



**Minutes of Local Action Group Forum Meeting  
held at East Coker Village Hall  
Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

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- 1. Chairman's Welcome** – Lizzy Ralph (LR), LAG Forum Chairman introduced herself, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the first LAG Forum of the year. LR commented that it had been a difficult year for the programme with an enforced period of purdah due to the EU referendum followed by uncertainty about the programme as a consequence of the UK leaving the EU. LR confirmed that due to this, the process of the LAG Forum had changed and the forum would no longer be involved in assessing applicants at the Expression of Interest stage. LR mentioned that due to the sad loss of Michael Mounde earlier this year, she was also acting Chairman of the LAG Executive Committee.

  - a) **Apologies** – None received
  - b) **Minutes of previous meeting** – Agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.
  - c) **Matters arising** - None
- 2. Executive Committee Elections** - Sarah Dyke, Programme Manager (SD) gave a brief presentation detailing information about the LAG Executive Committee and LAG Forum and what their responsibilities involve throughout the project application process. SD explained that the total number of members is thirteen plus five non-voting advisors. Five members of the LAG Executive Committee would be Core members from the key organisations Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, South Somerset District Council, Frome Town Council, Mendip District Council and Wiltshire Council. The remaining eight members of the Executive Committee would be made up from those LAG Forum members who had put themselves forward to be nominated for election. SD explained that currently there were eight applicants for the eight vacancies on the Executive Committee and asked if any other person wished to nominate themselves. No further members nominated themselves to stand for election so SD gave a brief overview of the nominees. SD explained that as no further candidates had come forward to stand for election, that if all were happy, the eight candidates would all be elected en-bloc as members of the Executive Committee. SD asked for a show of hands in agreement of electing all eight candidates, a show of hands for those against and a show of hands for any abstentions. All present at the LAG Forum voted in favour of electing all eight nominees as members of the Executive Committee so all nominees were duly elected.
- 3. Programme Update** – SD gave an update on the current status of the programme including an overview of the LEADER programme, the application process and recent changes made to application forms, national priorities, the Heart of Wessex LAG area along with details on eligibility for funding and funding levels and programme timescales. SD confirmed that currently the LAG had awarded 11 projects with a grant representing an investment of c.£400,000 with a further 4 projects being considered at the July Executive Committee worth c.£90,000 investment, 10 projects working up their Full Applications worth c.£480,000

investment and 13 applicants working on their Expression of Interest worth c.£500,000. SD concluded by presenting some case studies highlighting successful projects.

A gentleman asked whether planning applications should be submitted before applying to the programme if planning permission was required. SD commented that it would be beneficial, in order to streamline the process to apply for planning permission before submitting and EOI in order that both applications can be worked on in parallel.

A further question was asked regarding the cessation of the LEADER programme and SD confirmed that the programme would finish in March 2019, with all contracts having to be awarded before this time but that programme staff should be in position until March 2020 to complete the administration process.

Paul Egginton (PE) asked how many projects had been rejected by the Executive Committee. SD confirmed that none had been rejected as she works closely with the applicants to manage expectations from the start of the process giving due care and attention so that no work is wasted, avoiding the disappointment of being rejected.

4. **Project Update – Wren’s Shop, East Knoyle** – PE gave an in-depth presentation about the successful conclusion of Wren’s Shop 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Refit in East Knoyle. PE detailed the application process from commencement to close with particular attention given to the reasons for applying for a LEADER grant and the bureaucratic nature of the programme. PE outlined the delivery of the project and the support received from the HoW Programme Management Team and the improvements and benefits the grant had enabled the shop to achieve. PE offered advice on how to complete a successful applicant for any would-be applicants.
5. **Workshops** – SD requested that attendees split themselves in to pairs to discuss the following topics in order to suggest ideas on improving the delivery of the programme:
  - i) Spend across LEADER priorities. Have we got it right?
  - ii) How can we engage and bring forward more project applications?

Feedback forms were distributed and forum members had ten minutes to discuss the topics and provide feedback on the forms.

6. **Feedback and Q&A** – SD regrouped members and asked for any feedback from the workshop session. Colin Winder (CW) stated that the HoW was not a forestry area. SD commented that some parts of the area were and that the programme currently had one forestry application being prepared but that if the allocation was deemed too high in this area, it may be possible to have the flexibility to change the allocation with agreement from the RPA. CW suggested the allocation be reduced from 10% to 5%.

LR asked for ideas on how the programme could court more projects and reinforced the importance of “word of mouth”. Caroline Clark (CC) suggested that more “good news stories” were published of successful projects and promote through the local press and parish newsletters. She also suggested attendance at rural shows and SD confirmed that the HoW was booked to attend a number of shows over the coming months.

SD requested that all feedback forms be handed to the Programme Management team for analysis of comments and ideas.

7. **Any Other Business** – With no further business raised LR concluded by thanking Wren's Shop for presenting and SD and EC for their continued hard work. LR welcomed the new LAG Executive Committee members and thanked those members who were standing down, and those staying on the committee for their support over the past year.
8. **Date and Venue of Next Meeting** – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017, Nadder Centre, Tisbury, SP3 6HJ

**The meeting closed at 8.10pm**

Approved as a correct record:

Signed:

Date:

LAG Forum Chairman

DRAFT

