



**Scottish Rural  
Development  
Programme**

## **ANGUS COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

### **Integrated Local Development Strategy**

**Wednesday 2 September 2020 at 14:00 to 16:00**

**Venue – Microsoft Teams – hosted by David Tollick on behalf of LEADER**

#### **Present: LAG MEMBERS**

##### **Private Sector:**

Douglas Pond (DP) (**Chair**) – Individual (Left at 2:30pm)

Gill Lawrie (GL) (Vice Chair) – Angus Countryside initiative (**Chaired** after DP left at 2.30)

Caroline Warburton (CW) - Visit Scotland

Graham Hewitson (GH) – Individual

Hugh Campbell Adamson (HCA) - Scottish Land & Estates

Jenny Adamson (JA) – Individual

Jeremy Parker (JP) – NFU Scotland, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce

Lol Scragg (LS) – Dundee & Angus College (D&A)

##### **Public Sector:**

Alison Smith (AS) (**Vice Chair**) – Service Leader (Economic Development) - Angus Council

Gina Ford (GF) - Scottish Enterprise (by Skype)

Mike Strachan (MS) – Scottish Forestry

##### **LEADER Staff:**

Shelley Hague (SH) Business Manager (Funding, Policy & Projects)

Dave Tollick (DT) Angus LEADER/EMFF Co-ordinator (Host)

Karen Hamilton (KH) Angus LEADER/EMFF Clerical Officer

- Apologies:** Graham Galloway (GG) – DD8 Music/Kirrie Connections  
Mark Cessford (MC) – General Manager, RIY Shipping (Scotland) Limited

### **Welcome**

**DP**, The Chair, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending via Teams. Dougie not able to chair the meeting throughout, and Gill had offered to take over from 2:30pm.

The LAG attendance at today's meeting was quorate 3 public members and 7 private members present.

Graham Galloway is reported to have CORONA; the chair wished to be kept informed and to convey the LAG's best wishes to Graham (DT spoke with GG today, he was feeling a bit better although still not able to attend the meeting).

**DP**, Chair made introductory remarks, since he was leaving the meeting early. Angus will complete most projects with the exception of two transnational cooperation ones. We will be underspend as will other LAGS in Scotland and the possibilities of recycling these funds within Angus are now impossible within the SG timescales. Angus Council (Alison and Shelley) are ensuring that our financial position is secure, and are dealing with staffing issues ref. programme-end redundancy. We have the Legacy project to report and follow and the event to look forward to, to round off our work positively. After today, we will probably have two more LAG meetings before we disband.

Consequently, the chair wanted to thank everybody for all of the contributions to date. "Angus has punched well above its weight" and we have been told that quite often. That is thanks, in no little way, a positive, to a committed and able LAG. The Chair also must thank Dave and Karen for keeping the 'boat afloat' and in such a positive and effective way at a time of great uncertainty, both personal and professional, so heartfelt thank you.

"It is a future that we are looking towards and how our Rural Development in Scotland will move forward and hopefully it will be along CLLD lines, our work feeds into these lines and whilst at present there is much discussion and talk there is little definite action or resolution. Maybe this will change in 2021. Once again thank you for everything that you have done and attending today on TEAMS."

***Dougie passed the meeting to Gill Lawrie to Chair***

- Minutes of last meeting (June 2020) and Matters Arising**

**GF** Please can Aberdeen be changed to Aberdeenshire Council (page 8) – This will be amended.

**The Chair** asked about page 7, Monitoring by Scottish Government – the second paragraph about Auchlishie – do we know if the RPID inspection has gone ahead yet? **DT** I am sure it hasn't.

No other matters arising, and Minutes were approved by Gill Lawrie and seconded by Caroline Warburton.

### 3. Budget

#### i. Admin & Animation Budget

**DT** We are doing a calendar year budget for the Scottish Government, so this shows the Calendar year 2020. The figures show remaining balances of £43,143 at year end. That is the amount of money under budget if all the projections that we have, at the moment, are accurate.

- The salaries spend £82,712.67 included Kim until the end of March 2020 and thereafter it is just Dave and Karen. We also have paid for agency support for Finance Officer to cover some of the work previously done by Bruce, and also £1600 for one of Shelley's staff whom have completed work to support us.
- The staff travel for £1300 will probably not be spent as we are now all working from home.
- Communications for £10,000 is for a contract for monitoring and evaluation; we still might underspend on some of that.
- Consultancy costs for £15,000 is for contractor work that Kim's post would otherwise have delivered. That work is to do with gathering project completion information; we still might underspend on some of that.
- **A&A remains on course to come in well under the 25% maximum of total programme outturn.** We would have to lose over £100,000 in expected project spend (it will be a shock if that happens) for there to be a chance of us breaking the 25%.
- We do need to budget for the first three months of 2021 although none of that is shown here. However, the only likely further commitment that that would incur is under £18,000 to keep Dave and Karen in the post until the end of the programme.
- So, when we are ending this programme with a potential underspend of £43,000, we are in a good position to cope with a less than £18,000 pressure in the first three months of 2021.
- **DP** asked Alison if the extension of staff contracts from 31/12/202 to 31/03/2021 will increase the redundancy costs? **AS** There is a slight increase, but we live with that.

