



North Pennine Dales Leader LAG - Minutes of Meeting held on  
Tuesday 22nd November 2011 at Whitfield Village Pantry

Attendance:

Peter Samsom (PS), Jeremy Ancketill (JEA), John Atkinson (JA), Shaun Stuart (SS), Sue Ellwood (SE), Ian Forbes (IF), Pam Forbes (PF), Rosemary Thompson (RT), Charlotte Hursey (CS), Hazel Coppack (HC), Richard Betton (RB), Catherine Pearson (CP), Victoria Catesby (VC), Janet Seaman

1. Apologies:

Andrew Walker, Cameron Scott, Cliff Brown, Craig Wilson, David Fruin, Fiona Green, Graeme Gill, Natalie Connor, Robyn Peat.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed to be a true record and were duly signed by PS.

3. Declaration of conflict of interest

PS declared a conflict of interest with NPD131 Isaacs Tea Trail, as he was involved in this application.

SS had 2 conflicts of interest with NPD155 The Morritt Hotel, as he has worked with Barbara Johnson on her eoi and also with NPD161 Schools Enterprise & Engineering Challenge as he submitted the eoi for this.

RB declared a conflict of interest in Renewable Teesdale (NPD150) as he works with UTASS and RT declared a conflict of interest in this project also as she is a director of TVHC.

4. Presentation by Sandra Moorhouse for NPD 158 Dickens in Teesdale

Sandra gave a short presentation to the LAG members about this project and then answered questions. PS asked about the timescale of all the events and Sandra said that there would be many events initially but they would be scaled down by 2014. JA asked about the legacy and outputs and Sandra replied that they hope that the project will be taken up and developed. She added that they hoped to have an annual Dickens Day and another "D Day" for celebrating Jeremiah Dixon, born at Copley, who surveyed the Mason-Dixon Line in the USA. One outcome of this project will be training young unemployed people as volunteers so they can use these skills for future events or to help them find work. PS was concerned over the length of the project as Leader money had to be spent by June 2013. SE said that they are aware of this and they have other funding to use for 2014. She added that they will need to specify what Leader funding is for and spend it by June 2013. SS felt it was a good opportunity as it could become an established event. PS said that it fitted in well with the natural / cultural tourism measure. JA added that it would be good for increasing overnight visitors to Teesdale.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

5. Presentation by Barbara Johnson NPD 155 The Morritt Hotel

Barbara gave a short presentation of this project for installing a spa at the hotel with £1m investment. It will create 18 full time posts and when occupancy rates increase in the hotel, another 3-4 jobs would also be created. RB asked about linking the spa with other local tourist activities and Barbara said they will create packages for visitors to also do off-road driving, falconry and shooting. IF asked where she was in the AT Map process and SS said they were just starting this and they had already met with Craig Wilson of Visit County Durham about this. SE wanted to stress to the LAG that this would not be a members club such as at Headlam Hall. SS asked the LAG, before he and Barbara left the room, if the LAG would consider increasing the amount of Leader funding from the capped £75,000 to £100,000 in view of the high amount of private investment being made in this project and the business risk being taken. RB said this request would be noted. There were no more questions so SS and Barbara then left the meeting.

JA began by saying that it ticks a lot of boxes for overnight stays with Headlam Hall being at capacity. RB felt it was good that it would be jointly packaged with other local tourist attractions – off-road etc. JA agreed saying that Graeme Gill has wanted this joint marketing for a long time as it will a better offer to draw tourists. SE said that they've used top consultants to ensure the spa will be of the highest quality. JA said people will travel further for this type of facility. IF agreed that this will be a top quality product but wanted to have evidence of the natural / cultural tourism links for Leader. RB added that it must give added value to other Leader projects with cross linkages. SE said that Barbara is involved in the Dickens project and she is also trying to source local food. RB then raised SS's request.

The LAG decided to invite a full application but to keep the cap of £75,000 on this project.

## 6. Spend & Commitment

SE told the LAG that there was £2.2m for the whole project until December 2013 but there is pressure to spend as profiled as she has had to profile spending on a monthly profile which was difficult to predict. Furthermore, she has to keep to this profile otherwise some of the allocation could be removed. She had a recent meeting with Catherine Pearson and Claire Daly at DCC who have confirmed that there is £996k spent with £1.2m left to spend but the emphasis must be on projects who can commit to spend. PS felt that the integrity of the Leader programme was more important than trying to spend all the money and RB agreed saying they had to work with the delivery plan. VC felt the quality of projects was important. SE then went through the projected spend figures handed out at the meeting. RB said that any projects which have any developmental difficulties should be left until the next round of funding and SE gave an example with Rowney Art who have a planning permission issue but this wasn't foreseen at an earlier stage. RB thanked SE and team for putting these figures together to let the LAG see they are on target but there is still a long way to go.

