**HIGHLAND LEADER 2014-2020 PROGRAMME**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 February 2016**

**Highland Archive Centre**

PRESENT:

|  |  |  |
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| **Voting**Ian Wilson(IW) | NFU | Private |
| Frances Gunn(FG) | Third Sector Interface | Private |
| Sharon MacKay(SM)  | Visit Inverness & Lochness | Private |
| Yvonne White(YW) | Scottish Crofting Federation | Private |
| George Farlow(GF) | THC | Public |
| Robert Muir(RM) | HIE | Public |
|  |  |  |
| **Advisory** |  |  |
| Scott Armstrong(SA | Visit Scotland |  |
| Andy McCann | THC |  |
| Nicole Wallace(NW) | THC |  |
| Fiona Cameron(FC) | LEADER  |  |
| Judith Wainwright(JW) | LEADER |  |
| Liz Whiteford(LW) | LEADER |  |
| Wendy Anderson(WA) | LEADER |  |
| Joe MacMillan(JM) | LEADER |  |
| Paula Betts(PB) | LEADER |  |
| Fiona Daschofsky(FD) | LEADER |  |
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**1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

FG chaired the meeting in the absence of JH and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from David Richardson, Jon Hollingdale, Stewart Sandison, Debbie Gray, Cathy Steer, Richard Wallace, Martin Culbertson, Sarah Lamb and from LAP representatives Meg Gillies from Skye LAP, Pat Buchanan from Caithness and Anne Sutherland from Sutherland.

**The meeting was quorate.**

**2 MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Matters Arising

There were three actions for FC from the last meeting all of which are an agenda item for this meeting, Confidentiality Clause, LEADER Pre- Application Form and a Timescale for Launching the new programme.

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

 **LAG/LAP members code of conduct**

FC presented an amended version of the Code of Conduct which was adopted by the group. Adopted form to be sent to all for completion. **Action FC**

**3 Local Area Partnership Updates**

The updates from DO’s submitted prior to the meeting were discussed.

 **FC to provide a response for JW to take back to the LAP. Action FC/JW**

**4 ERG Update**

FC advised the group that an ERG working group meeting was held on Wednesday 17th

 February. The group was made up from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ERG plus two other

 members of the ERG plus FC & FD. It was agreed that the group would have a full meeting in

 March to sign off on all the documents discussed at the meeting.

 FC advised the ERG members that all applications would be screened bty the appropriate

 Development Officer and only applications that impacred equalities would be passed to the ERG

 for advice and comments. The ERG members accepted this process.

**5 Pre-Application Form & Assessment**

It was agreed at the last meeting that Development Officers would only assess the pre-application on eligibility only. FC created a Pre application Technical Review form which was

 handed out at the meeting for comments. The amended LEADER Pre-Application Form and

 LAG/LAP Pre-Application Project Assessment form were also handed out at the meeting. After

 discussion it was agreed to make a couple of amendments to the forms and circulate for

approval at the March meeting. **Action FC**

It was agreed that the forms would be used on a trial period initially and reviewed at future LAG meetings to see if meeting requirements.

FC stated that the templates tabled were being provided by the LAG and that the LAPs may wish to add additional questions.

**6 Programme Launch**

FC advised the meeting that a programme launch date was discussed at yesterday’s team meeting and the aim was to have a low key launch between the 11/4 and the 27/4, the date of the April LAG meeting. This target date is based on the proviso that the following key issues have been satisfactorily closed off.

* final guidance received
* LARCs formal timetable
* clarity on conditions in SLA pre any approvals
* timescale for application process
* documents approved at next ERG meeting
* pre-application & equalities appendix

An update on the above key issues to be provided to the LAG at the March meeting.

FC advised the meeting that advice had been sought and a low key launch would not breach purdah rules. A low key launch would involve local press releases, update on website, sending out mailshot to announce that Highland LEADER would be open for applications. This would also meet with rules surrounding the referendum.

**7 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

FC went over theMoU form which was e-mailed to the members prior to the meeting. RM

 suggested that any governance issues should be brought to the LAG at a formal level. It was also

 mentioned that governance of groups should be reviewed by Internal Audit and item included in the

annual report. It was proposed that this item be included as a standard agenda item for all future meetings.

FC to amend the form accordingly incl. the referencing in section 2 and resend to the group for acceptance.

**8 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Update**

NW gave background to discussions and an overview of the Highland/Moray Operational Plan. The

following concerns have been identified with Marine Scotland(MS).

* Eligibility confirmation – should be earlier in the process.
* Claims process – claims being processed by MS will require careful management especially where the dyamics of a project change.

The first Highland Moray FLAG meeting will take place on the 3rd of March. The FLAG will agree detail of the Operational Plan & Framework Agreement between the FLAG and Marine Scotland.  It is hoped that the FLAG will then open for Expression of Interest.

**9 Conference Update**

FD updated the meeting on the 2016 Scottish LEADER conference being held at the MacDonald Aviemore Resort on Thursday 10th to Saturday 12th March 2016. FD mentioned that fourteen people outwith LEADER staff had registered an interest to attend the conference and that there would be additional spaces in excess of the 20 initially allocated to Highland LEADER if required.

FD also mentioned to the meeting that Elphin Community Hall had been selected to be included in the film of inspiring LEADER projects being produced by SRN. Kirkhill Centre Forward had been selected for a project site visit on the Saturday of the conference.

**10 Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 30th March (provisional), venue and time TBC

 **Note: due to the Easter holiday period members to be contacted in advance for confirmation of attendance to ensure that the meeting will be quorate.**