to start programme works can commence the first week in May. A meeting on 10th April with SG and LAG coordinators indicated a capital allocation can be expected but no further information is available at present.

11.3 Chairs will be invited to a meeting in Edinburgh on 28th May to agree next steps. John Loder (Vice Chair) will provisionally attend instead of Gina Ford (Chair)

11.4 The lack of clarity at this stage is a disadvantage and creates a delay in starting programme works and therefore delivering effectively.

11.5 Moira Beverley will distribute a summary of costs and how these were spent in 2023 24 to the LAG in due course.

11.6 Any procurement activities needed for the upcoming programme still need to be carried out in. Any relevant information has already been presented before in a committee plan and approved by the committee (approx. March 2023) within Aberdeenshire Council. The procurement process is quite lengthy and as the maximum allocation of staffing is £57K this restricts the number of hours staff can dedicate to activities.



11.7 Concern was raised regarding the wide variety of different models for delivering CLLD funds and programmes nationally. Concern was also raised regarding the onerous requirements for running, and participating as a trustee of, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) which is a fundamentally different structure to the current model the Aberdeenshire LAG operates under.

12 AOCB

12.1 No further business was raised.

13 Date of Next Meeting

13.1 The next meeting is scheduled for 25th June 2024.

Minute Taker

Catrina Nicolson