## 7. Change in delivery of TA process and financial implications

SE had a meeting with DEFRA and was told that ONE had been one of a few RDA's delivering TA's for Leader and they now want to withdraw from this and pass it onto DCC – the accountable body.

Presently there is a completeness check performed by DCC as well as a TA so this would remove one layer of the process but there is a cost because of resources. As they can only have 20% of Leader budget as management and admin costs, it has been suggested that SE salary could be considered to be "Animation Costs" rather than M&A so leaving more money to cover the cost of the TA's by DCC. SE said that CP estimated that there is £49,000 available. DCC want £38,000 pa to do the TA's for both North Pennine Dales and East Durham LAGs. (SE added that this would actually be £76,000 for the remaining 2 years).

RB asked if they should go out to tender and CP said that would be an option.. VC said that ONE provided resources for the TA's at no cost as this was absorbed through Single Programme funding. Now they have transferred to DEFRA, they have lost staff so they have reduced capacity. She added that this would reduce the bureaucracy. RB said that in this time of austerity there should be a comprehensive procurement process as this will disadvantage the LAG's funding.

JEA asked what other Leader groups are doing regarding TA's. SE said there were 64 LAGs nationally and they all have different approaches including using lead bodies, consultants, accountable bodies etc. At present we pay £15,000 to DCC. CH asked if one person could do TA's and what capacity is there at DCC considering future job losses arising. CP said they have no resources at present to take on TA's. She has 2 staff so would need to take on another full time person. RB was concerned that recruiting would cause a delay in the process but CP said she would work quickly to get the added resource necessary.

RB asked how long it took, on average, to do a TA but VC said it was difficult to say as each TA was different but if everything was in place then a TA could take a couple of hours. IF was concerned about the salary as the number of TA's will be relatively small but CP said the post would not just do TA's but would also cover other aspects of Leader process and would benefit the LAG. SE said she was aggrieved at having to pay the whole costs and HC felt they should go through a procurement process with proper specification of the costs. She wanted to see what we would get for the money. SE said we had 24 TA's in total so 24 days work.

PF asked what other work would be involved as well as TA's and CP explained how they do completeness checks, approvals, audits, data processing, quarterly returns, claims etc. RB said they would need a Service Level Agreement. There was then further discussion to see if East Durham LAG could contribute towards the £38,000 pa but they have less money available. One suggestion was using any under spend they have or seeing if their local AAP could help with funding for the TA's.

PS said the LAG needed a clear understanding of what the £38,000 would cover and felt it would be better to wait until the next LAG meeting. IF was concerned about any lengthy recruitment as this could risk delays in the Leader process. RB agreed that a decision is deferred until the next LAG meeting and look at alternative arrangements as well as taking up HC's point of clarifying and formalising what the £38,000 pa would be for.

## 8. Proposal from Visit County Durham

SE explained that she met Melanie Lowes from Visit County Durham about planning an event to stimulate tourism in the area by showing what's been done elsewhere to generate ideas for existing or new tourism businesses. (This was included in the Delivery Plan for the LAG). Visit County Durham has sent a proposal for £9,600 and SE wanted to get members' comments on it. PS said that the proposal needed more definite outcomes and wondered why their proposed speakers were from the SW and not from more local areas. He felt the cost was OK if it was a WOW event!

SE explained that this was just a first draft and it was for the LAG to comment and change it where they wanted. She stressed that she wanted it to be a Leader event supported by Visit County Durham and not vice versa. IF felt the cost should be negotiable and wondered if it was what businesses actually wanted. He added that local tourism networks should be involved in the delivery of the event. IF suggested a working group and PF added that both Weardale and Teesdale Action Partners should be involved as they have tourism as a high priority. CH informed the group that she had organised Tourism Terrorism event in the past.

RB also wanted local tourism providers to set the event. It was agreed to set up a small working party to work with SE and Visit County Durham and the event should cover marketing, identify opportunities and see how other ideas can be used locally. CP added that 3 quotes will be needed for event management.

Action: SE to e-mail LAG members for volunteers to this working group.

## 9. Full applications

### NPD 131 Isaacs Tea Trail

(PS left the room).

SE reminded members that they had wanted a stronger offer rather than just leaflets and this application has included interpretation, way markers, engaging with local businesses, how to develop the walk and create new smaller ones from it. Match funding is in place.

