



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas

5.30pm – 9.30 pm, Thursday, 11 December 2008
Otterburn Tower, Otterburn

Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group (NULAG):

Anna Charlton (Vice Chair)
Anthony Murray
David Clubb
Elizabeth Rowark
Elizabeth Stewart
Heather Hunter
James Cookson
James Saunby
John Wilson
Marie Whitehead
Michael Nixon
Mike Murray
Norman Dunn
Paul Nicoll
Richard Walton
Roger Miket
Roger Wilson (Chair)
Stuart Moss
Vincent Milburn
Wendy Bond

Northumberland National Park Authority:

Director of Corporate Services
LEADER Local Action Group Co-ordinator
LEADER Local Action Group Admin Officer
Community Enterprise Officer (South)

Stuart Evans
Tom Burston
Sophie Lewington
Colin Earnshaw

One NorthEast/Northumberland Strategic Partnership:

RDPE Specialist Advisor
RDPE Sustainable Communities Specialist Advisor

Chrisi Doherty
Michael Patterson

NULAG Apologies Received:

Anne Lowrie
Adelle Rowe
Phil Biggs

1.0 Welcome from the Chair

1.1 Roger Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from the above members.

1.3 Roger welcomed new LAG member, Elisabeth Rowark and Sophie Lewington, the new Administration Officer. He also welcomed Chrisi Doherty (One NorthEast) and Michael Patterson (NSP).

1.4 NULAG were thanked for their hard work to date and explained the evening's format.

2.0 Notes and Actions of the Previous Meeting

The Notes and Actions of the meeting held on Wednesday, 8 October 2008 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3.0 LAG Members Expenses

It was reported that all the expense forms were now submitted and that everything had been processed to date. Tom explained the claim dates and that VAT issues should be resolved in the New Year.

4.0 Regional, Sub-regional and Local Responsibilities – Who does what

4.1 Tom explained about LEADER; that the money comes from EAFRD and goes to the RDPE (DEFRA). DEFRA is the accountable body. One NorthEast is the managing authority with NSP as the administrative body.

4.2 It was agreed that feedback on the Partnership Framework Agreement with NSP needed to be received by Tom by 23 December 2008.

4.3 It was agreed that the Executive Group would look at a strategy for the processing of cross-LAG applications.

4.4 TB explained that a Regional Support Network will be set up to support the 4 LAGs in the North East region, and that money had already been ring-fenced for this.

5.0 Project Applications

5.1 TB explained that the Executive Group had met the previous day to agree a basic format for decision making. This process was discussed in detail and was agreed by the members.

5.2 Haydon Tourism Gateway Initiative (NUL024)

No LAG member declared an interest.

Summary:

This project promotes local distinctiveness in Haydon Bridge and also highlights what wider role libraries can play in terms of rural service provision. The project is primarily focused on transforming the existing library into a community library that takes on a more varied role, including the provision of visitor information, and some space for small business activity. The application to NULAG also contributes towards the wider project of developing the Haydon Parish Plan into clear priorities for a new development trust, which in turn seeks in part to ensure a sustainable economy and clear marketable identity for the parish.

Vote:

It was agreed to support the project in principle, the first phase only to be supported initially for £50,038.

5.3 Walking in Hadrian's Wall Country (NUL020)

Marie Whitehead declared an interest.

Summary:

This project utilises the uniqueness of one of the area's prime cultural assets to stimulate local economic development. The project is two-fold. Firstly, it is focusing on a marketing campaign through promotional campaigns, aimed at increasing visitor numbers to the central section of Hadrian's Wall. Secondly, it will deliver business training aimed at local businesses maximising the economic opportunity that the increased visitor numbers bring. Northumberland Tourism has identified an opportunity to increase visitor numbers to the county as a whole and also increase the skill base in the tourist sector. Hadrian's Wall is a world class tourist attraction in the county.

Vote:

It was agreed to defer the project as it is.

5.4 Traditional Boundaries Traditional Skills (NUL017)

The following declared an interest: Tom Burston (NNPA), Stuart Evans (NNPA) and John Wilson (NNPA)

Summary:

This application is requesting funding for £95,000 over 2 calendar years and is concerned with traditional boundaries and skills. It trains 10 people every year and provides opportunities for younger people. The project has been running for three years and is due to finish in two years time.

