



North Pennine Dales Leader LAG - Minutes of Meeting held on  
Tuesday 28th June 2011 at Harehope Quarry, Weardale.

Attendance:

Peter Samsom, Cliff Brown, David Fruin, Ian Forbes, Pam Forbes, Jeremy Ancketill, Natalie Connor, Hazel Coppack, Fay Collington, Catherine Pearson, Sue Ellwood, Janet Seaman.

1. Apologies:

Andrew Walker, Cameron Scott, Charlotte Hursey, Fiona Green, John Atkinson Lucy Wearne, Richard Betton, Robyn Peat, Rosemary Thompson, Shaun Stuart.

Peter Samsom chaired the meeting in the absence of Richard Betton and as the meeting was not yet quorate, (one LAG member was on his way), said they would work through the agenda items which didn't need quorate decisions rather than the actual order on the agenda.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

SE mentioned that IF had asked for a slight amendment to the minutes which had been made. They were then agreed as a true record and were duly signed by the vice-chairman, PS.

3. Declaration of conflict of interest

PF declared a conflict of interest in NPD126 Tourism Transport as she is on the board of Weardale Community Transport.

CB declared a conflict of interest for personal reasons in regard to NPD136 The Pennine Way through Teesdale.

HC said she had worked with the Sandy & Black Pig company through the Love Food project but the LAG agreed this was not a conflict of interest.

4. Spend & Commitments Profile

SE reported that she had received a letter from ONE saying that the group had received another £125,000 making the amount to spend in this financial year £625,000 and she obviously would like to maximise on this. She added that the commitment to date is approx. £164,500 plus approx. £100,000 for EOI's and full applications so leaving around £300,000 still to spend. CP said that £625,000 is a lot to spend considering that one quarter of the financial year has already gone. PS said the group needed 1 or 2 really large projects but SE said that they would have to be well into the development stage to be ready for applying this year. SE then went on to suggest changing the policy on the limit for micro-enterprise applications. PS explained that the limit had been agreed as they thought there would be a lot of applications but this had not transpired so agreed to the LAG considering suspending this limit. The group agreed to this.

IF felt that any under spend would not look good for the group but SE added that £325,000 had been allocated for next year. CP informed the group that she will arrange a meeting for the delivery plan to be signed off in advance and she would check applicants for other funds, which are now finished, to see if they could be sign-posted to Leader. SE also suggested increasing the intervention rate. CP

raised the issue of value for money (VFM) and PS replied that VFM was covered by rigorous procurement. CP agreed with this and added that they had to look at the wider impact of applications.

(David Fruin arrived at this point so the meeting was now quorate but he had to leave early so the items on the agenda were prioritised).

#### 5. Joined Up Holidays

PS explained there was a meeting yesterday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, to discuss the complaint made by Janet Gardner of Joined Up Holidays. Adrian Sherwood and Victoria Catesby from ONE were there as well as SE and PS from the LAG.

PS then gave the background to this complaint. The application had been for capital investment including alternative energy equipment, the LAG had initially liked the application apart from some concern over its sustainability. There had been a some confusion regarding the change in policy for support for alternative energy capital expenditure during the period the project had been trying to establish core cost funding. Joined Up Holidays wanted funding for installing a wind turbine and a geo-thermal heat pump. PS went on to say that the applicant was not contacted with the final decision that the RDA's felt it was not appropriate to support capital expenditure where a project was claiming Feed in Tariffs. So they continued working on their application unnecessarily for 3 months, before being told they could not apply for Leader funding for the wind turbine and pump. It was agreed with Janet Gardner, at yesterday's meeting, to put it to the LAG to make a smaller application excluding the wind turbine and heat pump so making the total cost of the application £10,000 with a Leader grant of £5,000 for improving accessibility around the site.

She was also asked to set out how the scheme will run if other funding applications they have applied for, fail.

SE said she has e-mailed her back to say they could still open as a visitor centre where the carers have responsibility for the children (so Joined Up Holidays don't have the costs for extra staff or insurance) and the costs paid by users would pay for it on a short term basis. (She added that they have a professional grant bidder who is confident they will receive £75,000 funding from the Big Lottery). PS added that they had agreed to her submitting the new application for £5,000 as a Fast Track application and would ask the LAG to consider lifting the condition of having the running costs in place as he felt they were totally committed to this project.

IF said it was a bit messy but for £5,000 was happy to agree to this, adding that they might have a legitimate grievance. CB also agreed and HC added that it would install confidence in Leader. DF asked how ONE felt and PS said they were very keen on this resolution and had agreed to give the new application top priority. CP felt the LAG should ask for a progress report to give an update on results of the Big Lottery application. SE then suggested that they offer a higher intervention rate and PS asked the group about 70%, making the Leader grant £7,000 rather than £5,000. The LAG agreed to this and it was agreed for the new application to be Fast Tracked.