RB agreed that this was a better project now. SE added that there was one point from the TA re monitoring quantity of users but this could be difficult. After some discussion, it was agreed to go back to ask them how they would monitor usage but they suggested "website hits" and possibly doing an evaluation form to be used at the beginning and the end of the walk. CP and VC said these would both be good ways to do the monitoring.

The group approved this full application with the condition of SE asking them about ways of monitoring outputs.

(PS returned)

### NPD 140 Rowney Arts

SE told the group that this would need to be left to the next meeting. It had been already approved but just needed some changes to the figures. The group agreed for SE to do an e-mail consult with the final draft and TA, if no adverse responses then it will be assumed to have been approved.

Action: SE to e-mail the updated full application to LAG

### NPD 143 Developing Arts Tourism in the North Pennines

This is awaiting the TA with a late requested for additional cash flow information. VC added that cash flow projections were requested as they are very dependent on grant support. SE said they had been trading for some years and know they have to be sustainable and this project will help them develop a sustainable future. RB asked if the group would agree to another virtual consent if the TA has no other problems. If enquired about the lease issue and SE said the TA was OK about the rolling lease. The group agreed to the virtual consent.

Action: SE to e-mail TA to LAG members with a deadline. If there are several issues, it may have to be brought to the next LAG meeting.

### NPD150 Renewable North Pennines

Before leaving, RB brought up the wording on part 5.2 of the TA for this project about "irregularities" with reference to the proposer of this project. Although new wording will replace these comments, he wanted to say that this was unfortunate and unfair and had caused offence. (RT and RB then left the room)

PS chaired in RB's absence.

VC said that as part of the TA process, they have to check on the reliability of the applicant regarding any irregularities on previous projects. These can be minor ones. A check was done but the irregularities were very minor and unintentional and certainly hadn't intended to cause offence. The wording would be reviewed.

SE then explained how the project is to give independent advice on alternative energy to community groups and businesses and the second stage is to explore the option of community alternative energy and potential income generation for UTASS and TVHC (Teesdale Village Halls Consortium) to secure their future and

reduce the dependency on public sector funding. PS said it had scored very well on the TA. VC said it was reliant on match funding which is in place and they would need to keep time sheets for in-kind work. She added that DCC should be involved in the PEV. IF asked about outcomes and they needed to maximise take up. PS said they could monitor the take up numbers. SE added that the milestones are for engaging with 20 with a 50% take up. They will also provide a final report. PS added that they need to take note of the AONB planning and design guidelines. IF wanted to ensure they cover all the Leader area and SE said there are links to Lanchester parish Council already.

The group approved this full application.

(RB and RT returned) RB took over the chair again.

#### 10. EOI's submitted

Before starting, SE reminded the LAG that Leader is economically focussed and we need to be confident in supporting commercial activities. The purpose of eoi is to ensure the projects fit with the priorities and themes and LAG members are comfortable invited a full application. A quick overview of each project is needed at this stage for them to invite a full application which will then provide further details.

#### NPD160 Progression and Cooperation at Harehope Quarry

SE said this was to expand the existing facilities to this site. Match funding is in place and they hope to start in January 2012.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD 161 Schools Enterprise & Engineering Challenge

SE told the group this was a project working with local schools (one was outside the Leader area but would only include pupils who lived in the Leader area) to look at the manufacturing and engineering sector as a career as well as enterprise. RB considered this good value for money and IF also supported it. PF wondered if it was appropriate for Year 9's but it had been taken to a school who felt it was aimed at the right age group. PF also mentioned that £4,000 had been approved for Weardale School earlier this month and AAP funding was discussed. RB reminded the group that this would get sorted in the full application process. CP commented that it would be unlikely to start in January 2012.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD162 Murphy Equestrian

SE explained that the applicant was an accountant recently made redundant but had excellent equestrian qualifications and experience and wanted to start up an equestrian business at St John's Chapel with potential to start up a local riding club. (CP and JA mentioned 2 other equestrian businesses at Horsley Hall and Tow Law). The project will need to demonstrate added benefit in the area.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD163 A Journey Through Teesdale

CH declared a conflict of interest as being involved in the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership who are partners in this project, so left the room.

SE told the members about this project to develop the mini golf course in Barnard Castle to British Mini Golf Association standard and also using it to promote tourist information. They hope to start work next autumn 2012. HC and PS thought it was quite expensive but JA pointed out how expensive golf courses are. RB added that it would contribute to our delivery plan on the tourism offer and competitions will draw in more people. It was felt an imaginative method of delivering tourist information.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

(CH returned to the room).