#### ii. Projects Budget

**DT** highlighted thones which are still claiming money from us and doing work. The current commitment of the projects budget totals £2,113,221.99 but we may lose more money by projects' unforeseen underspend, which would reduce that commitment. More detail on ongoing projects to be discussed in Item 4 of the Agenda.

#### iii. Drawdowns from Scottish Government

Submitting drawdowns every month, and we are getting them back regularly. An issue with Drawdown 20, which had been sitting for many months, £57,958 was traced by SG to an 80 pence irregularity; sorted now by SG. We have submitted over £2,450,000 and we have recovered £2,329,000. We have got £180,000 waiting in the system coming our way and we will be making another drawdown today or tomorrow. Angus Council internal auditors

wanted to make sure the LAG was aware what of the drawdown submissions are coming back in; this report shows that detail.

**Gina** Getting money back through government systems is a minefield. Well Done. **DT** Thank you Gina. Scottish Government has improved the system as well in that we now get a remittance advice, so praise where praise is due, SG have improved things recently.

**AS** I absolutely agree, there is a power of work has to go in to making this happen and I know compared to other areas as well, this is a much better position, than some other LAGs are in and certainly from an Accountable Bodies point of view it gives us a lot more assurance that we are on top of it and keeping an eye on it.

**GL** Thank you to Gina and Alison for your kind compliments to our Team for all their good hard work.

#### 4. Selected Project updates including CV19 Issues

i. **Auchlishie Farm Equestrian Bunkhouse**

affected by supplier delays, but they are still on track and will hope to complete in six weeks. When we get to the end of the programme, I think he will have actually had that project live for almost 3 ½ years. Okay with Auchlishie, think it's going to be finished and they are going to do their final claim.

ii. **Ashbrook Nursery and Garden Centre**

Happily, opened their building which they had developed into a Café and multipurpose building which they are running well and reported to be very busy (**GL** also noted that she had been in and they are doing excellent work). **DT** hoping to go along next week, after having done a risk assessment. We will be discussing final claims and tidying things up. One of the family's sons has been appointed as General Manager, and two other sons now work for the business, so the succession planning has been put in place. The older business partner, Frances recently died.

iii. **Flourishing Destinations (FD)**

This transnational project, involving Belgium and Romania had substantial learning trips, with the Tourism communities in all three countries travelling to each other's countries. The last such event has not been possible due to the Lockdown where Romania and Scotland planned to travel to Belgium. They are currently trying to organise this remotely by involving people in the same kind of meeting and the same kind of experiences digitally, of course it will not obviously be the same experience. They are also now planning how to adjust budgets to deliver the same kind of outcomes digitally. We are expecting some kind of 'change request' from Flourishing Destinations. One or two of the LAG Members have engaged with some of the FD events put on in Angus and attended meetings, showing an interest in attending some of the future presentations.

**CW** (Visit Scotland) I know there have been discussions on the 'Change Request', I just wondered if the learning journey cannot take place on an online form or there might be an underspend to what extent can they repurpose the budget, say, to support Tourism Sector or the Community locally. **DT** The Scottish Government has expressly said if people need to adapt budgets or even increase budgets to help with 'COVID' that LAGS should be given

the green light to allow these project modifications. Therefore, I am sure that FD will repurpose the money. Angus Tourism Cooperative are well represented in the FD project, so they should be well placed to come up with what the local Tourism needs are.

**DT** On the back of that the Social Enterprise Network Scotland (SEND Scot) have started, potentially, a Tourism Project Pilot in Brechin building on some aspects of the Flourishing Destinations successes (Alison at Murton is very involved with that). **CW** The other link with that is that they have been pulled into starting a potential Regenerative Tourism Project which is across Perth & Kinross and Angus which links to the Cateran Eco museum. APK group of which I have been attending meetings, often mentions the Flourishing Destinations Project, so I really think it has been a valuable catalysis for that group.

**DT** I agree, I am very pleased at the number of things that have arisen from FD. The European Rural Development have asked for a case study for Flourishing Destinations and given us a template so that is another Angus project going to be focused on – excellent.