#### 5. Full Applications

##### NPD121 Woodland School Breakfast Club

SE said how keen the school was to ensure this project was successful. They had included food expenses on their first EOI but had since removed that figure. It was a small application - £3,800 and would come under Measure 312 Basic Service. DF asked about sustainability and SE replied that they were aiming to be totally sustainable by January 2012, plus the school had agreed to cover any shortfall. She wondered if the LAG would increase the intervention rate making the grant £4,800. CP agreed with this. PS asked about recruitment costs and SE said they would use internal systems and parents' newsletters etc. IF raised his concerns over sustainability and PF added that the school had a limited catchment area. However SE said they could expand the club to younger children or siblings. DF was asked about his experience with schools and he said he had found these clubs worked well plus PTA's can help a lot with fundraising. HC said that this

service would help Woodland School survive and may well draw families into the area. SE said the head teacher was very positive about this breakfast club. In view of concerns of some LAG members over the sustainability of this project, CP suggested asking for milestones to review the numbers and ask for a report in June 2012. The LAG agreed with this and then approved this application.

#### NPD 126 Tourism Transport Project (PF left the room)

SE said the application was from DCC who would bankroll this project and already had Health & Safety, Equal Opps etc in place and had provided letters of support. The idea was to do a trial run from the end of July to September 2011 connecting the Weardale Railway at Stanhope with a bus service which would run up to Killhope, over to Alston and back. It would use Weardale Community Transport which would take day visitors - walkers and bikers (and bikes) to these attractions. This would test the demand and possibly extend the service next year. SE said Leader could fund the costs for training for licences but not for the actual licences. Match funding will come from fares but will be negligible (£400) as rural public transport is generally not sustainable. FC asked about marketing this service to make users aware of it and IF thought it was too soon to do this pilot – would be better to leave it until next year and have more time to promote it. HC thought it would be better to run it over a longer period say next Easter to the end of summer 2012 but wondered if the LAG could approve a second application for a “second stage” pilot if this one went ahead but didn’t show the demand.

The LAG agreed to support this application, depending on the TA, and with the condition that the evaluation is an “options appraisal”. The LAG also agreed that it would consider another application for a further trial over a longer season from next Easter to September 2012.

#### NPD 130 Sandy & Black Pig Company (PF returned to the room)

SE explained how the applicant’s father had a farm and she wanted to start a rare breed pig business. She has the herd and wants to sell the pork direct to the public and to local butchers and restaurants promoting the high quality and value of the product. The Leader funding is to convert the garage into a packaging area. The total cost is £7,761 and she is asking for 50% from Leader. SE added that this included £108 for a design for carrier bags and CP confirmed that a proforma would be needed to go to ONE for that.

The group agreed to support this full application, and subject to the TA, PS agreed to take the appropriate action to prevent any delays in the process.  
(DF then left the meeting)

### 6. EOI’s submitted

#### NPD134 Wear Rivers Trust

SE said how the Wear Rivers Trust want to expand their work to Upper Weardale and this includes conservation; education and community involvement to map out the area and see what species are there and then record this information. They will work with land owners and farmers to help them with possible stewardship applications etc.

The application is for £7,000 for equipment to do this research with the total project cost at £9,220.

It comes under Measure 323 Conservation & upgrading of the rural heritage, which has been used before but not adopted by the group. CB asked if there were any outputs from their work in lower Weardale but this has not yet commenced. IF had concerns over who would input the information onto the website and the application would need to demonstrate clarity as other funding was involved for the person’s time already. PS agreed saying this project would need to show how both work together. PF asked how the information would be recorded as this was important and PS replied that a website recording system was in place. PS

suggested the applicant work closely with AONB who were looking to offer a similar project.

The group agreed to invite a full application

#### NPD135 High Crane Lodge Countryside Education

SE said this application was from a couple – one a teacher and the other a botanist, to set up an education centre initially for school children to learn about alternative energy, flora and fauna, farming and countryside skills on site. They are also planning to offer it to adults later as they have a holiday cottage which can be offered with farm walks.

The project costs a total of £6375 and they are applying for £3000 from Leader. It comes under Measure 312.

CB questioned the number of GPS sets required (20) but SE said they plan to have school classes of children coming. PS asked if there was a market for this and are there similar places in the area already. SE said schools do have problems taking children out from school due to lack of budgets for transport so High Crane will do a pilot study with a local school first.