Vote:

It was agreed to support the project in principle for part of the funding request, £45,000.

5.5 Harthope Permissive Path (NUL023)

Anthony Murray declared an interest.

Summary:

This project improves access to Hedgehope Hill as well as Harthope Linn, two significant natural assets in the north of the Uplands. There is potential to involve young people in this project. The applicant has identified the potential of working with youth groups to create opportunities for them to learn more about the countryside and its wildlife. This particular idea has not been worked up fully, as the application comes before the LAG. There is some evidence of need from partners. The landowner, Lilburn Estates has indicated tentative support to the project as it gives visitors specific guidance on how to access tourist attractions. The Mountain Rescue Team has supported this project idea in a letter to the Ranger team at the park, as it increases accessibility for their aims. However, the Northumberland National Park Authority Voluntary Ranger Service, (the applicant), are yet to agree this project through their own committee.

Vote:

No financial vote was taken – it was agreed to defer until various commitments were sorted out:

5.6 Northumberland Rural Community Development (NUL010)

Norman Dunn declared an interest.

Summary:

This ongoing project is part of the national Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) network, which operates with the aim of promoting healthy, vibrant and sustainable rural communities. The project is primarily focused on maintaining the provision of existing support to community organisations and community networks. Through this work in the rural Northumberland Uplands the project could support the progress of community organisations to address some of the challenges identified by Northumberland Upwards. As the LEADER approach develops in the North East there may be an opportunity for regional lessons to be learnt and shared.

Vote:

A small number of members voted for this project but the majority voted against.

5.7 Cheviot Futures (NUL026)

Stuart Moss, John Wilson and Anthony Murray all declared an interest.

Summary:

This project offers an opportunity to look at how upland farming is sustainable in the face of climate change. The part of the project is primarily focused on a communications package that will complement demonstration projects looking at simple techniques to help land managers mitigate the effects of climate change. This allows an innovative approach to farm diversification to be communicated locally, allowing young people to be involved through interactive education projects

The Environment Agency has already committed financial support to this project and sees it as contributing to the Northumbria Regional Flood Defence Committee. The wider project also enjoys support from the Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative; the Forestry Commission; the MoD; Natural England; the North East Assembly; Northumberland Strategic Partnership and the RSPB.

Vote:

It was agreed to support the application for the total funding amount of £45,000.

5.8 Stonehaugh Renewable Energy Project (NUL021)

Summary:

The installation of renewable energy into the village hall is part of an ambitious project to completely overhaul the community building in Stonehaugh. Young people from Stonehaugh were part of the decision-making process that decided to use renewable energy sources. The installation of these sources does not have to go ahead to ensure the hall opens but it would be a good statement by the young people of the village.

Providing a model of financial sustainability, the village hall has no on-going administration costs. The renewable energy systems are part of this model by keeping costs for hall users to a minimum. The hall will also become part of the Tynedale Renewable Energy Trail, which shows how local people are combating climate change with greener energy systems.

Vote:

It was agreed to fund the total amount of £13,861.

6.0 Partner Support Group

NULAG members agreed with paragraphs 7 and 9 of the Partnership Support Group documentation. Stuart Evans explained it was imperative that there was no duplication from the Partner Support Group. It was proposed that this group meet twice a year and report back to the LAG. Discussion was had as to the age ranges of representatives and communication. Suggested candidates for this group should be submitted to Tom by the first week in January 2009.

7.0 Plan of LAG Meetings for 2009

- 7.1 The suggested dates for next year's meeting were noted from the agenda and it was agreed that members commit to 4 out of 6 meetings.
- 7.2 Discussion as to when applicants should be invited to give a presentation was given.
- 7.3 It was suggested that LAG members should be introduced to potential applicants at the Expression of Interest stage.
- 7.4 It was suggested that LAG meetings take place in community settings with a different venue each time.

8.0 Any Other Business

- 8.1 Discussion was had as to the release of press releases and it was suggested that a productive media relationship could be cultivated between Mike Murray, Tom and the Park's media expert.
- 8.2 Business Cards were circulated.
- 8.3 The constitution needed to be signed by the end of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm