



Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group



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

NOTES AND ACTIONS Local Action Group Meeting

17.30 – Wednesday, 4th November 2009
Glanton Village Hall, Glanton

Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group (NULAG):

Roger Wilson
Anne Lowrie
Anthony Murray
Eliabeth Rowark
James Cookson
James Saunby
Michael Nixon
Pat Beaumont
Heather Hunter
Jennifer Hewitson
Mike Murray
Stuart Moss
Elizabeth Stewart

Northumberland National Park Authority:

Director of Corporate Services
Local Action Group Co-ordinator
Local Action Group Administration Officer

Stuart Evans
Tom Burston
Sylvia Byerley

Northumberland County Council: One NorthEast:

Heather Smith
Michael Patterson
Chrisi Page

NULAG Apologies Received:

Anna Charlton
David Clubb
Johnny Wilson

Vincent Milburn
Mark Mather
Marie Whitehead

1.0 Welcome from the Chair

1.1 Opening comments and Apologies

Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new LAG member Jennifer Hewitson and Sylvia Byerley, new LAG Administration Officer, to all. He also conveyed his thanks to Tom for organising the meeting, and gave apologies for Anna Charlton, David Clubb and Johnny Wilson

1.2 LAG Member Update

Rodger reminded all of Wendy Bond's suspension following complaints to the LAG as well as the changes to current LAG membership with regards to Marion Penfold stepping down and Simon Henderson and John Davidson not taking up invitations.

Tom touched on the need to recruit a minimum of 3, possibly even 5 additional members and it was agreed to widen the application pool though the placement of advertisements in local papers in order to gain better representation of the population dynamic of the Northumberland Uplands on the LAG committee.

Michael Patterson suggested that One NorthEast could possibly put something together in the press regarding the one year anniversary of NU LAG as a way of attracting possible applicants.

Additionally the need to have new members with knowledge/experience of various fields relative to the LAG which not yet represented on the board could be used as part of the selection criteria

1.3 Update on Grants

To date, the LAG have committed money to fifteen projects, some £485,638

Rodger stressed that as much as £100,000 of this approved funding is profiled for next financial year and that there is approximately £100,000 still available within the current financial year for new projects. Member were reminded that this funding had to be allocated and spent within this financial year as it was not possible to bring the surplus funds forward into the coming financial year.

Tom reminded all that there was only one more committee meeting within this financial year to allocate funds. Members were asked to keep in mind any projects that could be submitted with view to possible funding within the current financial year.

2.0 Notes and Actions of the Previous Meeting

The Notes and Actions of the previous meeting, held on 08 September 2009, were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3.0 LAG Meeting Dates

3.1 The possible dates of the next review meeting were discussed and it was agreed that it will be held on the Tuesday 15th December 2009 at 17.30 hours at a venue to be decided.

3.2 The 2010 schedule was agreed to start in early February allowing time for the application/review process to restart again after the Christmas break with meetings occurring every two months.

The following possible dates were tendered:

Thursday 04th Feb
Thursday 15th April
Wednesday 09th June
Tuesday 10th August
Tuesday 12th October
Thursday 09th December

4.0 LAG Claims

Tom reminded members of the importance to submit their claims regularly. He noted that this has been commented on by the internal auditors as part of their review of payroll and expenses at NNPA. The possibility of re-allocation of the funds to other areas was

mentioned if members felt that the fund would serve better use elsewhere. The possibility of redirecting the funds towards research was mentioned.

Members were again reminded that the deadline for claim submission was the end of December 2009 and that Sylvia and Tom were available to help members should they require assistance or have any queries regarding their claims.

5.0 Transnational Cooperation Proposal

Mike Murray recapped on his summer in Sweden with regards to possibility of the setting up transnational links with Leader Linne and other Local Action Groups within the Sweden Rural Network.

Mike commented that Linne was noted for its enterprise with regards to the biomass industry, renewable energy and tourism and faced many challenges similar to those in the Northumberland Uplands

Members agreed that it would be beneficial to proceed with Mike's proposal for an exploratory visit and investigate further the various tourism and biomass initiatives implemented in Linne and other potential links with Swedish LAGs, including the possibility of hosting a visit of Leader Linne members in return.

6.0 Project Applications

Four applications were presented for consideration.

NUL020 - Hadrian's Wall Visitor Welcome

Julie Sloan gave a presentation.

Declared Interest: None declared

Summary:

- This proposal is a re-submission following the appeal Issues: Technical Appraisal Condition: Applicant to confirm whether any costs associated with running events and workshops relates to own staff time, and how this has been apportioned, on signed acceptance of grant.
- Innovation: The events constitute specific tourism-sector 'business enhancement'. The idea is not necessarily a new one, but perhaps in this part of Northumberland the events are an opportunity for micro-businesses to link up with other local businesses that they wouldn't normally come in to contact with.
- Key Outcomes and Joined-Up Solutions: This is a re-submitted application. The original application was rejected at the July meeting but following advice from the appeal panel the applicant has submitted this application. A number of the LAG's concerns were heeded, namely the costs associated with a micro-site have been removed and the focus remains on actual events that will hopefully benefit small tourism businesses.
- Need / Opportunity: As a World Heritage Site, Hadrian's Wall (and the neighbouring corridor) is a 'key destination' for the region, in terms of boosting visitor numbers to the region.
- There are close links between the stated aims of this project and Northumberland Tourism's ATMAP. Linking tourism with other economic sectors, such as the food, crafts and cultural industries during these events for example is a long term aim of the ATMAP
- Value for Money: Clearly this project would deliver against high level objective 5 – Develop Tourism and Recreation. It would also deliver against our micro-enterprise objective. It seems to give a good proportion of our targets for the money requested.