**iv. ENGINE Young Persons Work Exchange**

This project, split jointly with Fife and Rural Perth & Kinross, is likely to see an underspend. We sent a group of 15 young scots to Sweden in 2019 and they reciprocated, sending the Swedes here. One or two of the LAG members were involved. Unfortunately, we were not able to deliver any of this project in summer 2020 but could have been delivered summer 2021. However, the Scottish Government will not let us spend any monies beyond 31/03/2021, so this project will see an underspend of £7-£8,000 in the period to 31/12/2021. If the SG accrue our underspend, we might yet still send our Scots to Sweden – but this is now out of our hands. There is demand there from local young people (and we had set up 15 young scots to go to Sweden in 2020). The Swedes might send their young people to Scotland in 2021 with their own money and engage a Scottish contractor to deliver it here, independent of what we do.

**v. Rural Youth Project (recent email cc'd to all) – Perth & Kinross are the main lead.**

We recently had a discussion at the last LAG and as per email that I recently sent out. Rural Youth Project has had great difficulty in having any impact with young people in the target age group. They have done very well in profiling the issues for such people at a very high level between politicians, strategists and the like, nationally, but they have not brought anything to the local area. We are one of 5 LAGs which support them, and the issues are the same with the other 4 LAGs as well. We have directed the Rural Youth Project to other organisations which might be linked to the target group, but they have not had significant success. Latterly, they tried a new approach, a European programme called 'Smart Villages' which has organised an event on the 10 September. On the basis of how successful that event is likely to be, we might have to change approach after that, as the only thing to be left after that is to pick up the pieces, identify the mistakes and learn from them. We will get back to you after 10 September to give you some feedback (my information after a conversation this morning re 'Smart Villages' (with Growbiz) – is that it's not going to improve that much). We are going to be looking at a major project review again.

**AS** Have they directly engaged with the lead for Youth Work in Angus Council?

**DT** We have all directed RYP and Smart Villages to the right people and they have had contacts with Angus Council (Head of Youth). Difficulty in Scotland is that most youth in Scotland is seen as under 18 and not 18-28 year olds who are 'enterprise hungry', which is RYP's target. The college and others were given the opportunity to engage, and RYP were showcasing their product; unfortunately, people didn't take the bait, that is the reality.

**GH** Youth work in Scotland (to say under 18 is probably to push it beyond their limits, it tends to be people under 15 and 16) young people perceive themselves in different ways and I

think the project, as you say, was looking at a particular cohort of young people and they haven't managed to connect to them. We did meet them with colleagues from the College and try and get the right kind of contacts, but I don't think that works from a distance, you have to get where the young people are and get to know them. You cannot build this project from the top down.

**GL** Rebecca Dawes of Young Farmers have both completed the Rural Leadership Programme under Scottish Enterprise, if they can't get it going through their connections, which is 14-26 age range, then nobody can.

**DT** The people from Smart Villages, to whom I spoke, almost know already what has gone wrong and are trying their best to change it round but they can see that it's not had its roots at the right level and not grown upwards enough.

**JP** It is a shame that the event to be held at Friock Hub had to be cancelled that could have led to something.

**AS** Re: Entrepreneurs. Business Gateway have reached their annual target for people setting up businesses in response to losing their jobs or thinking of alternatives and working at home. We talk a lot about entrepreneurship as a career choice for young people up there with College and University – is there something there that we have missed, have we explored that side of things fully?

vi. **Our Rivers**

We may be able to accrue £2000 in the same way as for ENGINE, above; again they are affected by transnational parts to their project, which could not happen, but are developing sites throughout the South Esk catchment area – doing interpretation boards and a bit of tourism trail involved in the use of the catchment. I do not expect any major delays but the £2,000 will be a minor underspend before the 31/03/2021 deadline.

vii. **Farm Tours Toilet Provision**

Applicant has gone a bit quiet (perhaps a little overwhelmed with other stuff at present) and they have not started this project yet. We have assured Louise that there is no obligation to spend the money – 'don't start that unless you can afford to finish it', because it would not be a big deal for LEADER to just cancel that project. We will keep the project 'open' until she gives us a decision.

**GL** The sad thing is if she wants to develop that business along with all the tourism tags that she has, she really needs these toilets. I am not surprised she has gone quiet as it is harvest time and she will be starting to get requests from Nursery Groups. Etc.