CP asked about the teacher resources which SE said was one of the applicants which has to be agreed and checked for market value. CP also asked over what length of time the 100 hours would last. PS added that the botanist is actually a member of another LAG group so knows the process and what is required. He felt it was a good project for job creation so long as there is a market. IF asked if it was big enough to be successful but then Harehope was quoted as starting small but now is a valuable resource.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD136 The Pennine Way through Teesdale

(CB left the room)

SE said that the applicant is a local artist with an art gallery in Barnard Castle and he wants to create a post-arrival tourism tool for visitors – a DVD of Teesdale to be shown in hotels, shops etc as well as for visitors to buy. He wants to use a local film-maker to do this. SE said he will have to go through procurement procedures for this with 3 quotes.

The project costs £15,000 and he is asking for £7,500 from Leader. It comes under Measure 312 – Tourism and he wants to start working on it as soon as possible.

PS thought the title was off-putting with The Pennine Way included and IF asked about how much it would be about promoting his gallery. SE said that he would be doing the commentary so his name and the film-maker's name would be on the film credits. CP felt it depended on the content so it may be best to have some sort of outline of the DVD first. IF also felt he needed to improve his outputs but it could be difficult to quantify. SE said they could go by sales of the DVDs. PF asked where the money of the sales of DVDs would go and SE said to the applicant's art gallery business but this would be minimal as the sale price is little more than the cost of producing them.

PS suggested the group invite a full application on condition that the applicant liaises with the LAG on how Teesdale will be represented on the DVD and increase the outputs.

#### NPD137 Lonton Podding

(CB returned)

SE told the group that this application was to buy and install 3 pods and a washroom pod on a site between Mickleton and Middleton-In-Teesdale. Pods are a step up from camping and provide affordable accommodation for short stays. The applicants have very good marketing skills so these pods will be well promoted.

The total cost for this project is £42,850 and they are after £20,850 from Leader. They are using their own money for this project.

It comes under Measure 313 - Tourism. There will be job creation for the applicant. PS said there was certainly a gap in the market and asked if planning permission had been given. SE said they had spoken to the planners who were

positive about it. CP asked about procurement but PS said there is only one supplier but they would have to provide a business plan. SE added that the applicant had quoted another pod site with a 60% occupancy rate. The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD138 Carrs Farm Camping Barn

SE said that the camping barn had previously received funding from RDPE through the RES to convert a building attached to the farmhouse into a camping barn. They have worked with many organisations e.g RSPB, Princes Trust, BTCV, Duke of Edinburgh award. It's an environmentally sensitive scheme with wind turbines but they are not generating sufficient consistent electricity and are losing bookings as a result of having "down time" when they cannot operate washing machines, dish washers etc. They want to connect to the grid as well as get FITs and so have a consistent energy supply.

IF wondered if it was a retrograde step in going to mains electricity from renewable and CB asked how they sell electricity if they are not already linked to the grid. PS was dubious on this whilst CB suggested they could use a generator for the "down time". JA suggested using battery backup.

CP then added if the business was all about renewable energy initially, would they be in breach of any previous funding rules if they went for mains electricity now? IF added that if they had set up as a sustainable business then shouldn't the LAG help them with renewable ideas.

PS asked JA if he would talk to them to explore other options and if there wasn't, then go ahead with this EOI. JA said he would be happy to speak to them to see what their electricity usage is and what the wind turbine generates at present.

Action: JA to speak to Carrs Farm and report back at the next LAG meeting.

#### 7. AOB

SE said she had received the grant offer letter for capacity costs which included the milestones previously agreed, to the group's attention.

By the end of June the group would commission a research project with CRE to find out what was needed/ where any shortfalls were in the area.

By the end of July they would organise a community group workshop.

Organise a Transnational Visit (PS said he might have an idea on that)

Develop a business planning tool kit.

SE added that she had considered asking visit durham and other tourism bodies to present a workshop for businesses to consider diversifying into tourism.

Action: It was agreed to add these on next time

Another idea SE suggested was looking into electric hook-ups for cars. FC mentioned Josey Wardell was a useful contact for this.

PS thought it would be better if the group brought any commissioning ideas to the next LAG meeting as the meeting had over run and the next meeting is only 3 weeks away.

Action: Add Commissioning Projects to early item on next Agenda

SE then checked with CP on what procedure to take for the full applications awaiting the TA and SE liaised with PS on this.

IF asked about broadband in Weardale as the last news on the website had said more money needed for it. CP said she would look into that.

Action: CP to check up on Broadband in Weardale

#### 8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is at UTASS, Middleton-In-Teesdale on 20<sup>th</sup> July.

These minutes are a reasonable reflection of what was said and agreed.

-----  
Richard Betton –  
North Pennine Dales LEADER Chairman

Date -----