Vote:

9 LAG members supported the idea (1 against)

9 LAG members voted to fund total amount requested

NUL054 - Haltwhistle Area Community Action for all

Gill Cowell, Project Officer of the Haltwhistle Partnership gave a presentation:

Declared Interest: Pat Beaumont declared interest.

Summary:

- Technical Appraisal Issue: Following a lengthy appraisal process, it has transpired that none of the match funding will be confirmed until the 2010/11 financial year, which puts the project at risk as it cannot proceed until match is in place. Leader support must be at the appropriate intervention rate sought, i.e. claims should not exceed 68.4% each quarter as this is what the project is seeking overall. Two options:
- The LAG could consider supporting the project in phases, starting with the Music & Arts Festival and support at 100% of costs, with the other projects reapplying once match has been confirmed.
- Alternatively, the project should be deferred until the match is in place.
- Technical Appraisal Condition: Haltwhistle Partnership Ltd is to provide detail on how additional day visitors for the Arts & Music Festival will be measured. This to be provided on signed acceptance of grant.
- Innovation: The projects conceived in this application give the opportunity for local volunteers to get involved in activities that are new for them.
- Key Outcomes and Joined-Up Solutions: Northumberland Uplands LAG is being asked to support the costs of a project officer, who will then manage the delivery of three distinct projects. Those three projects focus on different sectors: a music and arts festival; a community allotment project and a traditional skills project but they are all linked by the engaging local volunteers and a lot of the application docs focus on the broader benefits of volunteering.
- This project will deliver against NULAG's high-level objective 3 – Assist Communities to become more sustainable. It gives reasonable metrics against our young people and community network target but does ask for 11% of our allocation.

Vote:

8 LAG members supported the idea

Unanimous vote to support 100% of the funding of the first part of the Proposal, the Music & Arts Festival - £32,775

NUL044 - Wooler Drop-In

Noel Roy, Adrian Pardy and Mike Allport gave a presentation, the key points being:

Declared Interest: Tom Burston declared interest.

Summary:

- Technical Appraisal Condition: Not all match funding is secured at this stage. The applicant is to provide confirmation that it is in place on an annual basis. Agreement to support the project until 31 March 2013 is therefore subject to annual review or until such a time that all match funding is confirmed.
- Innovation: This youth centre provides a safe environment for young people aged 13 and above. It's run by Wooler Young Peoples' Association which has a voluntary board of local trustees.
- Key Outcomes and Joined-Up Solutions: The project is supported by Berwick Youth Project and provides a focus for young people to meet, get involved in recreational projects or receive advice from staff members on all sorts of things. Fundraising is an ongoing challenge for the committee and a grant of £5,000 per year would go a considerable way to breaking the back of that.
- Need / Opportunity: At present there are 91 members of the youth club. The project may fit indirectly with our Local Development Strategy and its commitment to support

- initiatives that focus on young people in our communities.
- Value for Money: This project will deliver against NULAG's high-level objective 3 – Assist Communities to become more sustainable. It gives excellent metrics against our young people target.

Vote:

Members voted unanimously to support the idea.

Members voted unanimously to support the application for the whole amount.

NUL047 – Children's Countryside Day

Glendale Agricultural Society gave a presentation, the key points being:

Declared Interest: Stuart Moss and Anthony Murray declared interest

Summary:

- Technical appraisal condition: Approval for future years is conditional that match funding is secured during the projects life time. Match sources are to be confirmed on an annual basis from the date of approval.
- Innovation: This is the only show of its kind between Harrogate and Edinburgh. The annual event focuses solely on school aged children and introduces them to life in the countryside. The event engages children through practical demonstrations and is run in collaboration with local businesses. Each year new stalls are developed and new issues are explored.
- Need / Opportunity: This project appears to fit indirectly with quite a few of the opportunities identified by NULAG in the Local Development Strategy. Namely: to promote the natural environment; to develop local produce; and to further community engagement with the 'missing' sectors.
- Value for Money: This project would primarily deliver against high level objective 4 – Support Sustainable Farming and Forestry, but will also delivery against our Sustainable Communities objective. If we can call a day at the show 'advice for young people' then it conquers that target for us!
- The total amount requested is £40,000 across four years, which means that annual funding would be £10,000 per year.

Vote:

Members voted unanimously to support the idea.

Members voted unanimously to support the application for the whole amount.

Summary of Decisions

A summary of the decisions was read out.

7.0 Any Other Business

7.1 Closing Comments from the Chair

Roger remarked on the significant improvement of quality of applications being considered and the overall improvement in the standard of presentations presented.

Roger thanked all for attending and offered thanks to Kirsty Hargreaves for the evening's meal.