**CW** Louise was on an Angus Tourism Framework meeting yesterday and she did mention that she had been run off her feet and had various family commitments, so I suspect it's just a question of asking the definitive question.

viii. **LEADER Legacy** – final report\* and proposed event - LAG discussion

**SH** We had put out a contract for the next stage of the LEADER Legacy project and have the report now which has been circulated and we are going to pull some bits out of it and make a presentation. The two dates for the event are the 27 or 29 October, LAG agreed get back to SH.

Examples of content: Dougie doing an intro (he did a good wee speech this morning, so would be fine with that), Mhairi Gougon is keen to speak a little bit as Minister of Rural Affairs and the Environment. We are then going to do some quick-fire voting, of which I saw a good example of that for an event for OECD, where they were throwing up some questions and they were able to get a straw poll instantly. We would do a little bit about the report,

picking out some of those key messages and doing a couple of workshops run by our projects, so people can see the types of work that we have done, and the good practice coming out of that. We are going to try some fun elements to it, for instance a virtual business card raffle. So, we have said to the consultants to see if they can be more creative with this stuff – that would be great.

An important part is how we move forward after LEADER, so, thinking about some of messages we need to start using in some of the other work that we are doing. From Community Planning perspective, the CLLD approach would be amazing to underpin some of the work we are doing, and not losing the skills we have on the LAG.

**DT** I will put around an email to get everyone to agree a date.

**GL** Who are being invited to this? **SH** It will be LAG, the projects, and people in and around the region who have an interest in all things Rural. We can flag up some of the local elements and start to get feedback from local elements and see what we can take away from it. Possible number could be 60 people to attend in total so that we can split it into workshops, e.g. four workshops of 15 people. **GH** I would not have any more than 6 or 7 in a workshop. **GL** what about the publicity for this event. **SH** Jigsaw will manage all of that for us. We will make sure that anything that is going to be put out is going to go before the LAG before, for approval, and that the LAG is ready to share over their own network.

**HCA** I think the idea of publicity is excellent and will get people on side. I agree with GH but worry about calling them the workshops (maybe trying to get people to do too much), could the workshops be separate to the meeting? This is a Webinar to show people what is happening – more information and not so much for your audience to participate. If you want to learn more about specific projects, they can buzz in to watch a Webinar and take out the workshops. Like the idea of having a raffle, something fun. **SH** it's more of a show and tell, for the projects to give an overview of the work they have done and then there would be an opportunity for questions. We did originally have it as two sessions; but we got some feedback that it would turn people off and that it would be a boring afternoon. This is just the first draft. It is noted about the 'workshops' and I think that perhaps 'workshop' is the wrong descriptive, sending out the wrong signals as in the word 'WORK'.

## 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

### i. Recent SG on the Spot (OTS) Inspections

This is just an information piece, these OTSs involve SG officers looking at our online system from a desk study point of view and then send a report out to RPID Inspectors who go out and check, on the ground, what matches the written report. The ground inspections cannot currently happen because of lockdown, although being eased at the moment; they might start sending inspectors out.

i.i. **Denfind** – was recently completed and there were quite a lot of questions, but we have answered them.

i.ii. **Angus Alive** – was underway, but we did not know anything about it as they said they had no questions and therefore did not inform us. This would have been good to know, in so far as, the project, has had a positive inspection. Good news should be shared

- i.iii. **Auchlishie** – have completed all the desk study bit and they are just awaiting the inspectors going out to visit.

We do not think there will be any issues with the above as the buildings/vehicles are there. **GL** We have heard through agricultural connections and have had warnings that the RPID inspections are getting underway again, so I suspect it will not be too long depending on priorities whether livestock, farming or build projects through LEADER will come first

- ii. **Annual Certificate of Compliance – Angus Council Internal audit**

The second part of that, annually, at this time of year, we have to get Angus Council's internal auditors to prepare a report which Alison then signs off on behalf of the Accountable Bodies, which is called the 'Annual Certificate of Compliance'. This is underway to let you know. They do a lot of preparation and lead up work, but the actual audit live is from the 1-15 October 2020. This will be reported to the next LAG.

- iii. **LDS M&E Contract**

Now that we have the final version of the LEGACY Report DT will put together a few more thoughts on what might be in a Local Development Strategy M&E contract. We had originally allocated £10,000 to that and we now need to revise that in view of reducing the brief of what was originally thought, we will be able to take out of the brief some of the stuff that was delivered in the LEGACY Project so DT will be speaking to Shelley and Alison about that in the next few weeks.

## 6. **Governance and Operation issues**

**DT** The programme closure documentation has been handed back to the Scottish Government successfully and we haven't heard anything more about that. This was always specified in the in the original 'Service Level Agreement' with the Council so there is no news there. LAG to note, in the minutes, that the closure documentation was supplied on time.

