

Orkney LAG is being part-financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community
LEADER 2014-2020 Programme



Minutes: LEADER Programme 2014-2020.

Local Action Group Meeting.

18 February 2020 (12:00), St Magnus Suite, Pickaquoy Centre, Kirkwall

Present: LAG Members (Public) – Francesca Couperwhite (Chair), Phyllis Harvey (Vice Chair), Alister Brown, Kerry Spence

LAG Members (Private) – Edgar Balfour, David Scarth, Sarah Sankey, Brian Cromarty, Mark Hull, Dawn Flett.

LEADER Team – Alison Barclay (LEADER Development Officer) and Jill Sutcliffe (LEADER Assistant Project Officer).

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the LAG members to the meeting. She also welcomed Tamsin Bailey, Independent Consultant and Mediator, who was sitting in on the meeting and would then facilitate a Stakeholder meeting for LAG and FLAG members in connection with the LEADER/EMFF Programme evaluation.

Apologies had been received from Steve Ray and Susan Pirie. Mark Shiner of the FLAG had also sent apologies for the Stakeholder event.

There were no minutes to approve, as the minutes from the last meeting had been approved by e-mail in August 2019.

2. Financial summary and outputs

The Chair asked Alison to present and explain the financial summary and outputs papers.

Commitment by Category (2a)

- The overall allocation has changed from £2,512,250 to £2,522,094 as additional money has been allocated by the Scottish Government for the Promoting Orkney Project and for one of the Co-operation projects.
- Commitment to date is for 45 projects, £2.124 million commitment made to projects with allocation fully committed.
- The Economic/Business/Farm diversification budget has to be at least 20% of the total allocation and is currently 21.89% (£522,139.90). This has decreased slightly since the last update as the Bain Farm project has withdrawn due to timescale issues and their allocation returned to the SG for reallocation.
- Community support is 23% of the overall budget at £583,676.54 with one project (Graemsay Hall) having a small underspend of £141.58.
- Environmental support is 9.59% of the overall budget at £241,848.27 with one project underspend of £5892.60 (Farming for Wildlife). £194 of this was used in December 2019 to increase the grant of another project which has encountered an unexpected VAT issue.

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- Tourism, heritage, crafts, food and drink support is 23% of the overall budget at £602,262.34.
- Co-operation support is 5.72% of the overall budget at £144,347.
- Admin and animation is 15.77% of the overall budget at 397,819.92 – these costs include the 2 contracts for evaluation of the 2014-2020 LEADER/EMFF Programme, costing £15,000 and £9,890.

The Chair asked if all LAGs had had problems allocating their co-operation money, and Alison confirmed that this was the case.

Budget Summary (2b)

- Claims are now coming in regularly from projects with 57% of the committed budget spent. Some of the larger projects are nearing point of claiming.
- 16 leader projects have now completed. There has been a collective underspend of £5,840.18 with this being returned to the SG as no new project spend was permitted after 31 December 2019.
- The current admin budget is 15.77% of the total budget with 72% of this having been spent by the end of December 2019.

The Vice Chair pointed out that Orkney Islands Council pays half of Alison's salary which accounts for some of the low staffing costs.

Alison advised that there are concerns with some projects being able to complete on time, and these projects are being closely monitored.

Project Outputs (2c and 2d)

- 45 LEADER and 6 EMFF applications have been approved, of which 16 LEADER and 3 EMFF projects have now been completed.
- The targets were set at the start of the Programme in 2014 and it now appears that some are going to be impossible to achieve, while others will be vastly exceeded.
- The LAG area targets were never included on LARCS when this was set up by SG; SG is aware of this and the Vice Chair advised that she believes our own internal recording of targets should be sufficient for SG monitoring purposes.
- Targets can be amended in the Business Plan update if LAG Board Members wish to do this, but the Board felt a better option would be to identify which targets have been underachieved, and explain why this is, rather than individual projects needing to re-assess their targets.
- LEADER staff and Tamsin Bailey would be looking at targets as part of the evaluation and will report back to the Board.

3 Approved Applications Progress (paper by e-mail only)

- Projects have been following a monthly forecasting process for claims in an attempt to keep projects claiming regularly especially as we near the end of the programme.
- There were no questions or comments.

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4 Change Requests (paper by email only)

- There were no questions or comments.

Additional papers – projects by round and budget category and match funding for projects

- There were no questions or comments however members noted that it was useful to see the amount and source of funding that had been used to match the LEADER contribution. It was noted that OIC's Community Development Fund had been a good source of match funding and that the two funds complemented each other.

5 Business Plan Update

- The main change to this is the updating of figures in the tables on pages 26 – 32 and associated text.
- The target figures on pages 18-24 show current objectives and targets, and there is an opportunity to amend these if the Board is so minded. Discussion followed, and it was agreed that the targets would not be amended but justification would be provided as to why targets had been under- or over-achieved.
- Tamsin Bailey will incorporate this into her evaluation.
- There were no other comments or questions.

6 2019 Annual Review

- Alison advised the LAG of 2 minor amendments to be made to the Review, as follows:
 - On page 2 47 projects were approved not 46, but only 45 are progressing as Wheems and Bain Farm withdrew.
 - On page 29 on the penultimate line 'knowledge of the position' should be replaced by 'information available'.
- Alison clarified the difference between project costs and eligible costs as noted on Page 22 – Match Funding.
- Other LAG areas have brought in less match funding but have contributed more LEADER funds to projects.
- The Chair had a number of formatting issues which will be addressed, and the report will then be circulated to the LAG and FLAG for approval.

7 Declaration of Interests

- At the last internal audit it was reported that these should be updated annually by LAG/FLAG Members, and Members present completed updated forms.
- This was the only action required following the audit, and Members congratulated LEADER staff.

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8 AOCB

- The first film produced by Start Point Media for the evaluation was screened and received a very positive reaction from the Board. The film features Edgar Balfour talking about the Orkney Food & Drink and Creative Orkney projects.
- Further films will feature Burray Hall, Soullisquoy Printmakers, Kirkwall Kayak Club, St Magnus Way, Happy Valley, Veg Visitors and Vibrancy in Papa Westray and hopefully one of the OSF Fisheries projects. Later in the year there may also be films about Making Yoghurt and Farmhouse Cheese (when the project has completed) and Orkney Sailing Club (when the sailing season starts again).
- Alison updated progress being made on the co-operation projects:
 - Between Islands – Collaborative events have taken place as part of the Folk Festival, and work is ongoing on the exhibitions.
 - Scottish Islands Passport – 2 part-time project managers have been appointed.
 - Foraging Fortnight – This formed part of the 2019 Science Festival in Orkney and was very successful, with over 1000 attendees at the various events. Planning for the 2020 event is well underway.
- An evaluation/stakeholder event is being planned for June (probably 13th) for existing projects and as an information event for future CLLD programmes. It is hoped that LAG and FLAG Board Members would be involved.

There was no further business to discuss, and meeting closed at 13:00.

FLAG Board Members Kate Rydzkowski and Mike Bell joined at this point to participate in the Stakeholder event planned for the afternoon.

Approved by: 
Date: 

Francesca Couperwhite (Chair)