

**Rural Community Led Local Development (RCLLD) Fund
LAG Meeting
Conference Video Call via Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 26th July 2023 1pm to 3pm**

Present:

Aileen Longino	Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action	(Private) (Vice Chair)
Justine Tough	Buchan Development Partnership	(Private)
Gina Ford	Fintray Community Council	(Private) (Chair)
David Hekelaar	Formartine Community Councils	(Private)
Gerald Banks	National Farmers' Union Scotland	(Private)
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland	(Private)
Dawn Tuckwood	NHS Grampian	(Public)
Martin Auld	RSPB Scotland	(Private)
David Fyfe	Scottish Land & Estates	(Private)

Officers in Attendance:

Jamie Wilkinson	Investments and Projects Executive
Catriona Nicolson	Investments and Projects Officer
Martin Brebner	Team Manager

Apologies:

Amanda Roe	Aberdeenshire Council	(Public)
Duncan Leece	Banffshire Partnership	(Private)
Mike Duncan	Federation of Small Businesses	(Private)
John Loder	Formartine Partnership	(Private) (Vice Chair)
Malcolm Nicol	Scottish Land & Estates	(Private)
Christina Wright	Visit Aberdeenshire	(Public)
Jo Robinson	Visit Scotland	(Public)

1 Welcome & Apologies

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

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chairs



- 3.1 Gina Ford was proposed for the position of Chair. The LAG agreed unanimously to appoint Gina Ford as Chair.
- 3.2 Aileen Longino and John Loder were proposed for the positions of joint Vice Chair(s). The LAG agreed unanimously to appoint Aileen Longino and John Loder as joint Vice Chair(s).

4 Minute of Joint LAG Meeting (26th June 2023)

- 4.1 The minute was approved by the LAG. This was proposed by Aileen Longino and seconded by Gerald Banks.

5 Paper 1 – Constitution

- 5.1 Martin Brebner reported back to the LAG regarding the content of the paper.
- 5.2 The LAG members discussed various aspects of the current funding landscape and the difficulties in knowing what is currently available and how this may, or may not, overlap with current or upcoming funding programmes.
- 5.3 Aileen Longino advised that the Just Transition Fund is delivered by Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action and invited LAG members to contact her should they wish to discuss any ideas or topics related to this.
- 5.4 It was acknowledged that significant difficulty is experienced in delivering a funding programme at short notice, with changing values of money available and in particular, in tandem when dealing a limited overview on any relevant strategy (assuming one is in place).
- 5.5 The LAG agreed unanimously with the recommendations in Paper 1, as follows:
- a) It is recommended that the LAG considers and adopts the updated constitution for the Aberdeenshire Local Action Group and agrees to open a call for interested community organisations to join the Aberdeenshire LAG.
 - b) With an addition in section 4.1 to add “and any successors”, and therefore amend the reference to “Rural Community Led Vision/Local Development Strategy” to include “and any successors” as follows “Rural Community Led Vision/Local Development Strategy and any successors”. This shall also be reflected throughout Paper 1, where necessary.

6 Paper 2 – Projects (Commissioned)

- 6.1 Jamie Wilkinson reported back to the LAG on Paper 2.
- 6.2 Regarding project Ref # 012 Core path condition survey and review, funding has now been received in full. There is potential to do more work on this project, if further funding

is available. Therefore, the £50k provisionally allocated to this project is now available for distribution.

- 6.3 The LAG discussed various aspects of each of the projects and their merits.
- 6.4 It was acknowledged that the delivery of these projects has to be within a very short timeline, as set out by the annual funding parameters of this year's allocation. Due to this pressure it was felt that a pragmatic approach is essential to assess, prepare and delivery these projects successfully. In addition, projects need to be approved and the process underway by October at the latest, in order to meet the stringent and tight deadlines set out for the fund.
- 6.5 It was also acknowledged that to run a challenge round, as an example as a stream of the programme, requires coming up with a plan, securing staff in place, running an application process and delivery (all within about 6 months) is very challenging.
- 6.6 Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action has a dedicated funding team and list of grants on offer on their website. Aileen Longino will review the projects and funding available to identify any cross over with other known options.
- 6.7 Buchan Development Partnership can also help support communities in Buchan with sourcing available funding. Justine Tough highlighted that she can also provide assistance in searching for funding opportunities.
- 6.8 Some of the LAG members felt that they are not able to provide funding for the areas they have experienced that require this support and expressed frustration with the situation.
- 6.9 The two methods for delivery of funding are an open challenge fund and commissioning projects. Revenue funding was available last year, via a challenge fund, for applicants to apply for but not many applications were forthcoming. Therefore, this year revenue funding will be delivered via commissioned projects. Challenge funds require a high volume of officer working hours to deliver.
- 6.10 Officers will follow up the meeting by setting up three subgroups for interested LAG members to discuss and develop the various projects further. A written procedure will also follow where LAG members can agree on a breakdown of funds and how this can be split between the three priorities and proposed projects.
- 6.11 The LAG will be consulted for final agreement of the plan regarding funds and projects once the details and projects are worked up further and finalised.
- 6.12 The LAG agreed unanimously to accept £320K as a top up grant for capital spend and to allocate this for delivery of an open challenge round.
- 6.13 It was highlighted that funding cannot be spent on any council owned assets.



7 AOCB

7.1 Christina Wright has transitioned from her role with Visit Aberdeenshire and will no longer sit on the LAG. A replacement will be forthcoming in due course.

8 Date of next meeting

8.1 The next meeting will take place on 30th October 2023.

Minute Taker

Catriona Nicolson

Final