## 7. **Additional Network and Communication**

- i. **National Infographic**

DT A national infographic was recently decided to be organised and the staff group between them gathered the information and one of the groups in the Outer Hebrides have published the information. It shows you the Scottish position on all the figures – there is an Angus version that has not as yet been turned into an Infographic. That has been given to the LEGACY event contractor Jigsaw Media and they will produce as an Angus version of something similar, which we might combine with the Scottish Data.

- ii. **AB Meetings**

SH We had the last AB Meeting on the 9 June and the next one is the 30 September. There was an awful lot on the Agenda. We spoke about Admin and Animation; within the AB minute it was agreed that we could use our budgets to fund the staff for an extra 3 months (January– March 2021). There has also been the news that Gillian is stepping down and her line Manager will be stepping in. Monitoring and Evaluation will be a big part of that and we have been asked to put in a one-pager based on the M&E actions to date and on what our plan is, which really just mirrors what we were asked to do as part of the Service Level Agreement with the addition that we have gone a little bit over and above with the 'LEGACY' work.

### iii. **Chairs Meetings**

**GF** Peter Ross, is suggesting the next Chairs meeting at the beginning of October. (GF is the chair of the South Aberdeenshire).

**GL** Is there a small working group being set up by the chair?

**GF** The Group was to consist of two from the AB's, two from the Chairs' group and two SG staff. This is an attempt to take something forward for the future. It is fair to say that the LAG Chairs collectively are frustrated that we are getting lots of reassuring warm words from SG, but no reassurance on a budget to carrying forward CLLD work.

**GL** it is quite sad that the Chairs group has not been more influential, to me it should have been quite a powerful body, as we represent 21 LAGS and that covers the whole of Rural Scotland. Hopefully the working group can come up with something that really stimulates thoughts and discussions.

## 8. **NESFLAG**

**SH** The last NESFLAG meeting was held by Teams on 10 June 2020. The Angus allocation of £114,960.00 was fully committed and all projects now complete.

Aberdeenshire Council is carrying out an evaluation on the North and South Aberdeenshire LDS and not solely EMFF. SH contacted Jamie Wilkinson to advise that she would be happy to discuss the Angus element in more detail and have responded to the consultant's self-assessment survey but to date have not heard back.

Evaluation of the Angus element of the NESFLAG would need to be discussed, there are only four projects; Angus Alive, Signal Tower Museum, Arbroath Harbour pontoons, Cold store and the East Haven litter clean.

The next meeting and final project decision meeting will be held in October and for us going forward it is ensuring we are aware of the funding landscape for Angus 2021 onwards to make sure we are involved in future programme discussions.

## 9. **Any other Business**

- **DP** mentioned that he met Bill Sturrock, a past LAG member, at the Letham Craft Shop (they had a break in and recent flood). Bill and his brother are taking over from his mother and father who ran the Letham Craft Shop and they are extending and developing it. Bill wished everyone on the LAG the very best.

- **VAA re RYP** had been trying to get in touch to ask for support to engage in Angus. VAA had indicated that they could do what they can but VAA thought it was a bit short notice.
- **New legislation. DT** This morning's meeting of the staff group highlighted the retained 'Agriculture Bill' which alludes to various aspects of the Scottish Rural Development Programme but not specifically LEADER. Perhaps SG are dividing up what was SRDP, some of it to be retained in the Agricultural Bill. This will be interesting to watch. Note, there is also money coming through UK's Shared Prosperity Fund that will hopefully be producing money in April of next year.

**JP and MS** have been looking at the paper that was issued by Scottish Government yesterday to see what their relevancies are. **MS** £150 million going into Forestry on top of what they get and talk about Youth Employment Schemes. Still a mass to read through. **JP** they have agricultural specific measures: agricultural transformation programme, rural land use partnerships and climate change acts, etc. only a brief overview, not the extra detail now.

**GL** I would like to keep an eye on Rural land use forums and groups – wonder if they might be a link with CLLD and various other things that are being pushed forward through the Scottish Land Commission.

**We must keep an eye on the Rural side of these things over the coming weeks and share amongst the LAG**

- **LOL** We do European projects within the College and we are currently working on one with five other organisations around Europe, looking at planning business succession. We are at the stage of looking at local businesses that have gone through a family business succession process. Please drop me a quick email if you can give me a story regarding this.
- **CW** We have a Dundee and Angus regional video (with regard to Visit Scotland) the link is below. Angus features prominently in it, including Newton Farm, please can we share it and then we can raise the profile.

Link: <https://youtu.be/YZnFvaU9aDk>

## 10. Date of next Meeting

***The next programmed meeting will be the 2 December 2020.***