#### NPD164 Highland Cattle Benefits

This project is to promote highland cattle by attending country fairs, agricultural shows etc. CP said some of the costs would not be eligible. PS had looked at their website and said it covered a huge area so felt the benefit would be too widely spread. RT said she would prefer to be funding a local rare breed Northern Shorthorns. IF shared PS's concerns and thought it would have limited use in the North Pennines area.

The group decided to reject this eoi.

#### NPD 164 Barney Bike Transit Project

SE explained how she had contacted Alan Best after seeing a feature in the Mercury. This project is to transport visitors from the Bowes Museum into Barnard Castle town centre using a rickshaw service. When not in use they would be used for advertising. They need to sort out licensing from DCC. Training will be given for riders to give out tourist information. RB said this was a good project and others agreed.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD 166 Living Low Barns

SE met Jim Cokill about this project which is to upgrade the visitor centre and car parking to increase the visitor offer. IF felt it was a good investment but had timescale concerns. RB said to invite a full application provided it fits in with the Leader funding deadline. It will only be valid if they can commit and spend the money before June 2013.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

#### NPD167 Heritage Skills and Overnight Stays at Killhope

SE explained how demand for the yurt at Killhope was very high but they need to buy 2 more for having separate yurts for boys and girls when school groups want to use them as well as an outside catering facility. RB wondered if they were so successful why they couldn't fund this themselves. IF added that local authority can't fund this from its revenue. PS asked about displacement – would it affect other accommodation for groups in the area. PF added that the initial requirement had been to allow school group to come to Killhope so this would enable that to happen. It would also develop links with other providers. IF was disappointed with the leaflet idea.

The group agreed to invite a full application with evidence of how it would affect other group accommodation providers and more imaginative ways of promoting it.

#### NPD 168 Middleton-in-Teesdale Farmers' Auction Mart Development

RB said he had bought shares in the Mart so had a conflict of interest and left the meeting. PS took over chair again.

SE said that Middleton-In-Teesdale lacked meeting venues so this project would be good for meeting rooms, school groups etc. They need planning permission and hope to start work in April / May 2012. IF asked about highway requirements and Se said they may have to change the entrance.

The group agreed to invite a full application.

(RB returned as chair)

11. Change in delivery of TA process and financial implications  
Already discussed – see point 7.

12. Birmingham Conference

SE said this event had been very worthwhile and Leader would continue post 2013 but in what form was uncertain. The feedback from other LAGs there was similar – uncertainty over the future, complaints of the bureaucracy etc. There were a lot of enthusiastic and committed people there. VC was there too and told the LAG about the Chairs' meeting next week with DEFRA and project coordinators to discuss the future of Leader.

13. Evaluation, consultation of local people for future requirements and development of LDS for post 2013

SE felt they need to develop an evaluation of the delivery to date to show what the group had achieved and how to go forward with future funding. She added that it could be better to have independent evaluations done to be more objective and they should ask the community what they want. SE said they could use AAP's for this. PS said he had spent a lot of time preparing the previous delivery plan and agreed they should go through this process again. RB said we need to prioritise and deliver on the existing plan first. He asked if DEFRA do an evaluation but VC thought theirs would not be detailed enough.

Action: VC to check what evaluation DEFRA do

VC wondered if there was capacity for LAG members to work on the evaluation but RB felt it should be independent. PS asked CP if they had a copy of a previous contract tender.

Action: CP to get copy of tender for next or following LAG meeting

14. AOB

SE raised the issue of her salary to the group. She briefed them on the background of the minuted agreement of having annual increments but after the first increment she has not received any more. She has a meeting with Rob Yorke the chairman of SDEA on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November to see why this agreement has not been honoured. She concluded that she would like to have the support of the LAG in this matter. She then left the room.

RB said that SE's account was accurate and she was offered increments as she had to drop her salary when she started with Leader. Other Leader co-ordinators were paid more but when he made various approaches to SDEA, he was told about a pay freeze for all staff so they wouldn't pay these increments. PS agreed with Sue, the budget is there and she does a great job. JA agreed that SE was a good worker and that SDEA had gone back on their agreement. PF wondered if SE could take the SDEA to a tribunal but RB said she wouldn't go that far. He added that she was the life and soul of this Leader group so wants the backing of the LAG for justice. IF suggested the chair should go with SE to the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November and RB said he or PS would go if SE wanted.

The group gave their full support for SE to ask SDEA to honour their agreement and achieve a satisfactory resolution.

15. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January at UTASS Middleton-In-Teesdale

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

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